



Title

**Representative Democracy and Voting: An Ethico-Political Interrogation of the
Vote Market in Ghana.**

Submitted by

Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham

Student Number: 222037438

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the

ETHICS STUDIES

**School of Arts, College of Humanities, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South
Africa.**

AUGUST 2026

Supervised by

Prof. Beatrice Okyere-Manu

DECLARATION

I, Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham, declare that:

1. The research report in this thesis, except otherwise indicated, is my original work.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
4. This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other sources have been quoted then:
 - a. their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
 - b. where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
5. This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the reference.

Candidate: Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham

Signed: 

Date: 1-02-2026

Supervisor: Prof. Beatrice Okyere-Manu

Signed: 

Date: 03-02-2026

DEDICATION

To the Infinite Mind above, family and those in pursuit of wisdom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The successful outcome of this research is firstly as a result of the grace and strength bestowed on me by the infinite might above and to this, I am grateful. Secondly, my sincerest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Prof. Beatrice Okyere-Manu, whose immense direction, dedication and guidance have seen me through this research journey. Thirdly, I am grateful to all the participants who participated in this research. Their cooperation, assistance, and teamwork have been crucial to the success of this research, and I am extremely grateful. Also, my deepest appreciation goes to my family, Dada Cosmos, Dada Kofi Kwegya, Mama Ama Karikariwaa, Abena Dankwa, Afia Dankwa, Kojo Kwegya, and all whose names I could not mention. Again, the School's administrative staff kept updating me and providing the required information and assistance. Thank you to my friends and acquaintances for the support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

Voting in elections is considered crucial to practising representative democracy. It is seen as the means by which citizens legitimise political officeholders and participate in governance. The treatment of votes as a commodity or resource has been gaining recognition in some democracies over the years. This study examined the phenomenon of buying and selling votes, also known as the vote market, through an ethico-political lens. The key objective, which also served as the key research question, was to ascertain whether moral and political obligations play a role in the decision to participate in the Ghanaian vote market. The study employed the qualitative research methodology and further adopted grounded theory as a method of enquiry. On this basis, the study used two theories: egoism and deontology as descriptive theories and interrogated data gathered through interviews and focus group discussions within the adopted theories. Furthermore, the study analysed the data in line with the objectives and research questions. The analysis found that the vote market is prevalent in Ghana, with the main participation considerations being a lack of trust in politicians, personal interests, among others. There were also reasons for non-participation, such as patriotism, moral cognition and civil duty. The outcome then provided an avenue to develop a framework for the ethics of voting anchored in Afro-communitarian theory. The fulcrum of the ethics of voting is that votes have intrinsic value and cannot be commoditised. This is because such a trade-off not only affects the value of votes but also prevents voters from demanding public accountability and enables political office-holders to fail in their public duties.

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	2
1.3 Key Research Question	3
1.4 Research Sub-Questions	3
1.5 Key Objective of the Study	3
1.6 Sub-objectives of the study	3
1.7 Research Methodology: Preview	4
1.7.1 Location of the Study	5
1.8 Validity, Reliability and Rigour	5
1.9 Theoretical framework: Preview	6
1.10 Anticipated Problems/Limitations/Scope of Study	7
1.11 Organisation of study	8
1.12 Conclusion	9
CHAPTER TWO:LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.0 Introduction	11
2.1 Democracy	11
2.2 Representative Democracy	12
2.3 Ethical Obligation and Representative Democracy	15
2.4 The Nature of Representative Democracy: Political Parties and Voters	16
2.5 Conceptualising Representation	18
2.6 Critique of Representative Democracy	18
2.7 Representative Democracy in Africa	21

2.8 Reconceptualising Representative Democracy: Integrativist Approach	24
2.9 Representative Democracy in Ghana	26
2.10 Conceptualising Voting	31
2.11 Theories of Voting and Voting Behaviour	34
2.12 Voting in Ghana	38
2.13 Vote Market	40
2.14 Vote Market: Acceptability or Non-acceptability.	44
2.15 Ethics of Voting	46
2.16 The Research Gap	48
2.17 Conclusion	49
CHAPTER THREE:THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	51
3.0 Introduction	51
3.1 The Theory of Egoism	51
3.1.1 Definition and Basic Tenets	52
3.1.2 Psychological egoism	53
3.1.3 Critiques Against Ethical Egoism	55
3.1.4 Relevance of the theory to the study	56
3.2 The Ethics of Deontology	57
3.2.1 Kant's Deontology	59
3.2.2 Critique of Deontologism	61
3.2.3 Relevance of Deontology to the Study	62
3.3 Afro-Communitarianism	62
3.3.1 Conceptualising Afro-Communitarianism	63
3.3.2 Person, the Community and Individual Interest	65
3.3.3 Critique of Afro-Communitarianism	69
3.3.4 Relevance of Afro-Communitarianism to the study	70
3.4 Conceptualising Moral and Political Obligations	71
3.4.1 Moral Obligation	71
3.4.2 Political Obligation	72
3.5 Conclusion	74

CHAPTER FOUR:RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK	75
4.0 Introduction	75
4.1 Nature and Scope of the Study	75
4.2 Research Method and Approach	76
4.3 Methodological Strategy of Enquiry	78
4.4 Study Area	80
4.5 Study Population	81
4.6 Sampling and Sampling Technique	82
4.7 Data collection	82
4.7.1 One-on-one interviews	83
4.7.2 Focus group discussion	83
4.7.3 Documentary review	84
4.7.4 Theoretical sampling	84
4.8 Data Presentation and Analysis	85
4.9 Validity, reliability and rigour	86
4.10 Conclusion	87
CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	88
5.0 Introduction	88
5.1 Theme 1: Nature of the Vote Market in Ghana.	89
5.1.1 Young-Adult Participants	89
5.1.2 Adults and Aged Participants	93
5.2 Theme 2: Perception of the Prevalence of the Vote Market	97
5.2.1 Young-Adult Participants	98
5.2.2 Adult and Aged Participants	100
5.3 Theme 3: Lived Experiences in the Vote Market	107
5.3.1 Young-Adult Participants	107
5.3.2 Adult and Aged Participants	111
5.4 Theme 4: Considerations in Participation in the Vote Market	115
5.4.1 Voluntary Participation to Sell Votes	115
5.4.1.1 Young-Adult Participants	115
5.4.1.2 Adults and Aged Participants	120

5.4.2 Voluntary Participation to Buy Votes	124
5.4.2.1 Young-Adult Participants	124
5.4.2.2 Adults and Aged Participants	127
5.5 Theme 5: Moral Considerations in the Vote Market	130
5.5.1 Young-Adult Participants	130
5.5.2 Adults and Aged Participants	133
5.6 Theme 6: Political Considerations in the Vote Market	137
5.6.1 Young-Adult Participants	137
5.6.2 Adult and Aged Participants	139
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	142
5.7 Personal reflections	144
5.8 Conclusion	144
CHAPTER SIX:DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	145
6.0 Introduction	145
6.1 Representative democracy and voting	146
6.2 Representation and voting in Ghana	147
6.3 Nature of the vote market in Ghana	148
6.3.3 The vote market and nature of the exchange	150
6.3.4 Role of politicians in the vote market	151
6.3.5 Role of voters in the vote market	153
6.4 Perception of the Prevalence of the Vote Market	154
6.5 Lived Experiences in the Vote Market and its basis	159
6.6 Considerations before participating in the vote market	162
6.6.1 Personal gain and interest in selling and buying votes	163
6.6.2 Distrust in Politicians and normalisation of the vote market	165
6.7 Reasons for not selling and buying votes	167
6.7.1 Reasons for not buying votes	168
6.8 Moral considerations and obligations in the vote market	169
6.9 Political obligations and considerations in the vote market	173
6.10 Deontology and the vote market in Ghana	177
6.11 Ethical egoism and the vote market in Ghana	180

6.12 Conclusion	183
CHAPTER SEVEN:TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ETHICS OF VOTING IN GHANA.	184
7.0 Introduction	184
7.1 Voting in Ghana: Afro-communitarian Approach	184
7.2 The Ethics of Voting	190
7.3 Vote and the Vote Market: Ethics of Voting Applied.	195
7.4 The Ethics of Voting as a Science of ‘Oughtness’	199
7.5 Intrinsic Value and Treatment of Votes	200
7.6 Principles of Afro-Communitarian Ethics of Voting	201
7.7 Conclusion	202
CHAPTER EIGHT:SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	204
8.0 Introduction	204
8.1 Summary	204
8.2 Conclusion	206
8.3 Conclusion	208
REFERENCES	209
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE	234
APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE	235
APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE	236
APPENDIX 4: LETTER REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT	237
APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT	239
APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT IN TWI	240

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by providing a bird's-eye view. The chapter provides the background to the study and a statement of its main focus. It also previews the methodology, theoretical framework, and literature review. The chapter also includes the research questions and objectives that guide the study, as well as its organisation. This is meant to set the path to developing a framework for an ethics of voting in the Ghanaian context.

1.1 Background to the Study

Representative democracy is conceived as one of the forms of democracy adopted by states to govern their citizens. In modern socio-political organisations and systems, it is widely practised as one of the most common forms of government. According to Sadik Haxhiu & Avni Alidemaj (2021: 2), representative democracy is simply the system of governance in which the citizens of a state participate in political decisions as a right through their elected representatives. The practice of representative democracy is such that citizens delegate political decisions to elected officials who are deemed to carry out their will and make decisions on their behalf (Nasstrom, 2015). Central to representative democracy is voting or elections. Thus, people select individuals who put themselves up for election through voting to represent their interests in government. For Sadik Haxhiu & Arbresha Meha (2019), representative democracy is realised through the organisation of elections in accordance with the state's laws or constitution.

This study defines elections as the act of voting for a person or individual to a position of power, either as a representative or in a public authority capacity. Thus, embedded in the means of democratic decision-making are the system and nuances of voting. Voting also represents the means by which citizens participate in governance. In this vein, voting thus becomes the pathway for citizens to legitimise the exercise of political power in a

democratic state. However, there are instances when certain factors, such as poverty, non-patriotism, cultural antecedents, the commoditisation of every aspect of human life, etc., have led to votes being conceived as a commodity and, by extension, as a resource. Conceptualising a vote as a resource has other implications; pivotal among them is the tendency to be pushed to maximise it by buying or selling it. This phenomenon is termed vote markets. The vote market, as a concept, prominently features in Christopher Freiman's (2014) work. In this study, the vote market is defined as the phenomenon in which eligible citizens sell or seek to sell their votes, and individuals seeking political office or a position of authority buy or seek to buy votes. Simply put, the system of supply and demand for votes for valuable consideration, be it monetary or material.

The study used Ghana as a case study specifically because, since its return to multi-party democracy, Ghana has experienced democratic changes of government through voting. The country offers many cases of voting and voter perceptions of the vote market, and the researcher believes that it will be crucial in exploring this study area. According to Joseph Henry Mensah (2007), Ghana's democratic development is still a work in progress. Since the return to multi-party democracy in 1992, Ghana has witnessed political party activism and development. It has sometimes led to clashes of interest and heightened competition among political parties and individuals. The result is reported instances of vote-buying and a growing perception of such phenomena in Ghana's body politic. Especially so when in Ghana, ethnicity plays a vital role in how citizens vote. The study's general focus is to ascertain the role of moral and political obligations in deciding whether to participate in the vote market in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Voting has been central to the practice of representative democracy. This is because it becomes the means by which citizens legitimise those who hold political authority. The understanding of voting as an activity seems to be changing over time, with both voters and politicians sometimes treating votes as a commodity that can be bought and sold. This leads to the phenomenon of the vote market. Whilst there are academic discussions on electoral clientelism and vote buying, there seems to be less academic space dedicated to

the vote market in Ghana, and to discussing this phenomenon from an ethico-political perspective. The researcher's task, therefore, is to interrogate the buying and selling of votes in Ghana from an ethical and political perspective. The aim was to interrogate the phenomenon of the vote market and elicit an ethics of voting based on Afro-communitarianism. In doing this the study would ascertain whether moral and political obligations play roles and/or ought to play a role in the decision to participate or not participate in the vote market in Ghana.

1.3 Key Research Question

To what extent do moral and political obligations of citizens reflect in the decision to participate or not participate in the vote market?

1.4 Research Sub-Questions

1. Is the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana a perception or reality?
2. What considerations do voters make in their participation or non-participation in the vote market?
3. How do the theories of Ethical Egoism and the ethical theory of Deontology inform the vote market in Ghana?
4. How does Afro-communitarianism help develop an ethics of voting within the Ghanaian context?

1.5 Key Objective of the Study

To examine the how moral and political obligations of citizens reflect in the decision to participate or not participate in the vote market.

1.6 Sub-objectives of the study

1. To explore the prevalence of the vote market, as to whether it is a mere perception or reality.
2. To examine the various considerations that voters make before their participation or non-participation in the vote market in Ghana.
3. To investigate how the theories of egoism and Deontology inform the vote market in Ghana.

4. To propose an ethics of voting in the Ghanaian context through the theory of Afro-communitarianism.

1.7 Research Methodology: Preview

The study employed a qualitative research methodology to examine the roles of moral obligation and political responsibility in the Ghanaian vote market. According to John W. Creswell (2013), the qualitative approach is ideal for exploring and understanding the ascriptions that individuals or groups make to a social or human problem. The research will be designed according to grounded theory as developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967). In this study, the researcher sought to elicit an ethics of voting through voters' perceptions and the extent to which moral obligations and political responsibilities help voters participate in, or otherwise engage with, the vote market. Furthermore, for data collection, the study used interviews and focus groups. According to Bennett J. Tepper (2000), among the most effective methods of gathering data under grounded theory are interviews and focus groups. Here, whilst interviews are optimal for gathering data on individuals' experiences, personal history, and perspectives, focus groups are ideal for eliciting data from a group to generate a broader view and draw inductive inferences.

Participants were randomly selected from the following towns: Cape Coast (Central Region), Takoradi (Western Region), Koforidua (Eastern Region), and Accra (Greater Accra Region). The study interviewed forty (40) participants on equal gender distributions, that is, twenty men and twenty women from across four regions. It also organised four focus group discussions, one in each region. There was a broad division of the age-group ranging from eighteen (18) years to thirty-five years (18-35), and then thirty-six to sixty-five years. Generally, there were seven people in each focus group session. Both the interview and the focus group took place face-to-face, with the researcher travelling to the various communities to engage the participants. However, all COVID protocols were observed, and the researcher provided nose masks and hand sanitiser to all participants. The language used was Twi, which is predominantly spoken across the selected regions: Central, Western, Eastern, and Greater Accra. The questions used are attached as Appendix One. Generally, the interview conducted in this research enabled the researcher gain

insights into the subjective experiences of the participants on the vote market in Ghana. The study also gathered secondary data from published books, articles, and other sources. The researcher accessed eBooks and other related literature through search engines such as Google Scholar. With respect to confidentiality and consent, the researcher obtained informed consent from each participant and explained the confidentiality of their identity and other ethical issues. Again, the study sought to obtain informed consent by providing this information to participants in the language they understand.

1.7.1 Location of the Study

The study area is located in Ghana, West Africa. However, within Ghana, the researcher focussed data collection on four regions: the Greater Accra, Western, Central, and Eastern regions. The reason for selecting these four regions is that they are predominantly cosmopolitan, have residents from almost all ethnic groups, and are not considered ethnic strongholds for any political party during elections. This took approximately six (6) months for the gathering, presentation, and analysis of the gathered data. The research also cut across the socio-political, economic, and ethnic divides.

1.8 Validity, Reliability and Rigour

The scope of the study was limited to ethics. Here, although it will be legitimate to conduct sociological and economic analyses of the vote market, these areas will fall outside the scope of the research. The study limited itself to ethical interrogations to understand the role of moral obligation and political responsibilities of the citizen in the vote market. Any political considerations in the research also fall under socio-political ethics. Further, the reliability of the findings was assessed through internal consistency analyses based on the collected data and the theoretical framework. This consistency was evident in the extent to which the study described the phenomenon of the vote market and prescribed an ethics of voting using the theories of Afro-centric communitarianism, ethical egoism, and deontological ethics. The validity of the research was also achieved by measuring the data as reported with the theoretical framework to produce a definitive ethics of voting. The research was grounded in research ethics, with informed consent sought from participants

in a language they understand. Also, there was no monetary compensation for participants, and they may withdraw at any time.

1.9 Theoretical framework: Preview

The study proposed three main theories, selected as both descriptive and prescriptive frameworks.

Afro-communitarian

According to Markate Daly (1994), the term communitarianism is generally derived from the term ‘community’, which conceptualises a person’s philosophical position within the context of social bonds and cultural traditions. Communitarianism makes a basic assumption that the norms and standards of the community are absolute prescriptions and form the basis for moral and social justice. The basis of Afrocentric communitarianism is communalism, which emphasises collective social and political organisation and goals (Wiredu, 2008:335). Central to the communitarian position is the place of the individual in society. According to Ifeanyi A. Menkiti (1984:172), the African conception of personhood is such that the community plays a central role in its full acquisition. Here, the individual’s values and interests are deemphasised, and that person plays no role in the realisation of her personhood. The assumption of communitarianism holds that, in considering morality, social justice, welfare, values, norms, and sanctions, the community is primary. For Kwame Gyekye, common good is “a good that is common to individual human beings - at least those embraced within a community, a good that can be said to be commonly and universally shared by all human individuals...” (1997:45). That is, to understand the common good is to conceive of it that it is a good that is needed by all the members of a society irrespective of their cultural and ethical orientations and affiliations (Mwimnobi, 2003:10, Watadza, 2016: 33). Additionally, Bernard Matolino (2014: 33) asserts that afro centric communitarianism gives precedence to the community over the individual and this is evident in the prescription of how individuals ought to act for such acts to be considered as meaning by the community.

Ethical egoism

According to egoism ethics, an action is deemed moral if it yields greater agent-utility for the moral agent than any alternative action, where agent-utility refers to actions that

promote and satisfy an individual's self-interest (Timmons, 2012:18). Self-interest, which motivates each person's actions, has been understood in various ways. Jesse Kalin (1970:66) describes self-interest as the personal welfare or happiness of a moral agent. Rhodes (2022:38) adds that the well-being of others can directly or indirectly affect our own, implying that actions that promote our well-being should also consider others. Self-interest can be short-term or long-term, but ethical egoism advocates prioritising long-term self-interest. Further, Flage (2008:6) emphasises that egoism accounts for humans' different reactions to events; in pursuing long-term happiness, one must also consider the consequences of acting badly toward others. Since such actions can harm the moral agent, he should avoid them to protect his own interests.

The ethical theory of Deontology

Morality is generally conceived as involving sets of rules that ought to be followed. These rules determine which acts have moral content. Deontology was derived from the Greek word '*deon*' or '*dein*', which means 'duty' or 'to be obligated. Further, Deontological theory posits that an act or a class of actions is not justified by showing that it has good consequences, but rather by showing that the action is performed purely out of duty (Onora, 1975). As far as the moral law is concerned, there are some categories of living species, divine or otherwise, to which it applies (Abraham, 2019). Kant (1959) sees duty as involving the recognition of and submission to the moral law. He therefore defines duty as the necessity to act in accordance with the moral law. James Herbert Paton (1964) holds that humans show moral worth when they do good, not from inclination but from duty.

1.10 Anticipated Problems/Limitations/Scope of Study

In this research, I anticipated two main problems: ethical and logistical.

Ethical problem anticipated: Since the vote market is predominantly viewed as illegal and not openly accepted in Ghana, participants were reluctant to share their personal experiences. Thus, whilst they were willing to talk about what they have heard, they were not easily flowing with their personal engagements unless a certain level of trust and confidentiality is created. The researcher dealt with this by explaining the confidentiality

and the use of pseudo-names for the participants to make them realise that their identities will be protected.

Logistical problem anticipated: Voting is undertaken throughout the country (Ghana), as a result, a more even research would have been one that selects participants from all the sixteen regions to ensure regional balance, especially so when voting is mostly done along ethnic lines in Ghana. The challenge was the logistics of selecting participants from all regions to reflect voters' perceptions. To address this, the researcher focussed on swing regions, which have large constituencies of both main political parties and cosmopolitan cities with residents from various ethnic groups.

1.11 Organisation of study

The study comprised eight chapters, and they are as follows;

Chapter One: General Introduction to the Study

This chapter introduced the study and gives an overview of the entire thesis. The chapter includes the background to the study, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, a preview of the theoretical framework, and the methodology.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The chapter thematically delved into the current and ongoing discourse in the research area. Here, the reader will first be introduced to the basic ideas and principles of ethics. The current literature on elections and voting will be presented again. This is to situate the whole research in the current ethico-political discourse on voting. The chapter also examined general perspectives on democracy and narrow it to representative democracy. This is where the means of selecting representatives through elections will feature prominently. Again, it provided an extensive exposition of the phenomenon of the vote market and the ongoing scholarly discourse. The latter part of the chapter was a literature discussion of the ethics of voting to ascertain the academic space dedicated to ethically assessing the phenomenon of voting.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

This chapter discussed the theories to be applied in the study. Here are three main theories: Afro-communitarianism, Ethical Egoism, and deontologism. These theories were used both

descriptively and prescriptively in the study. The chapter also discussed their strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter discussed the method to be employed in the research. Here, the chapter outlined the methodological approach appropriate for the research. It also examined the data collection methods, the sample size, and the analysis methods.

Chapter Five: Presentation of Findings

This chapter presented the findings from field-collected data. Here, the findings helped answer the research questions and achieve the set objectives. Again, the findings were presented to address the themes discussed in the literature review.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Interpretations of the Findings

This chapter discussed the data presented in the literature and the theories proposed. Here, the data gathered was compared with the literature. The themes discussed were first examine voters' perceptions of the vote market, the factors that influence their participation in it, and the roles of moral obligations and political responsibilities. The analysis, based on the data, was used to fit within the study's theoretical framework to enable an adequate prescription.

Chapter Seven: Towards a Moral Framework for the Ethics of Voting in Ghana.

This chapter elicited an ethics of voting based on the analysis presented. It made prescriptions that are in sync with the prescriptive theoretical framework of the study. The chapter further developed a systemic approach to the vote market and the treatment of votes, grounded in the moral and political considerations identified in the findings.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This chapter entailed the overall summary of the work. It succinctly captured the study and its pivotal findings, which adequately responded to the research questions.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter provided a general perspective and introduction to the study, setting the framework for the work to follow. The chapter outlined the research task and the study's objectives, which have also been translated into the research questions to be answered by the study. After introducing the study, the next step is to review the literature to identify

trends in academic discourse and existing gaps. This is discussed in the next chapter of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study provided a general introduction and an outline. This chapter provides a general exposition of scholarly works on the study. It provides a description and elucidation of the relevant literature on the array of conceptions and views of the research topic. The chapter presents the various perspectives in the academic discussion of the research's pertinent concepts. Thus, the chapter provides an extensive exposition of the ongoing discourse in the research area, as reflected in the literature. The chapter explains major concepts, including democracy, representative democracy, the vote market, and the ethics of voting. Further, the chapter explores academic discourse and discusses the various concepts of the study and establishes that, despite the relevance of the discourse to the study, the literature discussed does not adequately address or fill the academic gap the researcher has identified. The aim is to review the scholarship on the vote market in Ghana and to show how the question of moral and political obligation remains insufficiently addressed..

2.1 Democracy

Etymologically, democracy has been defined as the rule of the people from the Greek words *demos* and *kratia* (Dahl, 2020). For Yavuz Selim Alkan (2021), democracy has been defined in various ways, and scholars who have attempted to offer a univocal definition have not been successful (Gagnon, 2009:5). As a result, there is extant literature ostensibly addressing the basic question of what democracy is. In their contribution, Roskin et al. (2003: 73) aver that the divergent meanings democracy elicits are unique among other concepts. However, Alkan (2021) observes that, despite disagreement over a common definition and univocal conceptualisation of democracy, there is agreement among scholars on certain common arguments and practical issues related to democracy. Further, even though there is disagreement about the implementation of practical democracy, there is convergence on some institutional requirements of democracy, such as voting. He further asserts that there are two main dimensions of democracy: values and principles, which

constitute the elements of democracy, and, secondly, the practical implementation of these elements. Again, there is the conception of democracy as a normative ideal, which is prescriptive. Alkan (2021) states that any definition of democracy must be based on its core ideals, not on any other feature. Further, it is asserted that any definition of democracy can be conceived as either a set of values or a set of institutional arrangements.

2.2 Representative Democracy

The concept of representation has been conceived as the partaking of the governed in the government. It is important to note that in the Athenian system of democracy, it was a form of direct democracy, in which citizens directly participated in decision-making (Gastil & Richards, 2013). In contemporary democracies, however, representative democracy has been the dominant form of decision-making. For Alkan (2021: 444), representative democracy has been associated with voting, elections, and majority rule. A major central attraction of representative democracy is that direct democracy cannot function effectively in large polities (Dalton et al., 2001:142). The reason being that, with population growth, party politics takes centre stage in decision-making, and this, one way or the other, leads to representatives being selected through these parties to represent the will of the people. In his view, Rousseau (2014) argued that, although the best form of democracy is direct democracy, its realisation is impossible due to demographic and population constraints.

Furthermore, Alkan (2021) alluded to the definitive thought of Dalton et. al. (2001:142) that representative democracy basically “takes the form of party-based parliamentary rule and functions primarily through elected representatives.” Thus, in representative democracies, citizens make decisions through elections by voting for their representatives. Here, the view is that accountability and the realisation of interests are crucial to the selection of candidates and to the general legitimacy accorded to representatives. Albert Weale (2007:132) has conceived of representation as when “one thing stands for another”. Another attraction of representative democracy is that, since political parties are inevitable and the practical impossibility of regularly consulting people directly as a whole makes direct democracy impractical, there is the inescapable compromise of resorting to representative democracy (Pitkin, 2004:336). Again, William A. Hay (2006:136) also avers

that representative democracy “allows citizens to rule themselves in politics beyond the smallest communities by enabling leaders to mobilise opinion that facilitates consensus and allows them to implement policies”. Thus, among the conceptions in the definition is the idea that, within the democratic arena, there is a struggle for others' votes. This view is also shared by Saward (2010:56), who argues that representative democracy focuses on the competitive struggle for power and office.

According to Loia (2022), representative or indirect democracy is an effective system in which political institutions govern through elections. He further asserts that the principle of liberty, which ensures equality and freedom for all citizens, has translated into the perception of fairness in representative democracy. However, the attractions of representative democracy and indeed democracy in general are affected by the fact, as reiterated by Adam Przeworski (2019:143), that if losing elections is not a disaster and winning parties do not seek to remove all institutional bottlenecks that will restrict them from entrenching themselves in power, then democracy will not deteriorate.

Pertinent to representative democracy is what is expected of those selected as representatives, including, among others, accountability and responsiveness. Responsiveness in this sense also means the substantial acts and positive reactions of representatives for the represented (Esaiason & Narud, 2013: 4). According to Abramowitz & Mattei (2018), it is well known that direct democracy faces practical difficulties. This view is earlier stated by Green-Armytage (2015), who argues that in direct democracy, every citizen must be well informed about every issue and be ready to vote on them. Additionally, a voter in a direct democracy is expected to be able to articulate their preferences at the time of voting. We note that these are possible on two grounds: firstly, the issues at stake are not very complex or technical for the ordinary person to understand. Secondly, that the information made available to citizens is accurate and objective, enabling them to digest it and make an independent preference. The difficulties in achieving some of these make representative democracy an attractive system. Thus, representation is central to effective governance, whether political or economic. For Yu et al, (2010), representation is reflected in countries having a parliament and in companies

having shareholders. According to the assessment by Abramowitz & Mattei (2018), having an elected group or committee as a representative is very important for governance at any level. These groups must justify the representation of voters (Aziz et al., 2017) or even the very form of representation to which they have been elected (Anshelevich et al., 2021). In this regard, Abramowitz & Mattei (2018) define representative democracy as a system in which voters duly elect representatives who assume the duty of voting on issues on behalf of the people they represent. They further held that periodic elections and recall provisions are intended to make representatives accountable to voters. The downside, however, is that these practically do not make representatives accountable and also only promote civic duty and participation in decision-making during an election period.

Additionally, Sadik Haxhiu & Avni Alidemaj (2021) conceive of representative democracy as a form of governance in which citizens exercise their rights through representatives they select. In this sense, the individuals as elected become accountable and are also obligated to represent the interests of the people who elected them (Berisha, 2011:39). They further assert that through representative democracy, citizens find it easier to make decisions and participate in decision-making through their elected representatives. Central to representative democracy is majority rule, whereby the selection process and the decision-making bodies composed of representatives are based on majority decisions. As part of the democratic ideal, governance ought to be representative of its citizens and responsive to their interests (Latifi, 2009:27).

Moreover, Haxhiu & Alidemaj (2021) further argue that one feature of representative democracy is that citizens legitimise political power by granting representatives a mandate through voting. This means that legitimacy emanates from the electorate, and it is through this that political institutions can operate effectively. Another feature is participation, which is vital to building a democratic system. The right to participate is conceived as a human right; it is also seen as part of political socialisation. Participation is mostly seen in terms of the percentage of voters who exercise the right to vote and the legitimisation process. Thus, whenever turnout increases, there is a perception that participation has increased, and vice versa.

Free and fair elections are also central to representative democracy. This is because the selection of representatives is through elections, and as a result, the electoral process becomes crucial to the proper functioning of representative democracy. For Haxhiu & Alidemaj (2021), an election is free when there is a legal framework that ensures the electoral process is regularly followed, allowing voters to express their views and choose their representatives. Again, free elections are seen as the process of initiating a contract between the electors and their representatives and can also be conceived as a means through which citizens exercise their constitutional mandate (Baliqi, 2017:86). Haxhiu & Alidemaj (2021:86) further asserts that; *“During elections, voters have the opportunity to express their political will through voting and have the right to punish their representatives in the next election if they feel that the latter do not represent them properly.”* This means that the accountability process is initiated through elections, in which the representatives render their stewardship and further seek the mandate to continue what they have done. It is at this point that electorates also seek either to renew or abrogate their contract with the representatives, depending on the deliverables during the period of representation.

2.3 Ethical Obligation and Representative Democracy

It is also pertinent to examine the ethical implications of representative democracy, especially when the discussion is both ethical and political. For Urbinati and Warren (2008), elected representatives also have ethical duties in public office. This means that representatives have specific jobs to perform, the basis upon which they have been elected; also attached to these jobs that they are to perform are obligations. In assessing democratic representation, Mansbridge (2003) argues that voters generally select individuals to represent them on the basis of shared values and, as a result, give little attention to these representatives, mainly because they know and trust that they will do the right thing. In this case, therefore, voters would rather look at character and not performance. Again, it is important to note that issues of ethical obligations of representatives have been fuelled by political financing or campaign financing (Warren, 2006). Thus, elected representatives ought to reason like the voters whose mandate they carry and also render their stewardship frequently.

There have been some evident problems in understanding representative democracy. This stems from the duties, effectiveness, and responsiveness of the representatives, among others. According to Pitkin (2004:339);

Representatives act not as agents of the people but simply instead of them. We send them to take care of public affairs like hired experts, and they are professionals, entrenched in office and in party structures. Immersed in a distinct culture of their own, surrounded by other specialists and insulated from the ordinary realities of their constituents' lives ... The arrangements we call 'representative democracy' have become a substitute for popular self-government, not its enactment.

2.4 The Nature of Representative Democracy: Political Parties and Voters

In discussing representative democracy, Hamilton (2017) opines that the Western political system recognises two groups: the rulers and the ruled. That it is the representative relation that holds these groups together. It is also important to note that representation can be individual- or group-based. Group-based means a group selects an individual to perform functions on its behalf. According to Vieira & Runciman (2008), representatives have the obligation to respond to the interests and will of the citizens that they represent.

Representative democracy assumes that there is an avenue for public preferences and interests to be fused into politics in a democratic system (Flinders & Hinterleitner, 2022). This assumption, then, could be considered a 'mechanisms of representation' (Caramani, 2017), meaning that political parties play a vital role in the selection process. Here, political parties compete for citizens' votes. In leading this, the political parties put across their ideologies and programmes before the citizens. Representation is etymologically traced as a Latin word that entails an action delegated by someone to be performed on behalf of such a person. By this, therefore, Urbinati and Warren (2008: 389) propose four main features, which include the following;

- (a) that the sovereignty of the people is expressed in the electoral selection of the representatives;*
- (b) Representation is conceived as a free mandate relation.*
- (c) The electoral systems are to ensure a certain measure of responsiveness to the people by representatives who speak and act in their name;*

(d) *The universal franchise must ground representation on an important element of political equality.*

To this, Nadia Urbinati (2011) asserts that voting power and its exercise are more of an authorisation and legitimacy granted by citizens to the government, establishing that citizens have consented to the government's exercise of that authority on their behalf. In the view of Bryan Garsten (2009), is also of the view that the purpose of representative democracy is to translate the interests and sentiments of the people through representing them in government. This means that the performance of representatives is measured by the policy results in public opinion. He again puts it more succinctly that the main purpose of representative government is *to multiply and challenge governmental claims to represent the people*. (Garsten 2009:1). This purpose is thus different from the fact that governments are to represent the will of the people. It is about how governments are brought into political authority to turn the will of the people into implemented policy. Additionally, Ingham (2022) observes that it is a legitimate expectation that elected representatives will have more power than the citizens who elected them. However, it has been conceived of representative democracy as not allowing elected representatives to exercise power in an arbitrary manner.

It is also important to understand that because citizens cede their decision power to representatives does not make them subordinates and less inferior to these representatives. In the thought of Kolodny (2014:317), *why elected officials and ordinary citizens can still relate as social equals is that citizens delegate to the representatives their special power to influence political decisions, and, in general, a principal does not make themselves socially inferior to their agent merely by delegating power*. Ingham (2022) further observes that a citizen's voting for a representative does not necessarily mean she has delegated her power, and that if it did, those citizens who do not vote for representatives would be seen as having delegated no power. We are of the position that the act of voting for representatives is an act of legitimising the authority and power to be exercised by the representative so elected.

2.5 Conceptualising Representation

An aspect of democratic innovation that has received less attention from scholars is the rules governing the process of selecting representatives. Additionally, representatives are sometimes conceived as agents of the political parties. Here, there is no personal relationship between the voter and the representatives. Thus, the existing relationship between the voter and the representative is based on political party affiliation. Here, their roles are multifaceted; the representative communicates the party's policies and programmes to the electorate to attract their votes based on the views shared by the party. There is a further role termed by Denters, Vollaard & Bovenkamp (2020) as a democratic watchdog. This is when elected representatives act as facilitators or regulators to promote interactive governance and foster increased participation.

Basically, representation is the phenomenon in which governments and legislators represent the interests of their constituents and those who vote for them. It is fundamental in a democratic system, as it provides representatives with an avenue to advance voters' interests. The ability of electoral institutions to provide representation has been examined in various ways (Golder & Stramski, 2010; Thomassen & Ham, 2014). For Sofia Nasstrom (2015), some scholars hold the impression that representation does not necessarily entail popular rule. For Rousseau, it is an aristocratic idea intended as a response to the Athenian democratic system. Nasstrom (2015) assesses the democratic content of representation and observes that representation involves indirect rule through elections, in which representatives are selected to represent the interests and preferences of voters. Here, elections are the link between the citizens and the rulers, who are also seen as representatives. Again, an election is the means by which citizens consent to power.

2.6 Critique of Representative Democracy

Some critics of political representation, such as Montesquieu, have argued that it is inherently aristocratic, as it discriminates among citizens and excludes some from the decision-making process. This notwithstanding, representative democracy has been held to be one of the most valuable systems of governance. For Denters, Vollaard & Bovenkamp (2020), representative democracy is part of the democratic paradox; it is important to note

that, central to representative democracy, are institutions.

The current understanding of representative democracy with its accompanying practicality is undermined by factors such as low voter turnout, dissatisfaction with elected representatives, and political parties, among others (Michels & de Graaf, 2010; Saward, 2010; Ladner & Fiechter, 2012; Voerman & Boogers, 2014; Grimberg & Vollaard, 2016; Denters & Rose, 2013). The response to some of these problems is democratic innovation, which involves participatory reforms to strengthen the roles of citizens and other civil society groups in governance. It is also seen that representative democracy protects the views and rights of minorities by ensuring their representation. Thus, there should be an evident mutual cooperation between the majority and minority representatives. Additionally, Nadia Urbinati and Mark E. Warren (2008) observed that representative democracy evolved from, first, the transformation of liberal and constitutional regimes into democracy in the 20th century, and second, the increased role of political parties and the balance between ruling elites and members of society. There is, however, the contemporary view that representative democracy is a mixture of aristocracy and democratic authorisation.

We note that these features fit well with electoral representation, in which the represented requires accountability from the representative, and that accountability is examined at the end of each term of office through elections. In their contribution on the nature of representative democracy, Urbinati and Warren (2008) argue that it is inevitably an aristocracy, as it discriminates among citizens, excluding some from decision-making. Further, Urbinati and Warren (2008) assert that a subset of electoral democracy is the means by which citizens elect their representatives. According to Neblo et al. (2018), the main problem with contemporary democracy is that the representative relationship between elected representatives and citizens is strained, and that there is no longer trust in representatives to the extent that citizens' voices are heard through them. This has made representation more about the interests of the very representatives, rather than about the people. To aid in solving such a persistent problem, Neblo et al (2018:24) propose direct representative democracy. This is where an inclusive deliberative process and a more

direct link between citizens and elected representatives are created. This proposal seeks to make democratic institutions and their work more direct and representative. The aim is to enable citizens to reconnect with their representatives for better governance.

According to Margit van Wessel (2009), there has been extensive research on emerging problems in relations between citizens and elected representatives. Still, for others, the problem stems from the expanded arenas of policymaking that include institutions beyond the state, such as civil society. Further, van Wessel (2009) asserts that, in the current state, citizens find themselves in a system in which institutions have taken central stage, whilst they, as electors, have received less attention. In this circumstance, citizens feel lost and confused and, as a result, are unable to act as democratic citizens in a representative democracy, whereby they take an active role in political decision-making through their representatives. Chambers (2008) interprets representative democracy in a voting model.

Again, Nazerian (2019), in a contribution to the discourse, observes that people have lost some hope in democracy as a result of declining trust in politicians who have been in charge of these political systems. The other perspective is that individuals are now strongly inclined towards their political identity rather than towards constructive political discourse with its attendant compromises (Tormey 2015:16-21). It is for some of these shortcomings that representative democracy was conceived as a well-functioning system, even though it also has various deficits. For Nazerian (2019), the nature of this electoral choice is democratic, aristocratic, and so on. It is also pertinent to add that, through the selection of representatives, those considered are educated and reflect aristocratic ideals. Among the evident effects of the problems representative democracy faces is low election turnout. Thus, in measuring voter turnout, one can conjecture that dissatisfaction with representation leads citizens to develop voter apathy and, as a result, refuse to vote. This is why Simon Tormey, (2015:17) observes that; *A declining turnout is, by contrast, often taken to indicate that something is wrong, and that therefore we ought to be worried about the relationship between citizens and the political system.* For Massimo Tommasoli (2005), the problems of representative democracy and citizen participation can be examined through people's perceptions and voter turnout. One of the main issues is trust, which is

fundamental to governance and allows the government to take unpopular decisions. Citizens are inclined to cooperate with and understand a government that has the voters' trust. Conversely, government effectiveness is minimal when voters' trust in a particular government collapses. Therefore, it is about the trust of political institutions as controlled by the government.

In Sean Ingham's (2022) contribution, there is a distinction between democratic and non-democratic regimes based on the extent to which there is no hierarchy among citizens, with all citizens regarded as equal. This was taken to the extent that all were seen as equal, without any idea of the ruled and the rulers. However, there have been evident problems associated with this system of government. The problems, as seen, also include representative democracy. Here, representative democracy is criticised as concentrating power in the hands of a selected few (Ingham, 2022). What is evidently seen is that power is not equally distributed.

2.7 Representative Democracy in Africa

According to Adeolu Ouwaseyi Oyekan (2009), democratisation in Africa only gathered momentum after the collapse of European colonial rule. Also, within the African context, there is the struggle to conceptualise and define democracy. It again provides a mechanism for meeting human needs and satisfying basic ideals. He again defends the position that democracy is workable in Africa, even though he recognises the financial burden placed on individuals who seek to attain political office as representatives. That notwithstanding, he cited isolated cases in Nigeria in which some individuals have won political power with less spending to argue that elections are not always elitist and are not the preserve of the wealthy aristocratic class. Again, despite Africa's underdevelopment, it is hardly debatable that citizens choose their representatives and participate in governance through the democratic process. Thus, it is not alien to Africa that people choose their leaders, demand accountability from them, and have a say in how such leaders govern the state.

Further, Oyekan (2009) asserts that in African political thought, there is a need to

differentiate between the content of democracy, which refers to the ideal features of democracy and the form of democracy, which refers to how democracy manifests itself within societies with its attendant cultural peculiarities. It is the failure to distinguish between content and form that has given the impression that democracy is not a workable system for Africa. Thus, the problem again becomes the inability to conceive of economic politics within political systems. The failure of Africans to seek a homegrown economic order has contributed to their underdevelopment. In the end, it leads to an alliance with unbridled liberalism, which has no indigenous capacity to compete with Western businesses. The coupling factor is the inept African leaders whose interests are self-aggrandisement, without any selflessness or patriotism, to develop their countries. This is what has accounted for Africa's underdevelopment, not the adoption of democratic ideals.

The fact that the political system and, in this sense, representative democracy are conceptualised of the needs of the African has also been reflected in the work of Alhaji Ahmadu Ibrahim & Lawan Cheri (2013). They are of the view that the crisis in Africa, including instability and other issues, is about leadership. The embrace of democratisation by African countries was a result of Western pressure, and the product of this has been a conscious tampering with institutions and the constitutional framework by these leaders. This is why, internally, most African states are governed differently from the Western modern state systems they sought to follow. Elections, the process by which representatives are selected to represent the will of the people, are marred by violence and sometimes blatant rigging, and the inevitable result is political instability. Contexts can be cited from Kenya (1999), Zimbabwe (2008), Sudan (2010), Uganda and Nigeria (2003 and 2007), etc.

Some scholars, such as Kidane Mengisteab and Cyril K. Daddieh, (1999), among others, have made a strong case for democracy in Africa and its linkage with development. Again, because these leaders have been authoritarian, there is a disconnect between them and the people, and so they cannot be held accountable for their stewardship. Further, it is the subjugation engaged in by these leaders that has stifled the human resources of Africa, as many elites have migrated to escape the political tyranny. Another evident feature in the political landscape of Africa has been the transfer of power. Even more, the pervasiveness

of corruption, evident in legislative bodies, has severely reduced accountability and affected political representation. According to Adeseto Agbede Adegboye (2013), there has been the view that the growing socio-economic problems in Africa have been due to the inability to practice democracy. This has been based on the perception that investors are only attracted to countries with political stability and no conflict. Here, economic problems have been one of the obstacles to consolidating democratic institutions in Africa.

The problems associated with representative democracy in Africa have been variously outlined by Adegboye (2013), who states that the politics of exclusion and the creation of inequality in society have posed political challenges for African states. He further observes that leaders across Africa have failed to implement democratic ideals such as free media, a role for the opposition, and anti-corruption measures, among others. Again, political leaders have been corrupted and have refused to prosecute their corrupt officers, thereby making political life unbearable for their political opponents. Another failure of the ideal representative democracy in Africa has been the result of bad political leadership, and one of the evident means is the continuous perpetuation of power, fostering ethnicity and tribalism among the population, manipulation of the electoral process, and vote rigging. Generally, Adegboye (2013) sought to offer solutions to why democratic governance is not working in Africa, including holding leaders accountable.

In his contribution to the debate on representative democracy as practised in Africa, Ademola Kazeem Fayemi (2009) observes that both internal and external forces account for the introduction and adoption of democracy in Africa. Internally, it was due to economic restructuring policies that required African countries to adopt pro-democracy ideals. Externally, it was influenced by the actions of international bodies and states seeking to advance the universal practice of human rights. He, however, recognises that the democratization drive in Africa has not produced the expected results. Additionally, Fayemi (2009) asserts that there is no inextricable link between democracy and development or economic growth. Thus, as much as ideal practices such as transparency, free and fair elections, equality, participation, liberty, among others, are necessary to democratic governance, they are not the panacea for economic growth, but rather

contributive factors. People, therefore, commit the fallacy of reductionism when they attempt to reduce the features of democracy to the cause of sound economic growth. Furthermore, in the Universalist position espoused by Fukuyama, African states ought to opt for democracy to ensure sustainable development. It is again recognised that in Africa, democracy and indeed representative democracy are at their infant stage, as many countries remain poor and ethnically divided.

2.8 Reconceptualising Representative Democracy: Integrativist Approach

As earlier alluded, Jane Sophine (2000:19) asserts that the problems faced by African states that were democratising no longer exist, but many struggling states still seek to consolidate their democracies. In the African context, cultural values and norms are inextricably intertwined with the political system. Thus, for Fayemi (2009), cultures and traditions impact the democratic values and systems of the political system. It is therefore erroneous to assert that some cultures do not accommodate democratic ideals.

Some scholars, such as Kwasi Wiredu, Wambia Dia Wambia, and Francis Offor, have advocated a return to the indigenous democratic ideals inherent in African culture. This view has been termed the traditionalist view (Fayemi 2009:109). Thus, there is an indigenous democratic culture that is a better system than the representative democracy practised by African states today. This view is justified by alluding to the fact that due to colonialism, African states had a political system imposed on them, and the pre-existing system practised by the African termed as autocratic. The conception of the failure of democracy as practised through representative democracy in Africa as a result of Western imposition is also shared by Moshi and Osman (2008), with the thought that Western party politics is based on a class system, and since the indigenous African political organisation was not modelled that way, democracy failed in many parts of Africa. Again, the western conception of a multiparty system is not admmissive of indigenous cultural values, and as a result, these multiparty approaches, one way or the other leads to ethnic divisions. This view has been put differently by Offor (2006:121), who argues that the fundamental problem is the misconception that democracy can be imported wholesale from the West and planted in Africa without regard for the inherent cultural differences.

For Kwame Gyekye (1997), for democracy as practised in Africa to be sustainable, there must be a commitment to the democratic ideas inherent in the African indigenous system. This is because, even though democracy in its representative form as practised today was not present in indigenous Africa, there are elements of indigenous socio-political organisation that are necessary for contemporary application. (Gyekye, 1997:120). For Kolawole A. Owolabi (2004:443), it is appropriate to build a sustainable democracy on an eclectic approach to ideas from indigenous cultures and other societies. In his discussion of the development of an African theory of democracy, Fayemi (2009) proposes merging ideas from the collectivist and communalist perspectives and allowing the same to reflect democratic ideals as practised. He further observed that;

Unlike liberal democratic theory where individualism, majority rule, and autonomy of elected representatives in making political decisions on behalf of the people, African democratic theory demands greater commitment to entrenching the communalist spirit in social organization and state management; it is more committed to strengthening popular participation in policy formulation and other governmental processes. (Fayemi 2009:121).

According to Usman A. Tar (2010), countries that experienced colonialism share commonalities such as dictatorship, fragile economies, and foreign influence. In Africa, most of the countries are still tied to their colonial masters. He asserts that liberal democracy is organised so that there is accountability to citizens, which is secured through free and fair elections. However, there are various problems with implementing liberal democracy across Africa.

In their assessment of elections in Nigeria and conceptualising the practice of democracy in Africa generally, Tar & Shettima (2010) observed that as African countries seek to practice neo-liberal democracy, there is the observation of power held on by the elites as these ruling classes seek to do all possible things to win and hold on to power. Again, Victor A.O Adetula (2011) in his contribution held that the central position of culturalists or traditionalists with respect to democracy is that governments in traditional African societies are open and inclusive, unlike the current democratic and so-called liberal system, which breeds autocracies. Thus, there is evidence of accountability and transparency in

traditional African societies. According to Archie Mafeje (2002), because the Western system emanated from feudal lords and monarchs, the wholesale adoption of the said system, reflected as liberal democracies, produced one-party dictatorship in Africa. Also, Adetula (2011) observes that the failure of democracy in many societies results from weak institutional structures and underdeveloped political institutions. It is again asserted that;

Liberal democracy has produced a social context in Africa that has continued to work against the emergence of a democratic developmental state in various countries in the region. This has further immersed the state in social contradictions that render it unable to effectively intervene in the development process, especially in terms of a regime's responsiveness to its citizenry, justice, accountability and the provision of public goods. (Adetula, 2011:16).

For Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2014), the practice of multiparty democracy by Africans has been nothing but checkered and torturous, and this has been the experience of many African states for almost five decades since independence. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the only free and fair elections in African states have occurred in those that ushered in the first post-independence governments. Again, even after elections, regimes are not accommodating of opposing views and treat them as groups seeking to undermine the position of the current regime. Also evident in political party organisations is that they are cliques of personalities bereft of sound philosophical ideologies. As a result, political positions are determined by patron-client relations. (Prah, 2014:3). To this, Prah (2014:6) then defines democracy as *the right and the ability of people to elect and reflect their own leadership through open and transparent mechanisms of selection and election*. He also alludes that, much as African political organisations are marred by tribalism, the way to counter this is to open these countries to greater democratic expression by allowing ethnic and cultural sentiments to be expressed democratically.

2.9 Representative Democracy in Ghana

Since Ghana attained independence in 1957, the country has gone through four republics. This means four attempts to return to constitutional democracy (Gyampo, 2013: 50). The first republic was from 1960-1966; the second republic was also from 1969-1972; the third republic was from 1979-1981; and the fourth republic started in 1992 and continues to this

day. Ransford Edward van Gyampo (2013) also observes that only the Fourth Republic has lasted more than twenty (20) years without any military intervention. Again, even though it has at times been at its lowest level, the Fourth Republic has seen many democratic ideals. Part of these ideals has been accountability, in which people use voting to demand accountability from their representatives. To this end, students are a major part of the voting population who use their votes to either reward or punish representatives, voting them into or out of power (Diamond & Morlino, 2005; Gyampo, 2013). With respect to responsiveness, it refers to the extent to which the government implements measures to address citizens' needs (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). As of 2002, in a CDD-Ghana Afrobarometer survey, only 22% of Ghanaians believed the government had been responsive to citizens' needs (Gyampo, 2013). In Ninsin & Drah (1993), Kweku G. Folson, in his chapter, assessed Ghana's transition to democratic and constitutional rule. He observed that the 1992 constitution of Ghana is the last document that provides the machinery for liberal democracy in Ghana. He asserts that in a representative government, human behaviour is shaped by political institutions, whilst the institutions themselves are shaped by the behaviour of the political actors.

In a democratic system, a constitution must regulate human behaviour, whilst the people themselves must also adopt behaviour that sustains that constitution and the democratic ideals of the state. For Folson in Ninsin & Drah (1993), the best way to assess behaviour is to observe political parties, since they are institutions with a direct link to society. He observes that a liberal democratic system imposes on political parties. Among the main activities of these political parties is mobilising voters through various means, such as rallies, social clubs, and youth groups. In an ideal liberal democracy, the political administration ought to remain neutral between the political parties, enabling the winning party to rely on this administrative machinery to implement its policies. It is our view that this position is seldom practised as political parties seek to subvert these institutions in any way possible. Again, Folson proposes that political parties in parliament ought to cooperate with one another and ensure the cross-fertilisation of ideas.

According to Kofi Kumado in Ninsin & Drah (1993), democracy is simply understood as the government by the consent and will of the people. Here, the will of the people is filtered

through a mechanism, and again, there is a system that periodically renews the people's consent. Thus, the opportunity to renew such consent makes democracy a superior system. He further holds that constitutional democracy was appropriate for Ghana, as evidenced by a system in which political authorities are subject to predetermined rules. Thus, for Kumado, looking at Ghana's ethnic demography, constitutional democracy enabled political alliances to form across ethnic lines. Kumi Ansah-Koi in Ninsin & Drah (1993) also contributes to the socio-cultural influences on the multi-party system in Ghana and observes that a political culture in Ghana, which consequently undermines multi-party democracy, is one in which politics and political activities hinge on personalities rather than on issues or ideas. This is evident in the political contests and campaign parties run during elections. He outlined another feature: *the prevalence of a highly cynical and extremely economical-instrumentalist perception of politics*. (Kumi Ansah-Koi in Ninsin & Drah, 1993:67). This means that there is first the cynical attitude of representatives that they are selfless public servants. Thus, these representatives exhibit an altruistic public service posture, especially when seeking political mandate. There is a second perception: national politics is seen as a gold mine where people come to enrich themselves at the state's expense. He further observes the general fatalistic attitude of the Ghanaian towards political issues, and this, to him, does not augur well for democratic practices. Ansah-Koi alludes to sayings and responses such as *ebeye yie (it is well)*, *ehuru a ebedwo (when things reach their boiling point, it will cool down)*, *nyame bekyere (God will provide)*, among others. He further sought to trace the source of political culture and identified traditional cultural norms, colonialism, which, according to him, "did not spawn a democratic culture" (Kumi Ansah-Koi in Ninsin & Drah, 1993:68).

According to Ninsin, in Ninsin & Drah (1993), elections are based on the ancient maxim that the people are sovereign and that universal sovereignty means there is universal equality. Thus, elections are the means by which sovereign people are represented. The concern in modern political thought is the mechanisms that ought to be in place to ensure that representatives are responsive and accountable to the people who elected them. Ninsin poses what he considers to be one of the problems of representative democracy in Ghana when he says that;

For us in Ghana, the problem posed by representative democracy is further compounded not just by mass illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. It is also complicated by the fact that no representative body in the short history of representative democracy in this country has ever reflected the social composition of the electorate. Invariably, members of certain social classes or strata, who are not representative of the occupational or social composition of the country, dominate the elected bodies. (Ninsin in Ninsin & Drah, 1993:179).

Thus, in analysing Ghana's parliaments, assemblies, etc., it was realised that the very representatives who claimed to represent the interests of the masses were drawn from different strata, whereas, in fact, such institutions were designed for grassroots representation.

Several factors influence electoral behaviour in the choice of representatives. Further, Kwame A. Ninsin sought to compare the Ghanaian electorate with the British electorate, and he observed that the Ghanaian electorate is predominantly influenced by the community's interests, hinged on the need for development. This means that the electorates vote as members of the community whose interests lie in the improvement of material conditions, not as sovereigns seeking to promote democratic ideals. It is contrasted that the role of representatives, as proposed by Burke as trustees, cannot hold true for representatives in Ghana. Kwame A. Ninsin again proposes that voters focus on choosing representatives who will mediate between them and the state in the allocation and distribution of goods and services. To this, Austin has observed that representatives are seen as 'economic brokers' seeking to mediate for development. Thus, whilst the voter uses his vote to pursue opportunities for his own material gain, he again uses the same vote to join with members of his community to push for community development.

For Kojo Impraim (2020), the incidence of electoral injustice and thuggery has been part of Ghanaian politics for some time now, as the winning party is put in charge of absolute control of the state's resources. He agrees with Ninsin (2016) that the heightened competition among political parties is not driven by policy choices to better develop the state, but rather by the control of resources and other partisan benefits. The winner-takes-all system and the absolute control of power have led to violence in Ghana's elections. For

Bitafir F. Ijon (2020:36), even though elections in Ghana are now more participatory and competitive, they have also become more violent. As cited in Oduro et al (2014:2), elections in Ghana are characterised by clientelism and patronage mostly undertaken by the ruling party. This is because the ruling party controls the state's resources and has the power to distribute them, and, as a result, exercises this economic power to favour voters and party foot soldiers. (Asamoah, 2020; Asante, 2012). Further, Impraim (2020) agrees with scholars that elections in Ghana, and indeed voter choices, are heavily influenced by ethnic, religious, and demographic factors (Gyimah-Boadi & Debrah, 2008; Ninsin et al., 2008). Furthermore, structural factors that affect the smooth conduct of elections in Ghana include unfulfilled electoral promises, economic conditions, and joblessness (Impraim, 2020; Bob-Milliar, 2014).

Furthermore, Anja Osei (2013) also observes that political parties play an enormous role in multi-party democracy. This supports the view that representation requires that citizens express their interests and that the state respond to them positively (Carothers, 2006:12). As a result, political parties ought to be considered a necessity for democracy and, indeed, development (Osei, 2013). Osei (2013) further asserts that, in Ghana, political parties are considered objects of passionate support among their members. Anja Osei (2013) has noted that ethnic considerations are very evident in ministerial appointments. In elections, some voters also feel represented because the winning party has a strong base in their ethnic group. However, Osei (2013) points out that a person or party representing a person's ethnic group does not necessarily act on behalf of that ethnic group. That notwithstanding, it is not always observed that people in Ghana have abandoned the ethnic lines in voting. The voting patterns, which are based on the ethnic alignment of the political parties is seen as observed by van de Walle (2003), thus;

Even in the absence of tangible benefits, citizens will choose to vote for individuals of their own ethnic group, particularly in ethnically divided societies. Less than the expectation that they will benefit directly from the vote, citizens may feel that only a member of their own ethnic group may end up defending the interests of the ethnic group as a whole, and that voting for a member of another ethnic group will certainly not do so. (van de Walle 2003: 313)

For Asante (2012), elections are the only means by which Ghanaians choose political leaders and dispose of ruling governments whose reign they are dissatisfied with. The fourth republic has witnessed a smooth transfer of power from one party to another party. There seems to be a consensus that Ghana's democracy is still a work in progress (Mensah, 2007:6). This is because there are many incidents that are considered governance deficits. The height of external pressure for Ghana to return to democratic rule was in the early 1990s. During this period, the existing regime was under grave pressure from various pro-democracy groups advocating for the opening of political space, increased participation, and the promotion of human rights (Ninsin et al, 2008).

In Ghana, numerous military interventions affected the multi-party system. After independence, Ghana has gone through various stages of governance, including a one-party state in 1964 and a series of military governments. Ethnic politics are not oblivious to every Ghanaian. The two main political parties in Ghana, that is, the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress, both have their own ethnic affiliations. For Gyimah-Boadi & Asante (2006:248), the two dominant political parties in Ghana are more distinguishable by their ethnic affiliations than their political ideologies. Thus, the ethnic affiliations of these parties are reflected in their voting patterns, which also fuels political patronage. Political parties in Ghana have been less about providing policy alternatives than being a mechanism for vote gathering. For Jonah (2008:7), these parties have additionally not offered equal participatory opportunities for both men and women.

2.10 Conceptualising Voting

According to Ava Ayers (2021), in Voting as Exclusion, voting has been described as a civic duty through which citizens show their engagement with their communities. This has been Lawrence Blum's (2007) position, in which he conceives of voting as a civic virtue. This is one way to be an active and good citizen: to exercise one's right to vote. Ayers (2021) avers that voting is indeed a virtuous act that demonstrates a citizen's willingness to contribute to society. Again, voting is an altruistic action. In this sense, voters do not consider the direct benefit of their act, but that such acts will result in electing good

representatives to the general benefit of the community. However, for Brennan (2012) and Emre Aytimuretal (2014), voting is but a neighbourly act. Ayers (2021) further states that, since voting is a civic duty, denial of voting is a suppression of rights and a denial of a person's citizenship rights and membership in the political community. When voting is conceived as a right, it implicitly assumes that this right equally applies to everyone. In this sense, voting and the right to vote are associated with citizen equality (Ayers, 2021; Fishkin, 2011).

For Jason Brennan (2009), the right to vote is a political right that ought to be protected in law. The crust of the view of Brennan (2009) is that a person has a moral obligation not to vote badly in spite of the fact that a person has a political right to vote. This means that the right to vote is associated with the moral obligation to exercise it properly. Thus, Brennan (2009:536) puts it more succinctly, "...one ought not to vote badly". He further argues that voters who are considered irresponsible ought to abstain from voting rather than vote poorly. Thus, generally, there is no obligation on voters to vote, but once they decide to participate, it becomes an imperative on themselves and others that the exercise of the vote be done in a rational, just, and informed manner. He conceives of bad voting as any vote cast for unjust or harmful policies or cast for candidates who are likely to enact unjust or harmful policies. To this, he again states that for a vote to be seen as a bad vote, the citizen must have voted for, without sufficient reason, harmful policies or representatives who will enact harmful policies. In this way, once a voter votes with sufficient moral or epistemic justification, that vote cannot be deemed a bad vote, even if it results in harmful policies. Especially so because it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the consequences of electing a candidate. To this, Brennan (2009) observes that when a person votes from immoral beliefs, ignorance and epistemic irrationality and bias, such a vote is deemed a bad vote. Again, a person has a duty and obligation not to vote badly, because such an act violates the duty not to engage in any act that harms the community in general. To this end, citizens who do not wish to vote badly should rather abstain to avoid imposing bad governance on everyone. It is again the position of Brennan (2009) that people vote on the basis of character rather than policy, and that character voting can be considered the commonest form of bad voting, since it entails voting for the wrong reasons.

Bart Engelen (2007) establishes that the difficulty of direct participation in democracy led to the resort to representation, whereby citizens elect representatives to form a government, and that this is the basis for considering elections the means through which citizens participate in public life. Thus, voting then becomes the most essential form of political participation. Again, Engelen (2007) further asserts that people express their preferences and opinions through voting. As a result, there is a need to extend universal suffrage to include universal participation. This is also because the fewer citizens who abstain from voting, the less representative the governance system becomes. Additionally, there is the view that political participation is central to guaranteeing legitimacy in a democratic system. This suggests that when citizens abstain from elections, it also leads to minimal accountability for elected officials. In their contribution, Lee, Moretti & Butler (2004) assert that voting affects two things: either it makes politicians shift their policies to suit the preferences of the voters or that voters only vote to select what they consider to be the best policy out of the many opposing policies.

For other scholars, voting is explained by rational choice theory, which holds that people vote when the expected benefits of voting outweigh the costs. Thus, such a position constitutes a prudential approach to answering the question of why a citizen must vote. Further, to answer the question from a moral perspective, the Kantian position, based on his categorical imperative, is instructive. Here, a moral agent must will to universalise or make a universal law with the motivation to vote. Thus, Kant's categorical imperative will not allow a rational agent to abstain from voting since it will not further the course of democracy. There is also the theoretical position that voting is an expressive act. This, according to Geoffrey Brennan & Loren Lomasky (1993), is the theory, in alluding to it, that voting for a candidate is only an expression of the voter's support for that individual. Thus, voting is only an expressive act that conveys the voter's preferences and desires, and it does not necessarily lead to the desired outcome.

Another approach to answering the question is the causal responsibility approach. Here, the view is that a voter's vote has a causal effect on the election of a representative who

will represent the voters' interests. Thus, if a person votes for a good candidate, it is praiseworthy; conversely, abstaining from voting is blameworthy if, as a result, a bad decision is made. The blame and praise to be given can be moral. Meaning that there is praise or blame for voting acts that result in morally desirable or unacceptable candidates. For Joshua A. Douglas (2013), the entire democratic structure is built on the concept of voting, and, as a result, when citizens vote to elect representatives, it is an affirmation that they govern themselves freely. It is also without doubt that voting is a fundamental right, which right avails to every citizen within the state.

2.11 Theories of Voting and Voting Behaviour

According to Rui Antunes (2010), there are three main schools of thought in the study of voting behaviour: the sociological school, the psychological school, and rational choice theory. The foundation of the sociological school is based on the works and findings of *Personal Influence* (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955); *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944), *Voting* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954). Their findings revealed that voting is an individual act, and that these acts are influenced by two factors: the voter's personality and their exposure to the media. There is a further finding that original political predisposition affects voting behaviour. This also means that there was a strong association between voter behaviour and the fact that social groups of voters, in one way or another, affected electoral choice. Furthermore, Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) established that election campaigns and communication affected voters by either making them more indifferent, strengthening the linkage between voters and the political party, or converting new and undecided voters into the political party. They again observe instances of selective campaigns, and it is these groups that are most eager to reach that are least likely to listen to their message. This selective attention also assumes that those with a greater interest in the party and politics are more likely to pay close attention to campaign messages. Furthermore, social groups served as a mediating role between media groups and political campaigns by parties thereby exerting significant influence over voters. The influence of social groups and opinion leaders seeks to introduce the idea that voting is not only an individual act but also a form of social cohesion (Antunes, 2010).

For Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee (1954:75), as stated in Antunes (2010), political predispositions, established through race, ethnicity, tribe, demography, religion, and ecological divisions, among others, have a necessary correlation with a voter's voting choices. They also propose it is the case that "*many voters vote not for principle in the usual sense but 'for' a group to which they are attached — their group*" (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954:309). Furthermore, Antunes (2010) observes that electorates persuaded by this position do not satisfy the conditions necessary for a democratic regime. However, Berelson et. al. (1954:314) propose that if voters cultivate interest only in political and democratic elements, the same will also lead to deep political cleavages, and since society is composed of a heterogeneous group, plurality of ideas based on political ideals and social affiliations, among others, also promote strong democracy.

In proposing their version of the theory, Lipset SM (1960) and Lipset & Rokkan (1967) examined the sociological school of voter behaviour from another angle. For Lipset & Rokkan (1967), when examining party systems, it is important to consider their origins in national history, demography (rural and urban), and industrial structure (capital and labour). Antunes (2010) avers that the sociological school has a limitation when it comes to variations in voters' behaviour across elections. Further, there is no explanation of what makes an individual want to belong to one social group rather than another. The psycho-social school of voter behaviour is evident in the works of Campbell & Kahn (1952), Campbell, Gurin, and Miller (1954), and Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes (1960). According to Antunes (2010), the central concept of the psycho-social school is partisanship, understood as an affinity for a political party. Here, partisanship is acquired through socialisation influenced by the attitudes and values of colleagues, family members, peers, and others. It is with this that Antunes (2010) sees partisanship as a form of social identification. As earlier observed, it is a phenomenon in which "*citizens have an enduring sense of what sorts of people belong to various parties and whether they identify with these social groups*" (Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002). Antunes (2010) again observes that partisanship does not reveal the elector's voting choice. Thus, in the case of internal party politics, partisanship as a determinant of voter behaviour is insignificant. For Antunes (2010), the psycho-social model also examines the funnel of causality as it affects voter

behaviour. For him, the funnel of causality is the chain of events that contributes to the voter's choice, and this includes the distant and proximal factors. At the entrance of this funnel is the concept of partisanship. As indicated by Niemi & Weisberg (2001), the model focuses on partisanship, the candidate, and issues, while giving less attention to social factors and communication.

The third school that determines voter behaviour is the theory of rational choice, as espoused by Anthony Downs (1957) and Arrow, et al. (2011). This theory basically concerns the economic explanation of voter behaviour. Thus, voter behaviour is sought to be explained within the political economy of a state by relating resources, economic conditions, and political choice or outcome. For Antunes (2010: 157), the theory is based on the simple premise that *“if the assumptions of rational choice are able to explain the market, then they can explain the political functioning.* It seeks to establish the relations between consumers and enterprises, as well as between voters and political parties. Thus, just as enterprises seek to maximise profits, so do voters seek to maximise the utility of their vote, and the political parties seek to act to maximise their electoral gains. Again, Antunes (2010: 158) posits that the rational choice theory is based on three basic premises; firstly, that all human decisions are rational. This means that decisions are guided by egoism and the self-interest of the person, and, as a result, such actions are enforced on the basis that they maximise the action's utility. Secondly, there is consistency in the political system, so one can predict the outcome and consequences of the decisions made by voters and political parties in a democratic system. This implies that political actors, including voters, bear responsibility, which makes it possible to predict outcomes. Thirdly, despite the existing consistency, there is also a level of uncertainty, which makes it imperative that different options are allowed in a democratic system.

In this theory, the concept of rationality is extremely vital, and understanding it is crucial to understanding voter behaviour. Here, Downs (1957:5) defines rationality as the assumption that voters and indeed political parties make choices or act according to their own interests. In other words, there is an egoistic basis upon which parties act, and such acts are meant to satisfy the interests of the voter or the political actor. This also leads to

the assumption that the focus or objectives of an election are to elect a representative to form government, and that, in an election, rational behaviour is that which achieves this objective. Antunes (2010) further avers that the objective of political parties to win elections is not an altruistic one; rather, it is to amass the gains inherent in power, and so the rational objective for them is realised the instant they win elections. Put in another way, Downs (1957) asserts that; *parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies.*” (Downs, 1957:28).

Furthermore, the rational theory is also premised on the fact that voters and, indeed, political parties have interconnected options to choose from. Thus, in this instance, when faced with two options, rational subjects compare expected benefits and act in ways that maximise utility. Ideally, a voter is to compare the expected benefits she will accrue if a particular government wins power and vote accordingly. However, this assumes that there must be consistency in the deliverables of a particular government or representative. Again, for Downs (1957), due to the diversity of society and the presence of social conflicts, there is always uncertainty in governance, which leads to the development of ideologies to guide political parties in electoral victories. However, the rational choice theory emphasises that voters are not very concerned with political ideologies, intentions, or the discourses of political parties; they are rather concerned with the concrete actions taken by governments and representatives. Within the theory of rational choice is the concept of strategic voting. Here, “*Each citizen uses his forecast to determine whether the party he most prefers is really a part of the relevant range of choice. If he believes it is not, then rationally commands him to vote for some other party*” (Downs, 1957:48). The strategic vote decision is not only informed by the potential winning party but also the undesirability of the party that may win. Thus, when faced with a choice between candidates, a voter assesses the differences in their interests and chooses the candidate that best satisfies those interests. For Antunes (2010), the main weakness of rational choice theory is that it assumes voters have in-depth knowledge of their own interests and their parties' proposals and policies.

2.12 Voting in Ghana

Upon gaining independence from the British in 1957, Ghana adopted a liberal democracy. However, sooner than later, Ghana degenerated from liberal democracy to a quasi-dictatorial regime, which resulted in its first coup d'état in 1966 (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002:2). According to Alexander K.D Frempong (2008), between 1969-1972 and 1979-1981, Ghana made efforts to return to democratic rule however, each regime within the stipulated periods were overthrown in a military coup. The last ruling group, which then transitioned into democracy, was the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which ruled for eleven years until 1993, when the country returned to civilian rule under the 1992 Constitution, which marked the fourth republic.

Generally, voter behaviour is influenced by many factors, including ethnicity, identity, party affiliation, economic conditions, etc. Again, many scholars have proposed that in Africa, voter behaviour has specifically been influenced by ethnicity, family ties, economic situation, and religion, among others. (Agomor & Adams, 2014; Ferree et al., 2014; Hoffman & Long, 2013). In their work, Adams S. Achanso, George Hikah Benson, and David N. Zuure (2021) examined voter behaviour among electorates in a particular constituency in Ghana and observed that economic factors play a key role in voter behaviour in Ghana. Thomas Bossuroy (2011) sought to assess the role ethnicity plays in electoral outcomes. He observed that ethnicity has been conceived as affecting the trend of electoral outcomes in Africa (Erdmann, 2007). Again, for Lindberg and Morrison (2008), there are instances of ethnic and clientelism influences on elections in Ghana. Further, Bossuroy (2011) asserts that in the study of the 2004 elections in Ghana, ethnicity played a very crucial role; however, the same cannot be said of district-level elections.

In terms of electoral outcomes in Ghana, it is also realised that internal party politics within the parties affects the electoral outcome. There are instances of electoral outcomes influenced by the lack of democratic processes within the main political parties in selecting their candidates to stand for general elections (Debrah, 2014; Akuamoah, 2017; Asekere, 2021; Ichino and Nathan, 2013). Regarding the impact of ethnicity on electoral outcomes in Ghana, scholars have held varying views. Whilst Alabi & Alabi (2007), Debrah (2014),

among others, have observed that ethnicity plays a substantial role in elections in Ghana, Aryee (2015) was of the impression that ethnicity has little impact on elections in Ghana. Furthermore, just as Aryee (2015) has outlined the impact of party manifestoes on the electoral outcome and posits that party manifestoes are crucial to winning elections in Ghana, Debrah and Gyampo (2013) are also of the view that voting behaviour in Ghana is also shaped by the manifesto contents of the political parties.

For George Asekere (2021), even though ethnicity plays a role in Ghana's elections, the 2020 elections indicate that it played a minimal role. This observation is different from the observation made by other scholars that ethnicity plays a central role in elections as far as Ghana is concerned (Alabi, & Alabi, 2007); and according to Debrah (2016), the ethnic political and electoral trend in Ghana is along the lines of pro and anti Akans. Thus, there appears to be an observation that, as far as Ghana's political processes are concerned, ethnicity plays a vital role (Fridy 2007:281; Tonah 2009). In Ghana, therefore, the two major parties seem to represent the interests of the Ashanti and the Ewe, as reflected in voting patterns. It is, however, worth noting that ethnic affiliations are not enough to secure the votes needed to form a government in national elections. As a result, other factors are considered to ensure that a party wins and, as such, forms the next government.

Also, in the view of Felix K.G Anebo (1997), understanding voting behaviour in Ghana can be approached through the linkages between issue voting and party voting. Party voting is when a voter casts their vote based on their preferred political party. In Anebo's (1997) view, there is a coterminous relationship between party voting and voting intention in Ghana, meaning that a voter most often votes for the party he does not identify with. This again means that voter choice is restricted to party affiliations. Issue voting, on the other hand, is when a person votes on the basis of the preferences for issues that are aligned with their interests. Here, if parties or candidates present their issues, the voter will vote for the one whose issues align with the voter's.

In Ghana, the evident electoral cleavage has been between Nkrumahism, aligned with socialism, and the Danquah-Busia tradition, which prefers liberalism and pro-Western

policies. In his assessment of the 1996 elections in Ghana, Anebo (2007) observes that, even though areas such as the Ashanti and Volta regions voted along ethnic lines, this could not be replicated nationwide. From this, one sees the role of party and issue voting in influencing voter behaviour. In Harding's (2015) work, the state of roads, for instance, tends to affect vote shares in Ghana. The issue was whether a party or candidate decides to fix roads prior to elections, the same would amount to clientelism. For Susan Stokes et al. (2013), in distributive politics, there are programmatic and non-programmatic distributions. By this, clientelism falls under non-programmatic distribution, in which an individual's access to resources is based on the political support they provide. In his view, Harding (2015) argues that Ghanaian voters indeed use elections to hold their governments accountable.

Moreover, Zakari Bukari et al. (2022) add that political issues affect voting intention in Ghana, among the most crucial being corruption, unemployment, inflation, and other economic conditions. Again, the relationship between political issues and voting intentions is based on the trust and loyalty the voter develops toward the candidate or political party. According to Nahomi Ichino and Noah L. Nathan (2013), political parties often have ethnic affiliations. This feeds into the instrumental ethnic voting theory, which holds that voters use the ethnicity of candidates or political parties because they are perceived as likely to deliver targeted benefits. They further assert that the strategies that politicians use to interact with voters are based on the local ethnic demography of the area.

2.13 Vote Market

Scholars have conceived the vote market in various forms. The dominant view in the literature is that it entails buying and selling votes, as well as using other inducements to influence voters' voting decisions. For Schaffer (2005), because vote buying is widespread, civic educators have sought to urge reforms to prevent it. Thus, vote buying is not a country-specific issue but a general one. Here, Susan C. Stokes (2011) treats the vote market as a form of political clientelism. Where she defined clientelism as the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, whereby the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me? (Stokes, 2011: 649). She observes

that clientelism, and indeed the phenomenon of proffering material goods, can take the form of threats of force, whereby a government may threaten that if an electoral area elects opposition members, that area may not enjoy public goods.

Even with programmatic redistribution, the transfer of public goods or resources from beneficiaries to non-beneficiaries involves a *quid pro quo*: such redistribution is available only on the condition that potential beneficiaries provide support. To this, Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007:10) are of the view that the link between a citizen and a politician is that which is determined by the direct material or financial inducements targeted at the vulnerable, the poor and the needy individuals or groups in the society who will be easily willing to surrender their vote for a price. Further, when there is an exchange of jobs for political support, it is also conceived as clientelism (Robinson and Verdier, 2003: 2). Here, Stokes (2011) adds that there are conditions that a patron cannot simply procure such support from the market but rather needs to court the attention of others in order to get such support. We consider one of these means of courting support as votes.

Further, Stokes (2011) holds that vote buying and patronage are subsets of clientelism. To this, she observes that clientelism involves a citizen giving his electoral support, including his vote and efforts, to the patron to secure other people's votes, whilst vote buying is when goods are exchanged for a person's own vote and patronage is also conceived as proffering public resources to citizens in return for electoral support. Again, Kitschelt (2000:849) observes that clientelism, as much as it is about voluntarism and reciprocity, also entails exploitation and domination. In conceptualising reciprocity as a norm, we see that in clientelism the candidate seeks to enforce the norm by claiming that, once a voter has received gifts and other benefits, there is an obligation to reciprocate with votes. Hypothesising reciprocity reveals that it cuts across the spectrum of relations among individuals and groups.

The current conception of reciprocity in clientelism is not so much about an obligation as about the fear that benefits and resources will be cut off. In this sense, the cement that binds a client and a patron is not the norm; rather, it is the fact that the patron may cut off the

benefits. There is also the idea that, instead of targeting collective classes of voters through inducements, there should be inducements to specific individual voters. Then again, Susan C. Stokes (2011) further observes that the central problem with relying on clientelism as a strategy is that it hinges on commitment. Thus, a voter who receives an inducement to vote in a particular way may not do so, especially when such a voter is protected by a secret ballot. Further, the ideal target for vote buying is the indifferent voter whose disposition is sometimes slightly opposed to the party or the candidate. This means that a political party or an individual may shower gifts, inducements, and redistribution strategies to swing and indifferent voters. However, it is also seen that, when looking at ecological factors, voters considered loyal also receive much retribution and benefits in return for their support. For instance, according to Ansolabehere & Snyder (2002), counties in the US that provided more support for a governor received large transfers from the state and the local governments. Again, Perez Yarahuan (2006) found that in Mexico, the ruling party discriminated against the opposition and favoured its stronghold in resource distribution.

Further, it is recognised that the wide range of research on clientelism points to the poor and the economically vulnerable. To this, Stokes (2011) outlines two reasons why clientelism is linked to poverty. In the first instance, poor people are likely to be convinced and receive handouts (Calvo and Murillo, 2004). Secondly, because poor people are risk-averse, they value immediate material and financial benefits in hand as well as instant handouts, rather than a promise of future redistribution (Desposato, 2007; Wantchekon, 2003; Kitschelt, 2000). Thus, Kitschelt (2000:857) averred that the uneducated and poor people rely on short causal chains and instant advantage, whilst discounting the future, and since clientelist exchanges feed into this, they become the most targeted. That notwithstanding, in their study of the Argentine population, Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes (2006) observed that even though the poor were more risk-averse, these risks did not necessarily translate into the propensity to sell one's vote. With this, another perspective is that it is not poverty per se but that clientelism is encouraged by income inequality (Hicken, 2007; Stokes, 2017; Robinson and Verdier, 2003). Another perspective, however, is that clientelism rather causes poverty. In this sense, parties use clientelism to promote poverty by withholding income distribution to maintain power. That notwithstanding, there is also

the view that some electoral systems basically encourage personal votes and clientelism (Stokes, 2017; Hicken, 2007; Kitschelt, 2000).

According to Kaper Lippert-Rasmussen (2011), many scholars hold that vote buying is an undemocratic act. That said, it is not seen as a bad act for politicians to make promises to win voters' votes. It is thus often the case that politicians and political parties offer self-interested reasons to buy votes or make electoral promises. For Kaper Lippert-Rasmussen (2011), the vote buyer actually gives no reason to the voter as to why he should vote the way he is being paid to vote. Vote buying occurs when a voter is paid money during the election period in exchange for casting their vote in favour of the vote buyer or their candidate (Hicken, 2007). It is again the case that the seller of the vote can rescind or renege on payment when it is withheld; however, a buyer will find it difficult to ascertain if a seller actually voted, as he was paid. Also, it is actually an individual or a small group that benefits from vote buying. Again, Kaper Lippert-Rasmussen (2011) distinguishes between vote buying and election promises and observes that election promises are public proclamations in which the person making them announces that they will implement favourable policies if elected. Again, the promises are universal to all voters, and there is a way for voters to check whether they have been fulfilled. Further, he conceives of vote buying as a contract between the buyer and the voter, and it inherently entails an obligation to perform. He again reiterates Stokes's (2011) position that vote buying can undermine the autonomy of vote sellers. This means that vote buying coerces voters into supporting the party or candidate who has bought their vote. He, however, adds that, despite having sold his votes, this does not prevent him from considering the candidate's overall policies before voting. This is also because the buyer cannot monitor compliance. In this case, voters can set prices for their votes, paying more for less appealing policies. In that sense, the lack of seller autonomy does not make vote buying undemocratic. Further, for Christiano (2003), vote buying ought to be rejected because it does not guarantee that citizens' interests will be given equal consideration.

From another perspective, Cesi Cruz, Philip Keefer & Julien Labonne (2016) also argue that there are always potential trade-offs between vote buying and the provision of public

services. They defined vote buying, as other scholars have, as the pre-electoral phenomenon in which gifts in the form of goods or money are provided with the aim of persuading recipients to either vote in a certain way or not to vote at all (Hicken, 2011; Schaffer and Schedler, 2007; Nichter, 2008). There is an established link between vote buying and the inability of politicians and political parties to make commitments to citizens (Keefer and Vlaicu, 2008; Hanusch et al., 2016).

2.14 Vote Market: Acceptability or Non-acceptability.

The buying and selling of votes, and, by extension, the vote market, have again been rejected and discouraged in a democracy. Michael Sandel (2000:114-115) reiterates that the outright sale and purchase of votes, whether from the voter or the politician, cannot be defended in a political system. This view of the indefensibility of vote selling has also been rehashed by Debra Satz (2010:102). However, other philosophers, such as Jason Brennan (2011), have argued for the moral permissibility of the vote market, whilst Frieman (2014) has argued for its legalisation.

In response, Christopher Freiman (2014) defends the buying and selling of votes. Here, Frieman (2014) agrees with Brennan (2011:137) that vote selling involves a performance-for-pay arrangement. Thus, vote buyers pay for the votes of vote sellers, enabling the sellers to vote for a particular candidate or policy. In this sense, when a person sells his vote, he transfers a certain right over his vote to the vote buyer. His first claim is that the vote market enables a mutually agreed-upon exchange between the buyer and the seller. Thus, vote markets leave both the buyer and the seller better off. This is because economic exchange is always mutually beneficial; as such, a person will sell his vote for a certain amount if he values that amount more than the vote, and a person will buy a vote for a certain amount if he values that vote more than the amount. Then again, even if the vote market creates negative externalities, it does not suffice to prohibit the sale of votes. This is because the kinds of social costs that vote markets can cause can also result from uninformed voting; however, people do not seem to disallow uninformed voting (Muelle, 2002; Brennan, 2011). Again, Frieman (2014) argues that, under the presumption of voter liberty, citizens must be allowed to sell their votes. Thus, it is the right of citizens to make decisions

bordering on their vote without any interference from the state. By this, there is a *prima facie* reason that citizens have the right to use their vote as they please, be it justly or unjustly. In this vein, therefore, one has the right to sell one's vote.

There are also arguments against the prevalence of the vote market: the equality and republican arguments. According to Sandel (2012:10), in advancing the republican argument, it is not allowed for citizens to sell their votes, even if there are actual buyers, because civic duty and responsibility should not be regarded as private property but rather as public responsibility. With respect to the equality argument, the rich would gain greater political power than the poor if the vote market were encouraged. Thus, wealthy individuals can advance their political careers by buying votes. According to Satz, a market in votes will give the rich disproportionate power over the poor, since it is the poor who are likely to sell their political power. On the issue of voting equality, Satz (2010:103) observes that, since voting is not an aggregation of private interests that the market promotes, the same cannot be allowed. Indeed, the distribution of votes according to preferences makes citizens seem like consumers rather than co-deliberators.

Again, Alfred Archer and Alan T. Wilson (2014), in their response to Freiman (2014), reiterated the equality argument against the vote market: legalising it will lead to wealth-based political inequality. In his response to this argument, Freiman says that wealth-based inequality already exists in political systems where vote markets are illegal. He further responds that such wealth-based inequality can be successfully regulated. In their response to Freiman, Alfred Archer and Alan T. Wilson (2014) observe that it is not the case that regulating the vote market will be as successful as regulating other sources of wealth-based inequality.

In addition, Andrés Cendales (2012) conceives of the vote market as one in which votes are exchanged for material or economic payments and inducements, as the literature indicates (Schaffer, 2006; Gersbach and Muhe, 2011). Further, Andrés Cendales (2012) observes that the payment for the vote, as received by the voter, is usually negligible compared to public policy. According to Saul Levmore (2000), there are interesting

explanations for why the buying and selling of votes is illegal. He argued that when vote buying is legalised, the obvious danger is that it will benefit the wealthy and give them undue political advantage. For Levmore (2000), this means that either vote buying in this vein will lead the poor to use their votes to pay off loans, or that there are some things, such as politics, that the markets should not control. There is the further idea that vote markets will only make politics expensive and winning candidates will be preoccupied with gaining the monies spent and not producing common good then again, Pamela S. Karlan (1999) share the view that since voting is a collective act, then an important aspect is lost when an individual partaking in the collective decision sells his voting right on the basis for selfish reasons. Thus, the vote market has efficiency, anti-commodification and equality arguments. In his assessment, Levmore (2000) argues that it is untenable to claim that allowing the vote market will give the rich a political advantage over the poor. Especially when this phenomenon persists even without the vote market. Again, there is no evidence that an increase in electoral spending is correlated with the kind of representatives elected.

2.15 Ethics of Voting

Even though voting is considered a political act, it involves moral considerations. Here, Alexander A. Guerrero (2010) argued that, as part of the discourse on the vote market, the view holds that voting is a moral requirement, which obligates citizens to participate in the electoral process. This means that, beyond electoral consequences, voting also has a moral basis, no matter how ineffectual a vote may seem to change an electoral outcome. Again, there are some basic questions that resonate from the electoral processes and the eventual election of a representative by the citizens. The first question is about what moral justification an elected representative has to hold the power as given to him; secondly, what actually makes it morally justifiable for such power to be exercised in a certain manner by such an elected representative. In answer to the first question, the justification of the power is that the elected person is the one who acquired the most votes and mandate to occupy the job and, as such, holds political power. Non-moralists hold that once representatives are elected, they have no moral constraints on their exercise of political power. In this sense, representatives have the power to behave as they please, and if such acts are

antithetical to the welfare of their constituents, such citizens have the power to vote them out. Guerrero (2010) holds that the non-moralist position is false because representatives are actually subject to moral constraints in their use of power.

The ethics of voting seems to assume the following premises: that every citizen has a civic duty to vote. Here, even though a person may have genuine reasons to abstain from voting, there is a basic moral obligation that the right to vote is always exercised. Further, any vote cast in good faith is morally acceptable. The issue may be what constitutes good faith and whether voting for a perceptively bad candidate over a perceptively good one is an exercise of bad faith. Be that as it may, when a person votes with a good motive, such a vote is deemed morally acceptable. Finally, it is inherently wrong and immoral for a person to seek to buy or sell votes. Generally, these premises are as proposed by the Theory of Voting Ethics. This position, however, has been rejected by some philosophers who hold that we do not have any duty to vote and, as such, voters have the right to vote however they want. Even so, other scholars are of the view that it is not only about the duty to vote but also about the duty to vote well. Some scholars still argue that vote buying is not morally wrong, especially when it does not violate the duty to vote. In Benjamin Enke's view (2018), there is a strong reason to posit that heterogeneity in moral values, in one way or another, can affect electoral outcomes. In this case, we note a shared view that moral values and their recognition play a role in elections. According to Michael Sandel (2005), one reason why some past presidential nominees lost their bid in the United States' presidential race was their failure to appeal to the communal moral values of the people. Enke (2018) emphasises that moral values entail deep reflection on what people believe is right or wrong.

According to the folk theory of voting, citizens have a duty to vote, and any vote cast in good faith is acceptable; as a result, it is wrong to buy or sell votes. In his response to this position, Jason Brennan (2011) asserts that acknowledging that most people are not actually supposed to vote will serve the common good. For him, considering the number of votes cast when it is in the thousands, the value of one single vote is so small to the extent that the opportunity cost for the individual outweighs the actual utility of voting. Thus, for him, since the utility of an individual's vote is so small, such an individual does

not have the duty to vote. On this basis, a person has a duty to abstain from bad voting.

2.16 The Research Gap

The issue of the vote market and the developing discourse on it have attracted the attention of scholars across various fields, including philosophy, economics, and political science. The focus of ethicists with respect to the vote market has been the morality or otherwise of allowing commoditization to penetrate into areas predominantly associated with ethical value. The practice of democracy and its wide acceptance in the form of representative or indirect democracy have required that citizens exercise their power by voting for politicians who then become representatives of the people. Here, these elected officials represent the will, interest and preferences of the voters. Central to representative democracy, therefore, is voting, which has been conceived either as a right, a duty or simply an indispensable responsibility of every citizen of the state. The conduct of the democratic process, elections, multi-party democracy, and the quest to win and hold on to political power have heightened competition for votes among electorates. This phenomenon has raised concerns about the buying and selling of votes, also known as the vote market. From the above literature, it is evident that there is in depth discussion on representative democracy and its associated problems, including but not limited to the current existing gap between the representatives and the voters, whereby voters now feel that representatives are no longer there to represent the interests of the voters, rather themselves as representatives and their political parties. These have, however, not been very much explored by scholars; to the extent that such problems associated with representative democracy have affected citizen apathy, and the quest to benefit from one's vote, especially when in the exercise of that right to vote, the citizen in the end gains no personal accruals from the elected representative. Furthermore, factors such as poverty, ethnicity, and a winner-take-all system, among others, have also led to increased participation in the vote market. As a result, whilst some scholars agree that the vote market is wrong, others argue that it should be legalised and is actually justifiable. What seems missing in the extant literature is the extent to which moral obligations and political responsibility and/or obligation play a role in the vote market in Ghana.

As the first country south of the Sahara to attain independence under Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana has experienced several political regimes, including both civilian and military ones. The current republic is the longest and one of the most exemplary of democratic ideals. A look at Ghana's voting patterns and electoral system aptly reveals the prevalence of vote buying, whether through direct cash payments or material inducements. The researcher observes that there is no obvious literature examining the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana and the role of moral obligation in its perpetration or otherwise. Further, although political assessments have been made in the vote market, focusing on the extent to which they can influence voter outcomes, there has been little visible literature on the role that political obligation and responsibility play in perpetuating the vote market or otherwise. This study, therefore, seeks to ascertain the extent to which voters in Ghana respond to either participation or non-participation in the vote market on the basis of the recognition and application of the moral and political obligation to protect the value of votes and prevent their commoditization.

2.17 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature that is central to the area of study. The chapter began by exploring scholars' definitive views on key concepts, including ethics, moral obligation, and political obligation. The necessity of this is that since the study seeks to ascertain the role of moral and political obligations in the vote market, an exposition and exposure to the discourse on them is relevant to the study, and this is what the chapter has done. Further, the chapter has picked themes considered vital to the study and thoroughly reviewed them. Here, the chapter discusses democracy as a general system of governance and the various ways it has been conceived by scholars. Again, the chapter then focused on representative democracy, also known as indirect democracy. Here, the discussion has focused on the nature of representative democracy and the attendant problems. Again, some scholars have interrogated the conception and practice of democracy in Africa, arguing that they must differ from the Western approach. Thus, the chapter explored the conceptualisation of democracy and representative democracy in Africa and Ghana, whereby scholars were *ad idem* on the thought that implementation of Western practice wholesale without making allowances for the cultural values and the socio-political

practices of Africans has and will continue to result in the difficulty experienced in the practice of democracy. In the case of Ghana, the chapter traced the various epochs of political regimes the country has gone through and provided an exposition of the practice of representative democracy.

Again, the chapter explored voting in general and in Ghana. Here, a discussion of voting theory was presented from the sociological, psychological, and rational-choice perspectives. Again, the chapter has taken an in-depth look at the views of scholars bordering on the motivations of voting, whether voting is a right, a duty, or a right which ought to be exercised by every citizen. Again, the chapter has focused specifically on voting in Ghana because the study seeks to interrogate Ghanaian voters; therefore, understanding and exposing readers to the academic discourse on voting in Ghana is crucial to this chapter. Additionally, the chapter has examined the vote market, which involves the buying and selling of votes. Here, there have been various arguments for the promotion of, or the moral and legal justification for the promotion of the vote market, whilst other scholars have opposed such a view and held that under no circumstance can the vote market be justified. Further, the researcher has taken a general look at the literature on the buying and selling of votes, the vulnerable and affected groups and their implications. The literature exposition provides an avenue to further discuss the theories that underlie the study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an exposition of the various themes considered important to the research topic and exposed the existing *lacuna* that the study seeks to fill. This chapter made an in-depth assessment of the theories that will guide this study. It made an extensive exposition and analysis of the applicable theories and perspectives relevant to the study. Further, the chapter is dedicated to a detailed discussion of the various theories and perspectives to be applied, guiding the research by outlining their inherent principles and weaknesses. Again, I took an in-depth look at the basic drivers of the various theories, their basic tenets, and how they prescribe actions with moral content, or actions that ought to be applied in building an appropriate society. The aim was to unveil the current discourse in the theories, their meanings, and their applicability, in order to situate them within the expository, evaluative, and prescriptive analysis of the vote market in Ghana. The main theories in focus are egoism, which will be used as a descriptive or expository theory of the current phenomenon of the vote market, and the theoretical perspective on the perception of its practice or encouragement. The second theory discussed is deontology, which is generally seen as a rationalist response to consequentialism in determining what constitutes a right action; this theory is adopted as an evaluative theory of the vote market in Ghana. Then again, the study employed Afro-communitarianism as a prescriptive theory to develop an ethic of voting, in which the conception and value of votes depend on the theory's dominant assumptions. Finally, there was an exposition of the theoretical conception of political and moral obligations within the ethical perspective. This is to understand the foundation from which the study will ground moral and political obligations towards the treatment of votes.

3.1 The Theory of Egoism

The theory of Egoism is one of the oldest theories that seeks to define moral action and the right way to act, if such an action is deemed to have moral worth or to be morally acceptable. As a normative theory, egoism is an agent-focused theory that prescribes

actions to satisfy the agent's interests. Again, as a consequentialist theory, egoism evaluates the end result of an action to determine whether it satisfies its basic principle, thereby passing the test of moral worth. For Mark Timmons (2012:14), egoism evaluates an action as moral or otherwise on the basis of how it is based on a predicted outcome. In the thought of Smith (2006:19), morality ought to begin from the individual and the satisfaction of her self-interest; and it is only after the moral agent has pursued her own interest that there can be an extension of moral determination to affect how her actions impact other members of society.

3.1.1 Definition and Basic Tenets

According to Daniel Flage (2008:5), egoism is one of the theories that have been vehemently criticised and summarily dismissed as a moral theory by many philosophers. He emphasises the basic principle of egoism: an individual must maximise her own interests; as a result, these interests must yield sustainable pleasure. Further, Flage (2008:6) in his explanation of the interest that an individual ought to seek distinguished between sustainable and unsustainable pleasures with the view that sustainable pleasures are those pleasures that do not lead to pain in the long run, whilst unsustainable pleasures lead to pain. In their contribution, Jianing Fang and Nathan Slavin (2018:22) argue that, by nature, individuals have compelling inclinations to act in their own self-interest rather than in the interests of the whole society. By this, the morally expected route of an individual's action is that which satisfies the individual in all imaginable ways. This posture enables an individual to prioritise her interests above all else, thereby giving her the power to reject society's laid-down conventions when her chosen acts seek to, and do, maximise her interests.

Among modern proponents of egoism is Ayn Rand, who conceived of it as a rational theory. According to her, *"morality is to define man's proper values and interests, that concern with his own interests is the essence of a moral existence, and that man must be the beneficiary of his own moral actions"* (Rand, 1964:7). By this, Rand (1964) is of the view that the central consideration of morality and a moral action is one that prioritizes and promotes the interest of the individual. Further, Levit (2014:167), in agreement with

Mosley (2005:1), asserts that egoism broadly holds that the self ought to be the motivation for any action a person decides to perform. This means that a person's action must be motivated by the quest to maximise her self-interest, as her own goal and pleasure ought to be the ultimate goal of her action. In explaining her position, Rand (1964) referred to her defence of egoism as an objectivist ethics whereby she asserted that selfishness, which is the pursuit of one's own interest, can be done either rationally or irrationally. By this, whilst rational pursuit concerns long-term interests and values, irrational pursuit concerns short-term values.

Further, Rand (1964:11) asserts that humans ought to be considered an end in themselves, not a means to another person's end. In this conception, it follows that the highest moral purpose for humans is the achievement of our own happiness. She further asserts that a rational egoist is a person who strictly adheres to principles that culminate in respect for the environment and for other members of society. Again, Rand (1964) argues that egoism and liberty are interrelated, especially when an individual cannot adequately pursue her interests without freedom of choice. This view is also shared by Tibor R. Machan (2018:18), who states, *"It makes no sense. It amounts to nothing but wishful thinking. If we aren't free to take the initiative, all this comes to no more than witchcraft or demonology. Ethics would have to be a bogus enterprise in human life if freedom were not a reality"*. By this, the very nature of ethics and moral responsibility is the fact that the moral agent is endowed with the right and freedom to choose which action to perform, as well as when to or not to take initiative. Additionally, it is through this expressed conception above that moral responsibility gains meaning since a moral agent has the liberty and freedom to perform that action which she has chosen to perform. Then again, one of Rand's positions in support of egoism is the view that humans ought to be selfish because that is their natural makeup (Haidt, 2006).

3.1.2 Psychological egoism

According to India Rhodes (2022:2), there are versions of egoism which includes psychological egoism entailing the position that humans are naturally deemed as acting out of self-interest; there is also ethical egoism which posits that in any situation, the morally right action is that which best advances the self-interest of the person performing the action,

whilst rational egoism asserts that in any given situation, the rational action to be performed is that which promotes the self-interest of the moral agent. In his contribution, Mark Timmons (2012:26) is of the view that an action must benefit the actor and not just any person. Here, an action can have a collateral benefit for others; when there are moral considerations determining the morality of the action, peripheral benefits will not be considered, as only that effect that promotes the moral agent's interest will be taken into consideration. Put simply, an action is considered moral if that action produces agent-utility to the moral agent more than any other action that might have been performed; whereby agent-utility refers to that action which advances and satisfies the self-interest of an actor (Timmons, 2012:18). In this vein, self-interest, which becomes the motivation for every individual's action, has been variously conceived. According to Jesse Kalin (1970:66), self-interest can also be understood to mean personal welfare or happiness of a moral agent. To this, Rhodes (2022:38) makes the assertion that there are instances when the well-being of others also directly or indirectly has an effect on our own well-being. As a result, in determining which acts promote our well-being, such people must also be considered. Again, self-interest can be long- or short-term; however, ethical egoism advocates promoting long-term self-interest. In addition, Flage (2008:6) points out that egoism takes into account the different reactions humans have to certain events, and so, in seeking long-term happiness, one ought to also consider the effects on a person who acts in an ill-mannered way towards another person. Thus, since the effect will be detrimental to the moral agent, he ought not to act in that manner at all for the sake of his own interest.

According to Viviana Ivlampie (2017:377), psychological egoists also allude to the position that individuals always act to promote their own interest in spite of the fact that their motivation may be concealed by thoughts that they performed such actions on the basis of duty, obligation or any other intention apart from the pursuit of their own interest. In his contribution, Joel Feinberg (2004:479) observed that psychological egoism establishes that any better understanding of human behaviour will reveal that human actions are motivated by selfish desires. This does not mean that psychological egoists do not pursue others' interests; however, they insist that others' interests are worth pursuing only when they serve the interests of the moral agent. He further asserts that psychological

egoism is not prescriptive; rather, it is descriptive, speaking to what is the case. In conceiving of what is constitutive of selfish behaviour, Jeremy Bentham (1991), for instance, proposes that it is one's own pleasure that counts as a selfish motive.

It is always the case that human actions are prompted by desires or motives which always emanates from the individual even if such action is to advance the interest of others (Abraham, 2019a:9). From this, one can infer egoistically that any act which emanates from and pursues the satisfaction of the individual's interest is selfish, and in reference humans have naturally been always selfish even in actions that promotes the interest of others. Again, there is no doubt that achieving what a person wants is always pleasurable, and this feeling propels humans to act towards what they seek. This emphasises the egoist's point that, indeed, it is the pursuit of our own pleasure that underlies all our actions. To this, there is the reality of self-deception about the actual motives behind our actions. Thus, as altruistic as an act may seem, there seems to be an egoistic intent behind the action.

3.1.3 Critiques of Ethical Egoism

Among the prominent critics of the theory is Kurt Baier, in his work The Moral Point of View: A Rational Basis of Ethics (1973), asserted that moral obligation often requires us to perform actions that are often forbidden by self-interest and in that vein, egoism cannot be a commendable moral theory or a justification for moral interest. For him, if everyone adhered to the principle of egoism, society would break down as people would pursue their interests, bearing the means. To this, the proposition for enlightened self-interest only leads to the possibility of life without self-sacrifice, although self-interest is seen as antithetical to moral obligation. For Terrance C. McConnell (1979:238), central to egoism is the position that an action is morally right if it serves the moral agent well. However, ethics require a moral code of conduct which seeks to benefit both parties. For others, if everyone were to adopt the egoist position, society would be in a worse state, since everyone would pursue their own interests without considering others' well-being.

According to Stephen Leach (2023:26), the central thesis of egoism is that an action is deemed right when such actions are to our benefit. So, for instance, if I decide to sell my vote to a politician for money, the justifiability of my act will be commendable when the

sale of the vote has accrued to me some material benefit, which use will promote my interest. Leach (2023) criticises ethical egoism because it offers no response to instances of conflicting self-interests, which may prompt clashes or compromises. Here, because the ultimate goal is the protection and promotion of the individual's self-interest, instances in which these interests conflict make moral judgment difficult. To this, James Rachels (2003:195) also criticises ethical egoism, as the theory does not allow for a moral agent to assume an impersonal standpoint. To this, the theory is arbitrary, since its application is based on the moral agent's self-interest, which is subject to spontaneous changes and modifications influenced by external factors. Furthermore, William Dwyer (1975:224) observes that most ethicists and even ordinary men converge on the view that every individual has the obligation to treat other human beings as ends rather than as means to achieving that person's own ends. Thus, even though individuals have values, interests, aspirations, etc, the very essence of morality is to have the duty to deal with others in themselves and not as a means to the achievement of a certain end, which end is for the benefit of the person performing the said action.

Further, James Rachels (1974:301) proposes that critics of egoism assert that the theory shifts a moral agent's attention from everything to the moral agent's self-interest. To this, since the interests of others are only secondary, there are instances in which such interests are disrespected, and no empathy is shown. Additionally, Richmond Campbell (1972:252) emphasises that the pressure to pursue our inborn motivations and interests can lead to contradictions when the interests of the individual clash. Again, John J. Tilley (2022:118) sees that other critics of egoism are of the view that, as much as one may accept psychological egoism to the extent that humans are naturally self-seeking, such position does not necessarily translate into normative positions as adduced by ethical egoism whereby there is the prescription that a moral action ought to satisfy the interest of the moral agent.

3.1.4 Relevance of the theory to the study

Conceptually, the study reiterates the definitions and explanations of the vote market offered by scholars, which entail the buying and selling of votes for personal gain. To this

end, the study seeks to examine the extent to which the vote market is understood in Ghana. In other words, the research seeks to establish the motivations for participation and non-participation in the vote market in Ghana. By this, the research explores the extent to which moral and political obligations shape citizens' decisions to participate in or abstain from voting in Ghana. To achieve this, the researcher employs egoism as a descriptive and explanatory theory of the current phenomenon of vote treatment in Ghana today.

The theory of ethical egoism forms the theoretical foundation for participation in the vote market. To this, the research perceives that vote buyers actually engage in such acts as a result of their interest in winning and occupying political power at all costs. The same holds for voters who seek to sell their votes, looking to acquire material gains to satisfy their interests. In both cases, the interest of the participating party becomes paramount. This fixes the central thesis of the theory of egoism. In the descriptive path using egoism, the research posits that ethical egoism serves as the central motivation for voters to participate in the vote market between voters and those seeking political power. The downside of the theory, however, is that it leads to treating votes as if society will ultimately break down, and there will be no empathy if every citizen or member of society decides to buy or sell votes to satisfy his/her own interests. As a result, the research employs another theory as an evaluative theory for the vote market.

3.2 The Ethics of Deontology

According to Piers Rawling (2023), in general terms, deontology provides for the rules and principles according to which moral agents ought to act; and by this, morality is determined and assessed from the intention that the action arises out of, and such intention must be for the performance of a duty. In his explanation of what deontology is in its application and conception, Kodirjonovna (2024:1) asserts that deontology can be seen to represent the norms, duty and etiquette used in some aspects of ethics, such as professional ethics. In their view, Ilona Bauman-Vitolina, Igo Cals, and Erika Sumilo (2015:110) observe that deontological ethics prescribe an ethical path for moral determination that ought to be followed, irrespective of the outcome of the particular action being assessed. They emphasise that it is the motive behind the action which should be considered over the

outcome of the action when there is a moral determination to be made from a particular action. By this, the basic drive for ethical conduct is the performance of a duty, which means to act in accordance with the moral law, and nothing else (Abraham, 2019b:34). According to Gupta and Sachdev (2020:2), deontological ethics is also known as ethics of duty, with Kant as the main proponent. They assert that, according to the theory, a right action is one that is performed from the moral law. Again, the moral duty of a moral agent is assessed by the motive behind the action and, as a result, by the categorical imperative rules that ought to guide human actions.

In discussing the classical thoughts arising from the ethics of deontology, Hallgarth (1998:602) observes that deontology simply means the science of duty and as a result, any theory or theories that proposes for the upliftment of moral obligations, irrespective of the consequences or the outcome to be generated from the action, are following the deontological perspective. On this basis, deontologists hold that the moral law applies absolutely, with no exceptions. This also means that any moral consideration of an action on the basis of its outcome is not permissible, even if the action, as performed, conformed to the moral law. It follows then that the acceptability of a moral determination is only on the grounds that the action was performed based on the motive of duty. This is so because, for deontologists, moral obligation lies in the obedience to and respect for the moral law.

Furthermore, Frezza and Frezza (2017:1) assert that deontology is the determination of morality by recourse to rules. It is these rules which ought to be performed from the motive of duty. For Cooper (2012:3), a principle-based approach, deontologism basically admonishes the moral worth of an action regardless of its consequences. By this, the end results of an action play no role in its rightness or wrongness. According to Thomas (2015:2), deontologism justifies actions on the basis of a set of duties, in which the consideration depends on whether a person intended to perform the action because it is their duty. On this basis, Thomas (2015:3) adds that for deontologists, a violation of what duty requires is a violation of the moral law.

Again, Benlahcene et al. (2018:35) observe that deontologism focuses on the action itself and the motive behind it to determine the moral worth of an action. On this basis, there is

the belief that certain acts are intrinsically wrong, and such a determination is based on the motive of the action. Again, the moral character of an action is entirely distinct from the consequences it produces. For Weiss (2014), what determines morality and the status of an action under deontology is the duty to adhere to principles such as justice, fairness, right, among others. According to Daniel Krummel and Patrick Siegfried (2021), based on their thesis, deontology is also known as the theory of universalism. This is so conceived as a result of the position that the development of the principles of morality, as admonished by the categorical imperative, must be universalised in its application. On his part, Matviychuk (2014:152) conceives of deontology as the most suitable theory in prescribing the relationship that ought to exist between the morality of human action and duty. To this, Płachciak Adam and Mukarutesi Dative (2020:85) assert that, to make an optimal moral choice, it is imperative for a moral agent to comprehend their duties and the rules that ought to be applied to regulate them.

3.2.1 Kant's Deontology

The most prominent deontologist whose position provides a core understanding of the theory is Immanuel Kant. According to him, moral laws are known and indeed understood a priori, and it is through this that he sought to establish morality on the firm basis of reason.

In explaining this, Immanuel Kant (2017) developed the categorical imperative, which came to be seen as the principle that ought to guide an action regardless of context and circumstances. In his explanation of the deontological position of Kant, Hallgarth (1998: 608) asserted that for Kant, a genuine moral life is that which consists of the rational dedication to one's duty only for the sake of duty and nothing else. In his view, any consideration of the outcome of an action is meant to make moral determination more predictable and experiential, thereby subjecting morality to a plethora of attacks. On this basis, human morality ought to be grounded on reason and beyond the predictability that assessing morality will produce when such assessment is made on the basis of the outcome of the action under consideration. To this, the intention of the moral agent ought to be the focus for the determination of an action that has moral worth. Kant (2017) further asserts that there is one that is considered good without qualification, and that is goodwill. In his explanation of Kant's deontology, Hallgarth (1998:608) observes that Kant is of the view

that many things posed by humans can be used for bad ends, except that the act arises from goodwill. To this, an action that has a moral worth must also pass the universalizability test.

Again, an action that has a moral worth must take the form of categorical imperatives, which are conceived under universalizability, means and ends, as well as autonomy. According to H. A. Prichard (2002), knowledge of obligation is grounded in human intuition. In his agreement, Ross (1930) makes a position in consonance with Prichard's conception of duty and adds that it is through intuition that moral agents appreciate *prima facie* duties. Thus, the moral agent understands his obligations and duties through intuitive awareness. Intuition, as conceived by Ross, is instrumental, and so a moral agent develops and improves on the moral intuition with time. In his conception of *prima facie* duties, Ross proposes that they are those duties that ought to be performed unless they conflict with other duties which are intuitively assessed and also conceived as more important. He lists *prima facie* duties as fidelity, reparation, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, gratitude and self-improvement.

For Peter Singer (2011), Kant's position establishes that an action that cannot be universalised is inherently wrong. It is through this that Kant makes the proposition that morality is dependent on the duty that an individual carries to perform that action which is considered as the right in itself. Therefore, the goodness or badness of an action is then based on the motive and not on the result or outcome of the action. Additionally, Raymond (2020:4) posits that deontology employs the categorical imperative to determine which action is deemed as ethically right in a given situation. For Cunningham (2015:147), it is through the categorical imperative that choices are made on the basis of pure practical reason. Further, deontologism, as propounded by Kant, deals with morality in terms of moral obligation and the absolute application of moral rules on the basis of reason. James Savara (2015:67) is of the view that the principles developed in Kant's deontology converge on the fact that people ought not be treated as a means to an end, and also the principle against lying.

There is the classical assertion that, for Kant (1965:34), as reiterated by Neal (1999:29) and Rawls (1972:256), an action has moral worth when it emanates from the voluntary and obedient action of the moral agent to the moral law, without regard to the consequences the action will produce. Additionally, Benlahcene et al. (2018:35) further assert that, as far as Kant's conception is concerned, there is a logical consistency in his thought of the intrinsic goodness of an action. In his conception, Kant asserted that concepts such as intelligence, strength, power, etc., though considered good, are not good in themselves and can therefore be used for evil ends. Therefore, it is only the goodwill that is good without qualification (White, 1988).

Furthermore, Tseng and Wang (2021:13) also echo the deontological position, arguing that, as a duty-based theory, deontology is grounded in universal moral obligations. From this, among the potent views within the Kantian position is the conception that human beings have inherent value and, as a result, there is an imperative to respect human dignity and to recognise human autonomy. It was on this basis that Ross (1930), in his classical position, asserted that there is a plurality of duties, the most important ones of which he called *prima facie* duties. To this, Donaldson (2003:27) reiterates that deontology emphasises the strict adherence to the principles of justice, respect for autonomy, and non-maleficence, among others. To this, Marques (2015:8) makes the assertion that Kant is generally considered the father of universalism on the basis of the principles put across through the categorical imperative. In their assessment of Kant's deontology within a case study, Larrauri Pertierra, Iñaki Xavier (2019:3) observe that moral worthiness ought to go beyond the end results of an action to the fact that the rationale for performing a particular action emanates from goodwill.

3.2.2 Critique of Deontology

Critics also argue that grounding moral determination in human moral duties is problematic. Thus, deontology becomes more problematic when there is no proper justification for why a particular action must be deemed inherently wrong or right. This inherent position, therefore, places normativism in a debatable position, whereby one side, as argued by deontologists, asserts that moral rules ought to be set without exception in their application (Oliveira, 2016:492). It is also the case that, for some critics of

deontologism, central to eliciting the meaningfulness of any theory of justice is to examine the outcome of the theory. However, this is the very approach that deontologists oppose. The effect is that a person will be forced to leave behind the morally important outcome of an action when pursuing the deontological principle in determining a moral action (Rawling, 2023). In his discussion, Thomas Hurka (2014:138) also observes that deontologism has been criticised for determining the rightness of an action irrespective of its consequences. Thus, the strict application and fidelity to rules, even at the detriment of the life of the moral agent, can hardly pass off as moral.

3.2.3 Relevance of Deontology to the Study

The central thesis of the ethics of deontology is that an action is moral, good or acceptable when such an action is performed because it is an obligation and an individual has a duty to perform such an action. On this basis, the conceptualisations of moral and political obligations become prominent as deontologists conceive of what duty requires as an obligation. This deontological position is a relevant evaluative theory as it allows for the assessment of the vote market from the viewpoint of obligation.

In the research, deontological ethics is used to evaluate the vote market, focusing on how individuals seek to participate in or avoid the phenomenon. Again, deontological ethics becomes evaluative in assessing the reasons voters and other individuals decide not to participate in the vote market. To this, the role of performing a duty to refrain from participating in the vote market is very pertinent. On the other hand, refraining from participating in the vote market can be evaluated through deontological ethics to assess the underlying reasons for the non-participation, whether they respond to duties and obligations imposed on individuals as moral agents and members of society. To this extent, the theory is relevant for evaluating which factors will influence an individual to participate in or refrain from engaging in the activities of the vote market.

3.3 Afro-Communitarianism

According to Markate Daly (1994), the term communitarianism is generally derived from the term community, which commonly conceptualises a person's philosophical position

within the context of social bonds and cultural traditions. For Ester Rutoro and Leonorah Tendai (2014:424), communitarianism makes a basic assumption that the norms and standards of the community are absolute prescriptions and form the basis for moral and social justice. Generally, communitarianism is seen as a response to the Western conception of liberalism, which emphasised individual autonomy and a will that the communitarian ideology sought to critique such a liberal position (Masolo, 2004:483). On this basis, central to the communitarian thought is the concept of the common good (Hellsten, 2010; Etzioni, 2015; Ott, 2009). Further, communitarianism prioritises the community over individuals, conceiving humans as social beings whose very identity depends on their relationship with the community. Again, as far as moral supremacy is concerned, the communities outweigh the individuals. The primary and common good, then, becomes the community's moral norms and practices, which are fundamental to every individual's interests and considerations. This explains why Famakinwa (2010:157) alludes to the community's norms as common values, obligations, and roles. This also means that a person cannot ignore the fact that every individual has social ties to which he/she is bound.

3.3.1 Conceptualising Afro-Communitarianism

The motivation for Afro-communitarianism is hinged on finding a workable system that will respond to African unity, identity, collectivism and development, especially after the ills of colonialism were visited on African states. As dissatisfaction among post-independence leaders with the capitalist regime grew, Afro-communitarianism offered a collective, unifying ideology for the socio-political organisation of African states. In this vein, Obioha (2014:19) is of the view that Afro-communitarianism was prominent as a result of discontent with capitalism, which seems to have stalled the development of many African states.

In explaining their position, Jonathan O. Chimakonam & Uchenna Ogbonnaya (2022: 1-2) asserted that Afro-communitarianism is a form of Communitarianism inspired by African culture. This means that the basic features of Afro-Communitarianism are the cultural elements introduced into the concept of socio-political organisation by the Afro-

Communitarian. For Taiwo (2016:93), Afro-communitarianism is in the forms of methodological, ontological, axiological and epistemological usages. The ontological perspective of Afro-communitarianism concerns the prescriptiveness or 'oughtness' of communal living among humans; further, the axiological perspective concerns the communal values that underlie human actions and behaviour in society. This is where the theory dictates how a person must behave in society to be considered a worthy member. This study adopts the ontological and axiological Afro-communitarian perspectives to assess voting and the vote market in Ghana. According to Aborisade Olasunkanmi (2016:30), the basic tenet of Afro-communitarianism is that the autonomous self ought not to exist in isolation but be shaped by the culture and values of the community. The only way to prevent society from becoming normless, self-centred, etc., is to address the existing imbalance in favour of the community. Generally, the Afro-communitarian seeks a fair balance between social cohesion and individual autonomy. For the individual to achieve his life objectives, he needs society and the opportunities it offers. As a result, the community must be the individual's main consideration.

Furthermore, the individual cannot extricate himself from the moral ties created by the community. Generally, an Afro-centric theory, among other things, mainly focuses on fostering African development, unity, and identity. Again, communitarianism in the African sense is rooted in the Ubuntu practice of the African, as succinctly put by John Mbiti (1970:141): "I am because we are, and we are because I am." This means that there is a communal identity from which the individual self-actualises. Again, a person wholly finds himself as part of social relationships enabled by the concept and organisation of the community. This conceptualisation then places the community and its interests, values and norms at the centre of an individual's life. It is without doubt, therefore, that even though African communitarianism is built on African culture, it maintains the general communitarian posture of prioritising the community's interest over that of the individual (Ikuenobe, 2006). This means that the very identity, interests, and significance of the African individual, as much as they are determined by cultural factors, are also largely tied to the community's dictates.

The identity that the individual assumes through his relationship with the community is, at the micro level, determined by corporate groups such as descent, kinship and family. The socio-political organisation of the African, on the basis of these, is at the collective or communal level. According to Kwasi Wiredu (2008:335), the meaning of African communitarianism is based on how social relations founded on kinship are developed and recognised within the African context at the community level. It is worth considering that, by the idea of the community is not necessarily an allusion to a geographical area as demarcated and described through physical boundaries, rather it is also connoted by sharing of and the solidarity to the use of what is considered as the common good, the communal good or what is considered as good for the community (Gyekye, 1997:42).

It is important to note that, in Afro-communitarian thought, the community is central to the very conception of personhood, which explains why the community wholly constitutes an individual in African culture. In his study, Masolo (2010) takes an ethical journey into the Afro-communitarian position as a theoretical foundation of socio-political organisation and determinant of the acts of the individual, and establishes the view that in communitarianism, there is the practice whereby acts are considered as having a moral worth when such actions prioritise others and satisfy the interests of other people. In this vein, altruism is measured by the extent to which the individual's actions and inactions satisfy the community, or by the extent to which the individual fulfils his/her responsibilities towards the community.

3.3.2 Person, the Community and Individual Interest

It is important to note that central to Afro-communitarianism is the concept of personhood and its nature. Here, there is adequate space to discuss the ontological position of the individual within the community, and its influences on his behaviour, prejudices, and dispositions. Afro-communitarians, in discussing the basic concept of the theory, also focused primarily on the role that the individual plays and ought to play in the community. By this, the assertion is made of the individual's determination, his state, his identity, and the total prescription of his behaviour as a member of the community. According to Menkiti (1984:172), the African conception of personhood is such that the community plays a

central role in its full acquisition. This means that the attainment of the status of personhood, which entails being a worthy member of society, among others, is determined by the community.

Here, there is a de-emphasis on the values and interests of the individual; this is basically because she, in fact, plays no role in the realisation of her personhood. Rather, it is the community that determines whether a person achieves personhood, and if the individual plays any role at all, that role ought to focus on her relationship with the community in pursuing the community's ideals and interests. Thus, as emphasised by Mwimnobi (2003:41), it is the cultural community that wholly defines personhood. It is important to understand the assumption of Afro-communitarianism that, in considering morality, social justice, and rights, the community's welfare, values, norms, and sanctions are primary. Further, the interests and welfare of the individual are fully submerged in those of the community.

In his contribution, Kwame Gyekye (1992:103) conceived of the above communitarian position as too radical. Gyekye (1997:42) argues that communitarianism conceptualises the individual as inherently communal, which is reflected in the general perception of persons as possessing certain inherent characteristics. This means that there is affirmation of the basic supposition that Afro-communitarian ideals of sharing, solidarity, and collectivism, reflected in the communal posture of the African, are a natural inclination. In proposing his version of communitarianism, which seeks to recognise the potentialities and the vital recognition of the individual in society, Gyekye emphasises the concepts of common good and the principle of individualism.

The assertion that Afro-communitarian ideals are reflected in an individual's acts towards the common good is also a prominent thought of Gyekye. To this, he sought to explain what he means by the common good, since it is this good which then ought to become the priority and focus of every individual in the society. It is also conceived that communal living is reflected in the pursuit of this common good by all in society; hence, the ideals of

sharing, solidarity, and collectivism are emphasised to promote it. In his explanation of the common good, Gyekye asserted that;

A good that is common to individual human beings - at least those embraced within a community, a good that can be said to be commonly and universally, shared by all human individuals, a good the possession of which is essential for the ordinary or basic functioning of the individual in a human society (1997:45).

This means that, to understand the common good is to conceive of it as something that is needed by all the members of a society irrespective of their cultural and ethical orientations and affiliations (Mwimnobi, 2003:10; Watadza, 2016:33). In his contribution, Bernard Matolino (2014:33) asserts that Afro-communitarianism gives precedence to the community over the individual and this is evident in the prescription of how individuals ought to act for such acts to be considered as meaning by the community. In this vein, Matolino (2014:33) emphasises that, as far as African communitarianism is concerned, the community enjoys ontological superiority over the individual. By this, the interest and the welfare of the community are ranked above any personal interest of which an individual may have. It is again from such a position that the community determines the ethical and social behaviour of the individual. As a result, it becomes imperative for the individual to be responsive to the community and prioritise its welfare.

The position of radical communitarianism is that the community is central to any consideration of personhood (Matolino, 2009:163). This means that as far as the individual is concerned, the preferences, the interests and dictates of the community, as well as that which will further the course of the community, ought to be opted for, above and beyond that of the individual. In this regard, that which fosters the interest of the community and for which every member of the community must prioritise is known as the common good (Obioha, 2014:15).

Generally, it is undoubtedly known that every individual is endowed with rights, which rights are exercised as entitlements by the individual in society. That notwithstanding, radical communitarians also seek to replace civil and political rights with community rights and the pursuit of the common good. Basically, moderate communitarianism posits that

there is, and ought to be, a mutual balance of interest preference between the individual and the community. Thus, even though by nature, the human person is intrinsically communal, individual interest is not absolutely diminished. In the African context, communitarianism is seen to mirror the African communal orientation in the organisation of societies. The basis of Afro-communitarianism is communalism, which emphasises collective social and political organisation and goals (Wiredu, 2008:335). By this, Afro-communitarianism has been conceived as rooted in communalism as a social system and the basic system that determined the socio-political organisation of the African. To this, Gyekye (1997) had conceptualised African communalism as being characterised by the social order of kinship, which is also determined by ethnic reciprocity.

In their contemplation, Chimakonam & Ogbonnaya (2022:2-3) assert that Afro-communitarianism, as an ideology, primarily concerns the relationship between the individual and the community in African society. By this, they hold that in such relationships, communal values take precedence over individual considerations. In this vein, because the ideals and the endowment of the individual are shaped by the community, there is little room for individual freedom, autonomy, and self-actualisation, among others. Some scholars have variously conceived this assertion as an attack on the individual and of Afro-centric communitarianism as a theory that utterly diminishes the individual's interest. In further explanation, Chimakonam & Ogbonnaya (2022: 3) hold the view that since the community's interest is constitutive of an individual's interest, it is the case that in Afro-communitarianism, the community's interest is better taken care of when the individual is well catered for. This means that the individual's interest is also the community's interest, and vice versa. It is on this basis that Pantaleon Iroegbu (1995) famously asserted that, under Afro-communitarianism, the individual's interest is not subsumed by the community's, but rather complements it. Furthermore, among the ideal concepts of Afro-communitarianism are sharing, solidarity, interdependence, and complementarity, which capture the trend and the focus to which individual acts must align. This makes it possible for Afro-communitarianism to be conceived as always pursuing a path of collective and communal approaches to addressing the needs of individuals as

members of the community (Chimakonam & Ogbonnaya, 2022: 3). Indeed, the community has the duty to resolve individuals' problems whilst individuals ought to pursue the interests and values of the community. On this basis, there is interdependence on the paths to address the interests of the community and those of the individual.

The effect is that the individual's interest now becomes the community's, and vice versa. In simple terms, Chimakonam & Ogbonnaya (2022:3) observe that in Afro-communitarianism, the individual lives in the community through cooperation, sharing, solidarity and interdependence. For Boykin et al (1997:409), Afro-communitarianism can be conceived in the following terms: to begin with, as a theory that gives social existence primary consideration. Again, a theory that emphasises social bonds and relations, also, as a theory that conceives of the responsibilities of the group as transcending those of an individual. Additionally, it establishes the basis of an individual's identity within a group, and finally, it promotes and prioritises contributing and sharing to support a group. Further to this, Egwutuorah (2013:407) is also of the opinion that communal life, which forms the basis of communitarianism, entails individuals working together for the common good of all. In further observation, Masolo (2010) argues that Afro-communitarianism promotes altruism.

3.3.3 Critique of Afro-Communitarianism

One main concern is the affinity between Afro-communitarian norms and the diverse realities of modern, pluralistic societies. According to critics, the main communal values portrayed in everyday life in African communities may be a challenge and incongruent to contemporary societies, which are seen as being diverse and patently individualistic. To this, such critics opine that this conception may be a limitation to the applicability and relevancy of Afro-communitarianism in modern governance and social organisation (Chimakonam, 2018:128). Furthermore, Adeate (2023:55) weighed in on the downside of limited communitarianism, as proposed by Bernard Matolino, noting that it is not enough to fully emphasise the essence of African communities. Here, limited communitarianism is criticised for failing to strike the right balance between individuals' autonomy and the communal obligations they also bear. To this, the perspective is considered either

excessively liberal or not being able to adequately and effectively highlight the characteristics of Afro-communitarianism.

In their contribution, Chimakonam and Nweke (2018:82) also allude that in the various conceptions of Afro-communitarianism, some are of the view that Afro-communitarians cannot adequately subordinate individual interests and aspirations to communal interest, especially when such an attempt would be very inconvenient when dealing with personal rights and freedoms possessed by an individual. Additionally, Chimakonam and Awugosi (2020) observe that among the criticisms of communitarianism is the claim that focusing on collective community will limit the freedom an individual may enjoy, especially when the Afro-communitarian conception can hinder individual interaction with public authority. For Molefe (2017:12), one critique of Afro-communitarianism is that community is prioritised over individuals, thereby allowing the violation of individual rights and freedoms in the name of community goals or interests.

3.3.4 Relevance of Afro-Communitarianism to the study

The study employs Afro-Communitarianism as a prescriptive theory to develop an ethics of voting, which is basically a conceptualisation of how votes ought to be treated by both voters and those seeking political power. To this end, the study considers Afro-Communitarianism as the appropriate theory to establish that the commodification of certain things reduces their intrinsic and instrumental value. As already stated in the exposition of Afro-Communitarianism, the theory posits that the individual's interests are made subservient to the collective good, even as the individual continues to hold her autonomy and freedom; the collective good is considered primary. To this, the individual interest is not consumed; it is subsumed under the community's interest. In adopting this position, the ethics of voting will be directed toward establishing that, for example, voting and the legitimisation of authority are obligations that produce an end result of promoting the common good; as a result, the Afro-communitarian position ought to be the basis for the treatment of votes. The relevance of the theory is therefore to use the central drivers of the theory to design a theory of the ethical treatment of voting and, as such, avoid the vote market and its attendant problems and establish an ethics of voting.

3.4 Conceptualising Moral and Political Obligations

Any consideration of the treatment of votes and the vote market will be related to what is deemed the rights and obligations of a member of society or a voter. In this study, the vote market is assessed within the purview of moral and political obligations. This makes it imperative to elucidate the theoretical bases and conceptualisations of what is deemed moral and political obligation. It is on these conceptions that the study will proceed with its assessment.

3.4.1 Moral Obligation

According to Ved Prakash Varma (1977:610), any rational justification for moral obligation which is linked to the performance of a moral duty is based on the question ‘why ought I to perform my duty even though such duty is against my enlightened self-interest?’ For H.A Prichard in his classical work, Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake, 1912, he asserts that since knowledge of what we morally ought to do is self-evident, then knowledge of moral obligation is the same as mathematical truth. This means that moral obligation is naturally available to the moral agent to appreciate without any tutorial moments. This obligation is also conceived as what a person ought to do as her duty. Thus, for Kant (1991), there could be no justification for moral obligation, especially when we ought to perform our duty for the sake of duty and nothing else. Here, Kant (1991) is of the view that what is considered as our duty, which is the moral law, is also our moral obligation; and as a result, performing such moral obligation is to be based on no other reason but for the fact that it is our duty.

In his contribution, Toulmin, in his work, Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics, also posited that it is meaningless to seek to prove or justify the question, ‘why ought I do my duty?’ This is because it begs the question and falls into the fallacy of circular reasoning, since such a question also means, ‘why ought I to do what I ought to do?’ Further, Ved Prakash Varma (1977:18) holds that when morality is treated as an end in itself, it cannot be justified, as it is self-evident and depends on nothing for justification. To this, philosophers who hold that moral obligation needs no justification because it is self-evident and that duty admits of no exception are deontologists. This is because moral

obligation has been conceived by philosophers as moral duty, and the performance of moral duty is as advocated by deontologists.

However, teleologists generally find that justifying moral obligation is meaningful and a legitimate endeavour. This is because such philosophers hold that the significance of moral rules lies in their association with the pursuit of happiness. The problem that arises from the teleological posture is about what actually entails the justification for moral obligation. This is because, for instance, egoism holds that moral obligation concerns the satisfaction of the moral agent's enlightened interest (Varma, 1977). This means that the individual has the obligation to perform her duty so long as it is in her long-term interest. Therefore, moral obligation and its justification are grounded in the duty to pursue the moral agent's enlightened self-interest.

According to Thomas Hobbes (1991), the pursuit of individual self-interest is the sole duty and obligation, as well as the ultimate justification, for an individual's observance of moral rules or principles. However, he argues that pursuing our interests and being indifferent to others' interests can only lead to the state of nature, in which people resort to violence to satisfy their own interests. To this, he further asserts that when individuals pursue rules that override their personal interests, then everyone in the community would have their interests satisfied. On this basis, Hobbes (1991) posited that it is the enlightened self-interest of the individual which justifies his observing of moral rules. In his contribution, Schlick and Rynin (1962) also assert that moral obligation ought to be obeyed insofar as it promotes the individual's self-interest.

3.4.2 Political Obligation

According to Richard Dagger and David Lefkowitz (2014), political obligation is simply about the duty to obey laws. These laws could be those of a society, a country, or a politically organised group. The phrase 'political obligation' is credited to T. H Green in his lectures on the principle of political obligation, meant to ascertain the true grounds for which laws must be obeyed. It is realised that discussions of political obligation were extensively presented in the exposition of various conceptions of the social contract theory;

prominent among them were those shared by Hobbes and Locke. The convergent thought of Hobbes and Locke was that obligations to obey laws were derived from the consent of the governed.

Further, Dagger and Lefkowitz (2014) also observe that obligations are also duties. This is where it is understood that for an act to be obligatory is for that act to be a person's duty to perform. That notwithstanding, some philosophers have made a distinction between obligations and duty whereby obligation is conceived as that which must be voluntarily undertaken, whilst duty need not be that which is voluntarily incurred (Brandt, 1964; Hart, 1958). For instance, an obligation to keep a promise may arise only when a person has something to do with which that obligation may arise. However, the duty to tell the truth, for instance, will arise regardless of anything a person may be involved in. To this, Dagger and Lefkowitz (2014) again observe that the distinction, however, makes no impact on the discourse about the moral responsibility to obey the law.

For Bhikhu Parekh (1993:240), in actual fact, any determination of whether one has a duty to obey the law is basically a matter of civil obligation, which he conceives as the obligation to obey and uphold a civil authority. Further, Parekh (1993) and Raz (2006:104) also observe that political obligation is actually much more than an obligation to obey the laws of a polity. Again, it also involves the duty to advance the interests and the dictates of the polity. The view shared by Parekh (1993) supports the point that simply saying that political obligation is obedience to a country's laws is not enough; it will rather be taken as a legal obligation. Therefore, a person who simply pays her taxes is fulfilling a legal obligation; however, when she voluntarily contributes to public projects after paying her taxes, we can say she is fulfilling a political obligation. In this vein, the conceptualisation of political obligation is the same as that of civil duty, which goes beyond merely obeying the law. Thus, these obligations exhort us to be informed voters, to vote in elections, and to contribute generally to the common good. Generally, therefore, political obligation has also been understood by some to be that obligation which a person has as a member of a polity. Other philosophers who have followed Green (1986:13) have seen political obligation as a moral function; therefore, the obligation referred to as political obligation

is also a moral obligation.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter generally provides an exposition of the theories and perspectives to be applied in the study, namely, ethical egoism, deontological ethics, and Afro-communitarianism. Further, the chapter has delved into the theoretical conception of moral and political obligation. The various theories, as discussed, have also had some of their weaknesses outlined. The purpose is to show their vulnerabilities as they are used to explain and prescribe the vote market in Ghana. This sets the background for an explanation of the methods to be employed to undertake the research, which is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FRAMEWORK

4.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the theoretical framework and its associated perspectives were introduced to guide the entire work. This chapter examines the methodological approach and the general method guiding the research. Generally, research methodology entails the ideas, principles, and strategies on which the researcher grounds this study. The study seeks to assess the vote market in Ghana and the extent to which moral and political obligations affect participation or non-participation in the vote market. In doing so, the chapter outlines the various approaches, strategies, and epistemological paradigms aimed at gathering the necessary data and analysing them to develop a prescriptive theory of the ethics of voting in Ghana. Thus, this chapter explains the tools and designs for data collection, the strategies for interrogating the data, and the interpretational approach for analysing the collected data. The focus is to elicit and ground the data within a theory to respond ethically to the treatment of votes.

4.1 Nature and Scope of the Study

This study focused on ethics, specifically the political and social philosophy aspect. It sought to interrogate the vote market in Ghana by finding out the perception that people hold on the prevalence of the vote market, their willingness or unwillingness to participate in the vote market and the underlying reasons for their position, as well as the extent to which moral and political obligations play a role in participating in or refusing to partake in the vote market. To this end, the study sought to elicit an ethically focused theory that addressed the treatment of votes and the approach to the vote market in Ghana. On this basis, the study addressed questions such as the nature of the vote market in Ghana, the perceptions of voters on the prevalence of the vote market, what considerations voters make in participating or not participating in the vote market and the extent to which moral and political obligations play in the vote market in Ghana. In responding to these questions, the study sought to employ a qualitative research methodology and gather data through interviews and focus group discussions with voters. Further, the main methodological

strategy was grounded theory, whereby the gathered data was grounded in a theory at the end of the study.

The study restricted its scope to four regions: the western, central, Greater Accra, and eastern regions. The choice of the region was a result of its swing nature in voting patterns, especially in the first three regions. Specifically, western, central and greater Accra regions. By swing regions is their changing voter patterns between the duo political system observed in Ghana's fourth republic voting pattern. The choice for eastern region which is not a swing region is because of its cosmopolitan nature. These regions also have cosmopolitan cities; due to work and other economic activities, there is ethnic diversity, which also affects voter perceptions in these regions. The study did not restrict participant selection based on ethnicity, gender, religion, or other factors. The only means of disqualification as a participant was when such an individual had not attained the voting age and is not a registered voter in Ghana. Thus, since the study elicited the experiences, views and beliefs of voters, any individual who had voted in Ghana and was, as such, qualified to vote in a general election was a potential participant.

4.2 Research Method and Approach

Research method is defined by Creswell (2009:171) as the various procedures that a researcher follows to answer an identified research problem. In this study, one of the outlined problems is whether the concepts of moral and political obligations played a role in Ghana's vote market. In ascertaining this, there was a need to develop and explain the epistemological journey to achieve it, which was what research methodology entails. According to Chivanga and Monyai (2019), research methodology is the period during which methods, data gathered, and the epistemological perspective come together to form a systematic view that contributes to knowledge.

Research methods, according to Silverman (2015), are the use of various interpretive tools and techniques to find meaning in a phenomenon under investigation. Thus, for Chivanga and Monyai (2021:12), whilst research methodology concerns the way a phenomenon is understood, it is about the techniques a researcher uses to undertake research. Creswell

(2009:170) defines research as a scientific study or investigation that results in the positing of new knowledge, the drawing of new conclusions, or the uncovering of new data, whether old or new. Masukume (2018) also conceives of research as the use of tools such as experiments and observations, among others, to arrive at truth, which is considered a contribution to the existing knowledge and discourse in the area of research. From this, the chapter embarks on a journey to examine the phenomenon of the vote market in Ghana by gathering data to capture the various views, perceptions, and experiences of the participants. In the end, the focus is on developing an ethics of voting to prescribe the treatment and conceptualisation of votes. To achieve this, the research design needed to be outlined to enable the researcher to maintain this focus. Thus, for Chivanga (2018), among the crucial things in conducting meaningful research is the formulation of an appropriate research design. Also, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) have defined research design as a procedure and a set of processes used to collect and analyse data from relevant courses.

In grounded theory research, qualitative research is a vital and pertinent approach that allowed the researcher to investigate and understand social interaction and the perspectives of cultures, groups, and individuals. The basis of qualitative research, therefore, is the interpretive approach to social reality and the construction of views grounded in human beings' lived experiences. The choice of a qualitative research approach in this study was to allow the use of open-ended questions to probe the phenomenon of the vote market in Ghana and the extent to which moral and political obligations play a role in participation or non-participation. The open-ended questions offered the participant opportunities to respond with a wide range of perspectives. It also enabled the researcher to elicit responses pertinent to the participant's experiences, obtain unexpected answers, and obtain an explanatory response to enrich the data. For Anton N. Isaacs (2014:318), the appropriate research approach for complex issues that focus on human behaviour is qualitative research. This is to help understand social phenomena through participants' experiences and views. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), in qualitative research, a total picture is built from respondents' views and their analysis, sampled from the natural settings of the participants. In this context, qualitative research explores social phenomena, or what can be conceived as human problems.

4.3 Methodological Strategy of Enquiry

The study also adopted the classical grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), in which data are gathered and analysed, and a theory is then developed that becomes grounded in the data. At its core, grounded theory is a tool for developing a theory grounded in collected data, which is then systematically analysed. According to Kim (2011:1), grounded theory allows one to develop a new theory grounded in the data, based on how the analysis of the data interplays with the data collected. Whilst it is allowed that a theory may be developed initially from the data, there may also be a modified theory based on the data gathered.

In this study, the main focus was to develop a framework for an ethics of voting grounded in the data to be gathered. According to this theory, the study sought to establish a normative prescription for voting based on the ethical considerations of the vote market. Generally, grounded theory focuses much more on the generation of data or theory grounded in the data. The generated theory is self-correcting because adjustments can be made to accommodate new data. Furthermore, grounded theory results in a developed theory from the gathered and analysed data, rather than from any *a priori* assumptions or the theoretical foundations of any research (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Parry 1998; Charmaz 2000; Charmaz 2006). The theoretical basis of grounded theory is found in the interactionism that emanates from human conduct. This interaction is what has been developed as symbolic interaction, which Blumer (1969) classically conceives as a direct examination of the empirical world.

On this basis, this study sought to develop an ethics of voting through the analysis of the gathered data and a disciplined examination of Ghana's political space. Through this, the data was categorised and a hypothesis constructed for each category, from which the study then weaved the categorised data through a theoretical scheme. The importance of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical basis for grounded theory was earlier established by Corbin and Strauss (1990), who observed that symbolic interactionism and pragmatism are central and pertinent principles of grounded theory. Kim (2011:3) observes that

pragmatism here alludes to change, since an important aspect of a method is to foster change. Again, the second principle is more about determinism, where strict determinism is rejected and participants are allowed to make their choices on the basis of their perceptions and views. The study favoured grounded theory because it allowed for data to be collected from multiple sources. In this case, both primary and secondary data will be used from different perspectives. This aligns with the observations by Strauss and Corbin (1998), Charmaz (2011), among others, that grounded theory allows data to be collected from various sources, including observation, document review, and interviews.

Furthermore, grounded theory allows for the interpretive work on the views and perceptions of the people being studied to understand their behaviour. As much as the study recognises the position of Glaser (2004) to as much as possible avoid the literature before the development of categories, this study approaches grounded theory from the position of Strauss and Corbin (1998), that knowledge of the literature aids in the theoretical sensitivity of the research and also provides various ways of approaching and interpreting the data. This explains why the study has engaged in an extensive literature review and theoretical posture in the research area.

According to Hans Thulesius (2019:2), the grounded theory proposed by Glaser (1978) offers a unique methodology that addresses rigour, procedure, and outcome. Undertaking research based on this theory provides an in-depth understanding of human behaviour using available data. This aligns with Tossy's (2015) position that grounded theory reveals a comprehensive pattern in human behaviour based on the data the researcher gathers. Furthermore, Hans Thulesius (2019:2) has again observed that grounded theory also requires that, in analysing the data, there is autonomy, openness, among others. This means that the researcher is allowed to analyse the gathered data within the categories designed and to develop a theoretical framework based on the analysed data. In their view, Holton and Walsh (2017) also argue that grounded theory involves constant comparison of the data gathered, which eventually leads to construction. Engward (2013) conceives of grounded theory as a rigorous and systematic means by which data is gathered and analysed. To this, van Voggel (2022) adds that grounded theory, as a methodological

approach, generates hypotheses and theories about people's experiences rather than merely validating them. Again, Farragher and Coogan (2018) assert that data gathered through grounded theory are unbiased and very rich in explaining participants' experiences. Thulesius (2019) again observes that data collection in grounded theory is usually unstructured, which makes it easier to develop a theory.

This study employed the classical grounded theory, which elicits participants' beliefs, experiences, and concerns and analyses them. According to Glaser (2005), Cooney (2010), and Bryant (2009), data gathered from participants who are allowed to share their experiences and beliefs is the foundation for developing a powerful theory, which eventually integrates into an existing theory or becomes a newly developed theory. According to Mohajohan and Mohajohan (2023:5), the data collected under classical grounded theory are analysed simultaneously; this means that every piece of data collected at each stage is categorised, coded, and assessed, and the same is repeated for subsequent data, which is organised. Holton (2007) says that the data, which is collected and analysed simultaneously, eventually turns into a theory.

4.4 Study Area

Ghana was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule in 1957. The country has an interesting political history, with significant implications for voting. The opportunity for universal adult suffrage was first introduced after independence, leading to the election of the first president, Kwame Nkrumah, which ushered in the first republic. The first republic under Nkrumah lasted from 1960-1966, the second republic under Busia was from 1969-1972, whilst the third Republic under Liman was from 1979-1981 (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004).

Ghana returned to democratic rule after nearly a decade of quasi-military rule under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) (Ninsin & Drah, 1993). This ushered in the fourth republic under the 1992 Constitution. It is also worth noting that, until 1993, when Ghana returned to democratic rule under the Fourth Republic, the country had spent more years under illegitimate and undemocratic regimes than under duly elected governments.

Indeed, the first republic lasted six years, whilst the second and third republics lasted three and two years respectively. These illegitimate interruptions had implications for governance, citizen participation and democratisation. Currently, the country is divided into 16 regions, each with various districts. The regions are demarcated with little regard for ethnic dominance, even though the country's demography shows that certain tribes dominate specific regions. While there was a need to pay attention to ethnic distribution in Ghana, the research does not focus on ethnicity in all aspects. This was the case even though ethnicity also plays a role in voting in Ghana. The inattention to ethnicity also stemmed from the data collection strategy, which did not discriminate among participants. Again, the chosen regions had diverse inhabitants with cosmopolitan cities. As a result, the focus on ethnicity would not have been helpful for the work, but could serve as an area for future research.

4.5 Study Population

According to Strydom (2005), the target population in research comprises all participants and people affected by the research. The study focused on the western, central, Greater Accra, and eastern regions. These regions host diverse populations that span ethnic groups. It also includes both educated and uneducated people in its demographics, since the focus is on registered voters, who span both educational divides. The study engaged ten (10) participants from each region. The participants were supposed to be male and female registered voters in Ghana's national elections, especially those who had previously voted. The total number of participants interviewed were 40, evenly distributed across the regions.

The study also ensured gender balance, with both men and women selected. Since the legal voting age in Ghana is 18 years, the study focussed on participants aged 18 to 70 years. This was to enable the researcher to assemble the views of the young, young adults, and the aged in the study population. The study included both educated and uneducated participants. By this, participants who had formal education up to the tertiary level and those who had none. Again, this revealed the extent to which rich comparative analysis could be done from the data. Further, the study interviewed participants across the formal

and informal sectors of employment. Generally, the study focussed on eligible voters, especially when their expenses are tied to their status as voters.

4.6 Sampling and Sampling Technique

According to Chivanga and Monyai (2021:13), the research sample represents how participants will be selected from the target population. The sample size then becomes the determined size and number on which the research will concentrate, eliciting their views and experiences. The sampling procedure is the process by which participants are selected to represent the entire population (Chivanga and Monyai 2021:13). It is observed that one criterion for determining sample size is the point at which in-depth information is gathered to the point of saturation. In choosing the sample size, the researcher considered the length of the research, the accessibility and availability of participants, and their willingness to provide information for the research. There are two main types of sampling techniques: random and non-random sampling. This study employed random sampling. Here, the researcher randomly selected participants. Participants who were randomly selected were then interviewed and made participants in the focus group discussion.

4.7 Data collection

Data collection primarily consisted of two forms: primary and secondary data. Since the aim was to develop a theory through the grounded theory strategy, data collection focused on developing concepts and categories, along with their properties and relationships. This process was repeated until saturation was reached, then the researcher proceeded to organise the data. Of utmost importance here was the research data collection instruments used in this study. According to Babbie (2013), research instruments are the devices researchers use to answer their research questions. For Chivanga and Monyai (2021:13), various types of research instruments are available to a researcher. In this study, I used three main research instruments: an interview, a focus group, and library research. In other words, this research employed instruments to gather data through face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and a thorough review of relevant documents.

4.7.1 One-on-one interviews

Interviews are when a researcher meets selected respondents and asks them about the research area and the research questions the study seeks to answer. To do this, the researcher is guided by many factors, primarily informed by the objectives and research questions. According to Chivanga and Monyai (2021:13), interview guides are very important because they guide the researcher within the parameters of the questioning and also allow participants to express their beliefs, opinions, and perceptions in detail. In this study, the interview guide was formulated around the categories needed to develop a theory aligned with the grounded theory approach. To this, some of the categories were the perception of the vote market in Ghana, actual participation experiences in the vote market in Ghana, the role of moral obligation in the participatory decision in the vote market, the role of political obligation in the participation of the vote market, reasons for the participation in the vote market and strategies to deal with or promote the vote market in Ghana. To better elicit participants' views within these categories, the study used one-on-one interviews and asks participants open-ended questions along these categories. The open-ended questions enabled participants to provide in-depth responses and explanations of their perceptions, beliefs, and experiences regarding the vote market in Ghana. One-on-one interviews were conducted for a total of forty (40) participants. These participants were evenly divided among the four regions chosen as the study's research areas. The language for the one-on-one interviews was the local language (Twi). This was to allow participants to be expressive and communicate without difficulty. Furthermore, these are areas where the twi language is predominantly spoken. According to Paley (2016), researchers collect detailed data through face-to-face interviews by asking participants relevant questions. This also allowed the participants to answer questions put to them to their satisfaction. Chivanga and Monyai (2021:14) add that interviews allow the researcher to get relevant first-hand information in a rich seam manner.

4.7.2 Focus group discussion

This was a group interview with selected participants, each of whom was allowed to share their perceptions and responses to questions aligned with the research focus. Here, the discussion was moderated, and the group was given time and opportunity to express their

opinions on particular topics (Creswell, 2008; Silverman, 2015). Qualitative data is gathered through discussion aligned with the research questions. Further, a focus group allows participants' responses to be elaborated on and clarified. To elicit diverse responses and in-depth views from respondents, open-ended questions are crucial. According to Wilson (2016), the data obtained through focus group discussions are very detailed and cost-effective. In this study, two focus group discussions featured seven (7) participants each. The first focus group discussion was held in the Western Region, and the second was organised in the Greater Accra Region. The focus group was moderated by the researcher, and open-ended questions were posed to the groups. This was to allow participants to express themselves in detail on the various issues discussed.

4.7.3 Documentary review

This entails using already available documents, which are reviewed as part of the data to be gathered. According to Shepherd (2002), the document from which the data are gathered may have been used for other purposes; however, it must be considered relevant to the research. According to Chivanga and Monyai (2021:14), documents that can serve as data include books, journals, reports, and newspapers. These documents are used to augment the primary data that is gathered through interviews and focus group discussions. This study has conducted an extensive review of sources and literature relevant to the objectives. This literature was interrogated to explain concepts, to show current discourse in the area, and to serve as an authority for the various views shared by participants.

4.7.4 Theoretical sampling

This involves a sampling method based on the concepts, categories, and terms that are significant to developing the theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Kim (2011:12) observes that theoretical sampling is important and must be guided by the questions and comparisons derived from the sampled views within the categories. As a result, all gathered data, including interviews, focus groups, and documentary reviews, form the basis for theoretical sampling. In doing this, comparisons and constant questioning are important for a better understanding of the concepts and categories developed for the theory. Mohajohan and Mohajohan (2023:5) observe that the coding system is used to categorise the data gathered,

enabling a researcher can develop the necessary theory using grounded theory. Thus, in grounded theory, theoretical sampling is extremely important for eliciting the various beliefs and experiences that form the basis of the theory to be developed at the end of the research. Here, the data on the vote market were categorised by theme and grouped to facilitate easy analysis.

4.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

The first step in presenting the data was transcribing the gathered data. Since participants were both educated and uneducated, the main language for the interview and focus group discussion were in Twi, the most dominant and widely spoken language. As a result, the first step was to transcribe this data into English. The transcription was detailed and strictly convey what the participants had said. There was no attempt to reframe and insert hidden meanings into what the participants had said. Rather, the participants' actual views were directly transcribed. The transcribed data was then be presented based on the categories developed. These categories and themes would specifically address the research questions and achieve the study's objectives. The data was presented in a structured form, based on the understanding and conceptualisation of key concepts, such as the meaning of the vote market. There was also a structured presentation of voters' perceptions of the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana and their experiences with it. This structured, themed presentation of the data enabled easy analysis.

Generally, the research adopted an interpretivist or constructivist analytical paradigm. Interpretivism analyses events in society based on the specific value system of that society. It allows researchers to interpret elements and data in a manner that integrates human interest. According to this paradigm, reality is known through social constructions such as language, values, and norms (Myers, 2008). Interpretivism is based on idealism and rejects the objectivist position that the world exists outside of human consciousness (Collins, 2010). As a result, the researcher becomes a social actor who seeks to appreciate the differences among the people under study (Saunders et al., 2012). The interpretivist approach is also grounded in social action theory, which holds that one can better understand human actions by first examining the motives behind them. In this respect, the

study interpreted voters' perceptions and experiences in the vote market and examined the extent to which moral and political obligations influence voter participation or non-participation in the vote market in Ghana.

Specifically, the study adopted grounded theory as the analytical tool. According to Kim (2011:8), the preferred analytical procedure in grounded theory involves constant comparison of responses based on the categories and concepts developed. Here, once the data are collected through theoretical sampling, they are broken down and conceptualised to form the basis of the theory to be built (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Here, the data analysis took the form of a constant comparative method of grounded theory, which entailed comparing the views, experiences, and situations of the people involved, comparing the data of the same individuals within different points in time, comparing the various incidents that may be developed, and comparing the data with a category or various categories. According to Shank (2006), as cited in Wendy Miller (2015: 2), data analysis is the process of linking facts that seem unrelated to make logical sense by piecing together the significant data and doing away with that data which is not significant to the study. Since this study was grounded in grounded theory, the analysis was informed by the themes that emerge from the data gathered. The data gathered were also be analysed using constant comparative analysis to establish the properties within each category. Here, the categories were analysed into smaller themes based on participants' information.

4.9 Validity, reliability and rigour

The study was conducted to ensure the utmost validity, legitimacy and cogency. To safeguard validity, the study elicited the lived experiences, perceptions and views of registered voters. Since the study focused on assessing participation in the vote market in Ghana, the participants selected are registered voters. This allowed for fewer speculations and a greater likelihood of participants' real experiences, rather than mere perceptions. Again, the validity of the research was reflected in the non-reliance on non-random methods, which would have tended to bias the results with respect to ethnicity, political party affiliations, and other determinants. The study primarily focused on random sampling, which allowed for diverse views across ethnic, political, and tribal affiliations.

Furthermore, the study's reliability was ensured by obtaining participants' consent before they were engaged. There was also a detailed introduction to the study, especially given that issues on the periphery of the vote market could easily be construed as corruption. This gave participants the confidence to freely give reliable information. Again, the information was first provided in the local language or in the language in which participants could best express themselves. Thus, there was no difficulty in communication as they felt comfortable speaking. The data was also recorded and saved before transcription. This afforded the opportunity to always return to the data when needed. Again, great attention was paid to the ethical guidelines and participants' confidentiality. Here, consent was obtained from the participants, who were explicitly informed that their identities would not be revealed. The study, therefore, employed pseudonyms and other tags to indicate participants' views without naming them. Participants' knowledge of anonymity led them to offer more detailed explanations and to share personal experiences and perceptions about the vote market in Ghana. Indeed, some participants confirmed their active involvement in the vote market upon being assured that their identities would not be revealed.

4.10 Conclusion

The methodology and the study's framework used qualitative methods. The study used interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews as instruments to gather data, which will be analysed using the interpretivist paradigm. Again, the strategy of enquiry employed by the study was grounded theory, which posits that the theory be grounded in the data, whether an existing or a developed one. To this end, the study aims to develop the ethics of voting, a theory prescribing the ethical means of conceiving of voting and engaging with it. This chapter has generally outlined the various methods, strategies, means of enquiry, and interpretation approaches to be used in the study. The next chapter will present the findings from the data gathered using the outlined data collection instruments.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter of the study outlined the methodology for data collection, the sample size, the data-collection method, and the analytical tools, among other aspects. This chapter presents and reports the data collected from the participants in the study area. The study has strictly followed the approaches outlined in the previous chapter to collect the needed data presented in this chapter. The general criteria for participant selection are that participants must be registered voters in Ghana. Age is a primary consideration, as Ghanaian law stipulates that the voting age is eighteen (18) years and above. Thus, the foundation for the selection is that the participants, whose views are presented in this chapter, are those who have registered to vote or have voted in general elections. The data gathered are presented within themes or categories aligned with the objectives and research questions the study seeks to answer. The themes or categories upon which the data is presented are, the nature of the vote market in Ghana, perceptions of voters on the prevalence or otherwise of the vote market, considerations that voters make to participate or not participate in the vote market, effects and impact of moral and political obligations in the participation of the vote market, egoism and the vote market in Ghana as well as deontology and the vote market in Ghana. The participants are divided into two main age groups. The first group is young adults and first-time voters with the age bracket of eighteen (18) years to thirty-six (36) years. The second group is the adults and non-first-time voters, denoted by the age brackets between thirty-seven (37) years and seventy (70) years. The age variation is motivated by voting experience, life experience, and the changing political landscape in Ghana, especially since 2000, when Ghana began changing political parties that form government every eight (8) years through elections. Participants have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities and ensure informed consent, which was

adequately explained to them before data collection. Indeed, given the nature of the data, many individuals requested anonymity themselves, and this has been strictly adhered to in the presentation. Notwithstanding this, the participants' gender has been maintained, as reflected in the use of pronouns throughout this chapter.

5.1 Theme 1: Nature of the Vote Market in Ghana.

The vote market has been variously described and conceptualised. Among the differences seen in the conceptualisation of the vote market have been the materials exchanged for votes, the active or passive participation, the rightness or wrongness of the participation, among others. While it is generally assumed that the materials for exchange are predominantly money, other items, such as clothing, foodstuffs, farming implements, and fishing materials, are also used. I posit that, more often than not, the things shared in the vote market are context-specific. For instance, the things that may be given out in a farming community to convince voters may differ from those distributed in a fishing community. It is evident that in the material exchange for votes, there has been no conception of reliance on promises for future performance in exchange for votes. In other words, it is rare for people to engage in the vote market based on promises that are expected to be fulfilled later. To adequately determine whether participants understand the issue they are giving their opinions on, it was necessary to assess their knowledge of the voting market.

5.1.1 Young-Adult Participants

Participants in the young adult category shared a range of responses. This is regardless of their educational background or literacy capacities. Here, the question did not specifically ask participants to define voting, but it did ask them what they considered the voting market to be and, in their estimation, the activities that constitute a 'market'. They agreed that the very entailment of the vote market includes buying and selling. For instance, in his explanation of the vote market, John shared the view that...*what I know is that it is when a political party gives money or resources in the form of anything that they want to give, to voters or people who are going to vote, and expects them to cast their vote for them.* This understanding is similar to Rose's view, as she also noted that it often occurs during elections and times when we are required *to vote for politicians. So, for me, when someone asks you to vote for them and then, because of what they want you to do, gives you*

something, even though you are not ready to vote for them. This means that for Rose, the vote market involves giving something to a voter when you know that the person does not intend to vote for you. The responses given so far suggest a one-sided understanding of the vote market, which seems worth exploring further later in the chapter. In sharing her view, Sika explained what she considers to be the nature of the vote market by saying that,

...I know that it is like what happens at the marketplace, where you buy goods. In this case, when people ask you to vote for them by paying you, it is considered a vote market. For instance, if I am running for a political position and want to get more votes, I give my friend money so that she will vote for me. That is what I think the vote market is about.

Further, Fred expressed his knowledge about the vote market by first giving his value judgment on the concept; according to him

...I know it is a corrupt practice where politicians try to influence voters by offering them money or gifts. So, people take the things that these politicians give and go ahead to vote for them. It is a significant issue in our elections because it leads to our politicians becoming corrupt. The sentiment shared by Fred will be further explored in the next chapter of the study, but it sheds light on whether the vote market is the right approach.

Furthermore, Mary also gave her opinion on the nature of the vote market and shared what she considers the general attitude of those seeking political power. Mary thus said that,

...personally, it is just about giving people incentives or paying them to vote for you so that you can get to a particular position that you would want. You see, people always want to do anything to win positions in Ghana. Some people will even kill to have their way. So, giving money to let you vote is something small, and that is what I know happens with what you are asking.

In James's view, the nature of the vote market entails that those seeking political office use the distribution of goods to convince others to vote for them. Thus, for James, *...okay, so when maybe I am a political leader, and I want to come to power, and I feel people won't vote for me, I give material things in the form of items that I think the people that I want to convince may need to vote for me.* James's view aligns with the earlier views of John, Fred, Rose, and Sika that the vote market is about the active participation of politicians and political officeholders seeking to convince voters. Again, Andy shared his view of the nature of the vote market, presenting what he considers the two sides. Thus, he shared that,

...what I know is that people buy votes to increase their chances to win elections, especially when it is a political position. The other side is when voters also sell their vote to those standing for a position. This happens both ways, but it all depends on the one who wants to win elections because they need the votes more to occupy political power. This convinces many people because they are also in need of money, so it is easy for them to take money and vote for these politicians.

In his understanding of the vote market and its nature, Frew shared his view, focusing on political delegates as voters. This view seems to stem from the current state of Ghanaian politics, in which delegates to political parties take money and other gifts to elect party leaders. Thus, according to him,

It is an incident or event that happens during the election period where an aspiring candidate for a particular position or office tends to go to delegates and give them money in exchange for their votes. I am stating this because I have seen many delegates of political parties receiving money in envelopes from political aspirants, and when you speak with them, they will say that it is from this or that politician. I think that the money is meant to buy their votes, and the delegates also end up voting for them.

Lamin's contributory views also explain what he considers to be the buying and selling of votes. He conceives of the vote market as one-way, understanding it only as the buying of votes. Thus, Lamin said,

...I have an idea of it, and to me it is when a person who is standing for office or a politician gives out money or something to people to vote for them. For instance, when you are running for a position and you realize that you need more votes to win, you give money to people and tell them to vote for you. Here, whether or not they will vote for you or be able to convince people in this form depends on the money you have and the things you can distribute.

Furthermore, Tom's opinions consider both perspectives, including the selling and buying aspects. Here, Tom argues that there is always active involvement, with voters trying to get money for their votes and candidates actively seeking to buy them. Thus, he said that,

...it's about the means used by those standing for a position to get many votes from those going to vote. And then those going to vote are trying to get money before they vote; I see that mostly politicians are the ones who always use their people to go around and give money to people so that they can increase their votes. There are also times when voters will say that if they don't get money, they will not go and waste their time voting. So we are all guilty.

Lamin's view reflects the active participation of voters, who indirectly invite politicians to offer incentives for their votes. In sharing her view, Hannah also emphasised that the vote market is about active participation by people who stand for positions, buying the votes of the electorate. Thus, she said that,

...ok, so I know that it is when people vying for positions in politics bring money and other things to urge others to vote for them. People are convinced and so take the money and the things offered, such as food and other goods, to vote for these individuals. However, there are times when people will also take those things but will not vote for such politicians.

So far, participants are clear about the entailment of the vote market and the activities denoted as market. Again, some have been particular about the material exchange and the mode of market engagement. According to Steve,

It is when people give us some things to push us to vote for them. So, in this case, it happens when a politician goes from house to house and shares incentives like provisions and money with the people to solicit votes. That is one side, on the other side, we see that when a person takes items, and for the reason that he/she will vote for the person giving the items. The voter has the right to reject the things and the money, but when people take the money and the things, then they are engaging in the market of votes.

This view aligns with the opinion shared by Jess that

...when a politician tries to convince or give out money for people to give out their votes for them to win a party leadership or position. People pay others in terms of money or other items, like food items and other things. It was in the last election that I heard people were influencing others with money to vote for them. What I know is that people take the things, but not all of them vote for such politicians.

The responses indicate that some participants offer their views on the nature of the vote market, expressing value judgments about its rightness or wrongness. Thus, according to Leo, the vote market is also about the active solicitation by politicians. He asserted that,

... I know politicians offer gifts to people because of their greediness for them to vote in their favour. It's about paying someone to vote for you during an election. I can say that mostly it's about buying and selling of votes, and it happens through paying or giving someone money or things to gain their vote, or taking something from a person seeking an office on the condition of voting

for him.

Additionally, Liz explains that the nature of the vote market entails an instance... *when politicians go to electorates to persuade them to vote by offering money or other incentives. Also, as a voter, if you also understand, accept, or align with them and take their money to vote for them, you have sold your vote.* The prevailing conception of participants has been the placement of value judgments, reflected in the view that the vote market is an active arena of political participation and, sometimes, of electorates buying and selling votes.

5.1.2 Adults and Aged Participants

Participants aged 37 to 70 were also interviewed, and their views were sought on the nature of the vote market in Ghana. In sharing their views, it was also evident that they have predominantly one-sided opinions, in which the vote market is mainly understood as the buying of votes by office seekers and political candidates, rather than the active selling of votes by voters. For instance, according to Prince, *...I know that it's a common practice during elections. Politicians or their agents offer gifts to voters in exchange for their votes. It's illegal, but it still happens, and it's a big problem in Ghana, especially in rural areas.* This view was corroborated by Freda, another participant, who shared her understanding of the vote market. Thus, she asserted that,

Some political candidates give money so that voters will vote for them. For example, political parties like the main ones in Ghana try to persuade voters with gifts for their votes. Yes, that's how I understand it, when you buy the vote, and when you also sell your vote for a person to gain admission to the parliament or other office.

Another participant, Max, expanded his knowledge of the vote market beyond politics. He assumes that in any sector where a person seeks a position, there is some vote-buying. He said that,

People seeking to be elected to a position use items or money to convince citizens to cast their vote for them. Nowadays, it is not only political, but churches also now employ such tactics when voting for their leaders. So people seeking to be voted for or elected into positions influence those who have to give their mandate to them to vote in a particular fashion. Sometimes,

they do it directly or they use their assigns or agents to go and find persons who are supposed to do the voting for them.

Further, Mike also explained what he knows to be the nature of the vote market and asserted that it is not an open endeavour, so the items and money politicians offer are intended to indirectly convince or buy the support and votes of those who receive them. He asserts that,

...the constitution of Ghana doesn't openly allow that. As a good citizen, you are not allowed to sell or allow anyone to buy your vote, but indirectly, it is going on in Ghana. Most of the politicians find a very enticing way to buy people's votes, which shouldn't be. Some of them do it in diverse ways, like giving out money, giving out gifts, and providing transportation to people to go and vote. In all these, they are trying to buy people's votes, and the voters do not even know it. So indirectly, politicians buy votes from voters. I mean, as a good citizen, you are not supposed to do that. In Ghana, people should vote freely and not be pushed to the wall to vote for someone.

Additionally, Jason shared his view on the nature of the vote market, asserting that it is not only against democratic principles but also unethical. For him,

it involves exchanging money, goods, or services for a person's vote in an election. It's illegal and unethical in most democratic countries. I see it as a corrupt practice where individuals offer financial incentives or other benefits to sway voters' choices, undermining the fairness of the election process. So simply, it involves manipulating the voting process by giving people material or financial rewards to influence their vote.

Furthermore, Gifty shared her opinion, asserting that the vote market extends beyond the exchange of money, even though it is the most popular form of trading votes. Again, Clara corroborated the earlier shared opinion by saying that,

...from what I know, people in power or those who want to attain political positions often try to buy the favor of individuals. This usually involves offering money in exchange for their votes. However, it is not always about money; sometimes, they offer favors or other benefits to influence voters.

Also, Dufie, who is very advanced in age, admitted to having voted in national elections since Ghana became a republic in 1992 and shared her view on the vote market, stating that,

politicians influence people with money to vote in their favor. On the other hand, it is also when citizens accept money from leaders to vote for them.

This can be in the form of money or material goods. It involves both buying and selling because the politician is buying the vote, and the voter, in accepting the money or material, is selling their vote. So the little I can say about it is I think it's the act of people vying for positions and trying to buy the votes of voters. This means they try to provide their needs at the wrong time for them to be persuaded to vote for them due to the items or whatever they provided for them. I know that during elections, those vying for positions actually convince people to vote for them by giving them money.

Furthermore, several views on the nature of the vote market were shared during the focus group discussions held. For instance, in the first focus group discussion (FGD 1), Dansowaa said that,

per my intellectual understanding, it's about persuading someone to show interest in a political party or a contestant to win power, the inappropriate way by which those seeking positions entice the other electorates for their votes by giving them incentives to manipulate their decisions. I can also say that it is one-way candidates who are standing to be elected for a position acquire the votes of the voters; both the candidates and voters take part in this process. It has become the order of the day, it has become a norm that politicians mostly use to secure or gain power, especially in Africa and Ghana, to be precise.

A similar view was shared by Afia in the same group about the nature of the vote market when she said that

...politicians come to us to persuade us to vote for them by giving us money that is buying votes. As a voter, if you also accept them and take their money to vote for them, you have sold your vote. People sell their voting power to those seeking positions. Also, political parties try to convince potential voters to vote for them using money. In all, it is people being paid or given something of value in exchange for their votes, and it's illegal in many countries.

In the second focus group discussion (FGD2), much time was also devoted to soliciting participants' views on the vote market itself and participants indicated their knowledge of the vote market. For instance, Abena said that

...it happens that most politicians, especially those who are not confident of winning a particular position, usually go into buying and selling of votes so that they can attain the position they want. Also, people sell it because they want to get money for other things. It occurs during elections where a said political party tries to use stuff like money and offering services to people in return for their votes. We see that political parties try to convince potential

voters to vote for them using money. This act can be classified as a form of bribery.

In her contribution, Nkuma testifies to having personally experienced the vote market and explains the concept by clarifying the activities she considers pertinent. According to her,

...People give money to others to vote for them; political parties or candidates offer money and goods to voters in exchange for their votes. Also, agents of political parties go to their members to entice them with their votes. I know that it facilitates and promotes cheating in elections, or one party is given an advantage over the other.

To this, another participant, Esi, also shared her experience of what she has heard, and supported the earlier views with the opinion that

I have heard about how people gain an upper hand in elections by buying votes from people, and how other people, too, who are the participants of the election, decide to sell their votes for a gain. So, a person vying for a position gives you money or physical things for you to vote for him or her. Through that act, he or she is buying your vote, and you're selling your vote. Based on the money these politicians spend during the election, they try to take that money back when they win power.

In the focus group discussion (FGD 3), it was also realised that participants shared various views on the nature of the vote market and what it entails. While participating in the discussion, Eunice, for instance, said that

...giving out money or goods to people in exchange for their votes and selling of votes is accepting the money given to us by the candidates in exchange for votes. It is a situation where the politicians will entice the voters by giving them money, so they vote for them during the election period. So, there is an offering of money or goods and services for others to vote for you; also, in cases like this, the vulnerable people, for example, the illiterate and those who know nothing about the risk of buying and selling of votes, are those targeted.

In his contribution, George also explained that

those in authority try to get a particular position, because voting goes in accordance with the position. Ghana, for instance, voting is only done when we want people in a position. Those who want these positions can decide to buy votes to get the position, and the voters, on the other hand, will sell their votes or franchise to those vying for the positions. So, one may think even if he/she vote them to power, they will not do anything, so they will also decide to sell their votes.

This view triggered other opinions about how politicians use vote buying as a means to acquire power because most of them know they do not qualify for their positions; thus, Abbey also shared the opinion that,

Okay? So, some people are not qualified for these positions because they know they are not prepared. What they do is, because they are wealthy and sometimes have a lot, they gather people and then persuade them with their money to sell their votes to them; they sell their rights or votes. So, maybe the person may have another choice of choosing another person, but because he gave the person something, the person might change his or her mind to vote for him or her because of what has been offered.

It is generally evident from participants' responses that their conception of the vote market centres on politicians who go to voters to convince them with gifts and other incentives. The roles the electorates play are very minimal, so in the vote market, activism is much more about buying votes than selling. Further to this, the incentives have predominantly been in the form of money and other gifts.

5.2 Theme 2: Perception of the Prevalence of the Vote Market

The prevalence of the vote market in Ghana is based on perceptions and personal experiences of buying and selling votes. Measuring people's perceptions is imperative because buying and selling votes is often done indirectly. Thus, people offer incentives as a form of help and good gestures, and cloak them as if they are only showing concern. Again, it is not clear that voters openly ask for their votes to be bought, except in isolated cases. On this basis, measuring perception is central to understanding whether the vote market is indeed prevalent in Ghana or merely an assumption.

5.2.1 Young-Adult Participants

Young adults' perception of the existence of the vote market is crucial to understanding how they conceive of the behaviour of people seeking to occupy offices, as well as how voters conceive of their own votes. In sharing their perception about the vote market in Ghana, one participant, Andy, who has voted in previous elections, said that

it is an undeniable reality that vote buying and selling occur frequently in Ghana. While I have not personally witnessed such transactions, I have certainly heard numerous accounts of them. Some people have openly discussed how politicians have offered incentives in exchange for votes. This troubling practice takes place openly during every election cycle, with many individuals displaying no shame in their actions. This thing is almost becoming a norm where vote buying is not only accepted but almost expected.

Again, Jess shared his opinion on perceptions of the vote market in Ghana and emphasised that his view is based on what he has heard. She said,

...My view of vote buying in Ghana is based on my personal experiences, having both heard about and occasionally witnessed it. I have heard people discuss how politicians distribute items to voters during elections. It seems to be something that many people are aware of, and some have accepted it as a normal part of the electoral campaigns. It seems that this practice is widely recognized, and some individuals accept it as a normal part of the electoral process.

Furthermore, Fred was emphatic about his perceptions of the vote market in Ghana and provided the basis for his assertion that it is prevalent there. He said that,

... in Ghana, vote selling is a troubling reality that many people are familiar with. It is no secret to hear individuals talk about its practice in Ghana. In the recently concluded general elections, it was evident that party agents were offering incentives in exchange for votes. The prevalence of the buying and selling of votes highlights the need for electoral reform.

This opinion aligns with Steve's contribution, which also traced his perception to the stories he has been hearing and reiterated what he considers the effect of promoting the vote market, as well as its prevalence in Ghana. Thus, he asserted that

various reported incidents on social media and some news reports convinced me that vote buying and selling are prevalent issues in Ghana. It is easy to

see people in party shirts going about distributing items to electorates. When individuals accept money in exchange for their votes, it jeopardizes our ability to elect leaders who are genuinely committed to fostering development and progress.

Furthermore, Hannah also shared her experience, noting that her knowledge of the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana is based on interactions she had with people during the election period, especially during the just-ended 2024 general election. She shared her experience of having seen and interacted with one or two people who have openly admitted to taking items from party agents during past elections. For them, it was normal, since everyone was collecting them, and the politicians didn't actually say it was in exchange for a vote. Another person explained that party representatives gave him money in return for his agreeing to vote for them. These politicians have amassed significant wealth, enabling them to consistently allocate funds to constituents and secure their votes. The experience shared above is also corroborated by Lamin, who narrated what is happening in his area as the basis for his assertion that the vote market is very prevalent in Ghana. Thus, he said that,

In my area, it's common to hear people, especially some of the young men, say that they won't vote unless they are given money. To them, elections are an opportunity to benefit directly from the politicians who come around only during campaign seasons. These boys see voting as a business. They are not interested in policies or what the candidates will do when they take office. What matters most to them is what they can get immediately. Ultimately, when politicians come through their agents, they distribute items and money.

Again, Tom shared his personal experience with the vote market, especially with respect to buying votes, saying he has personally seen money distributed to voters, but it is covered, so it does not become very obvious. He said that,

As for the buying and selling of votes, it is there in Ghana. For instance, I have witnessed people putting money in things such as matchboxes and giving it to people who are going to the polling station to vote. Additionally, I've heard some people say things as an invitation to these politicians, hoping to gain something in return for their votes. It's like people expect that their vote must be bought. To them, the vote is something to be traded, not a tool to shape the country's future.

Moreover, James also shared his view, reiterating that he has not personally experienced it; his perception is based on what people claim they took money from candidates to vote for them. Thus, he said that,

Even though I have not personally experienced vote buying and selling, the number of people who talk about it or admit to engaging in taking items from politicians is large. To me, it widely suggests that vote buying and selling are happening in Ghana, especially during election periods. No one can deny that vote buying and selling are occurring in Ghana.

The position shared by the above participant aligns with Leo's opinion, which concludes that the vote market is indeed prevalent in Ghana based on his observations. He said that

...vote buying and selling is a common issue in Ghana during elections. I have seen it myself and also heard many stories concerning it. People often discuss how politicians exchange gifts for votes. Some even admit that they have sold their votes in past elections. These conversations reveal that vote buying is occurring openly, and many individuals do not attempt to conceal it.

Again, John was more emphatic that it happens in his community, where politicians and political office-seekers come to his community and use incentives to convince people to vote for them. He said that,

It is quite common to hear people on Facebook and other platforms, especially some of the young men, say things to insinuate that they want incentives before they will vote. Apart from this, it is also common to see politicians use their assistants to distribute goods to electorates. These instances demonstrate that the vote market exists in Ghana.

These views were also corroborated by Frew, Sika, Mary, and others, who emphasised that the vote market is prevalent in Ghana and is not a mere assumption.

5.2.2 Adult and Aged Participants

Responses from adult and elderly participants are important for understanding how they

perceive the political climate in Ghana, especially from those who are actively involved in political issues or have long-term voting experience. Their perception of the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana also goes a long way toward answering the crucial question raised in the study's objective. In sharing her opinion, Gifty pointed out that the vote market and its prevalence in Ghana are not just rumours, especially after she has seen people receive items and material benefits from politicians in exchange for their votes. She said,

I know that the buying and selling of votes is rampant in Ghana. I have personally witnessed the distribution of items, which typically occurs only during election periods. If the items were not to buy votes indirectly, they would be distributed periodically and not only during election periods. You also see people go for these items. For me, it indicates the buying of votes.

This position is also similar to that shared by Mike, who said he has experienced buying votes first-hand, with party agents going around sharing money with people to buy their votes. He said that

I know for a fact that vote buying occurs in Ghana. It's not just a topic of conversation. I have witnessed it. I remember a specific incident during an election period in Cape Coast North. One candidate, whose name I prefer not to mention, circulated through the area attempting to influence voters by handing out money. He was distributing GHS 20 notes to individuals, hoping it would persuade them to support him.

Furthermore, Jason stated that although he has never sold his vote before, he is aware that the vote market exists in Ghana, as he has observed and heard people engaging in it. Thus, he shared the opinion that

I have never sold my vote, but I have heard stories and seen people do it. This has shown me the seriousness and prevalence of vote buying in Ghana. We need more education, especially in local communities, to help people understand that their vote is their voice and should never be sold for anything.

Moreover, Clara also shared her view on whether the vote market is prevalent in Ghana, asserting that it is a very profitable venture, especially for the electorate during delegates' conferences to elect political party leaders and flagbearers. She asserts that

the phenomenon of vote buying and selling is highly lucrative in Ghana

during election periods, especially during the internal elections of political parties when they are electing party officers. It is also a norm for all aspirants to pay delegates money and other items, such as a fridge and clothes. It is even worse when it comes to electing flagbearers to lead the party. These delegates see such voting periods as 'harvesting' seasons. So, in fact, the vote market is very prevalent in Ghana.

Again, Prince, in sharing his view on the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana, confessed that he had been personally offered money to buy his vote. He shared that

I have personally witnessed vote buying. Even though I didn't accept the money that day, it made me realize how easily our democratic values can be weakened. I believe we need to educate people, especially young people, about the power and importance of their vote. Since politicians often give money and items to people, many will continue to accept them. I don't think this practice will stop.

According to Max, his views on the prevalence of vote-buying in Ghana go beyond perception, as he has personally witnessed the distribution of money to voters to secure their votes for a particular candidate. He further asserts that this distribution is typically done in the last days before general elections, as this period is considered the time when people can be easily persuaded with money to change their minds and vote for them. He said that

...there is certainly vote buying in Ghana. It's not just something we hear about in the news; many of us have witnessed it. Personally, I know individuals who have been approached directly with gifts and other items and made it seem as not had no strings attached. Some of my friends have shared experiences of how politicians or their campaign teams attempted to influence them with money or other incentives to indirectly convince them to vote for their parties.

These offers come in the final days leading up to the election when politicians are desperate to gain support. They visit communities, particularly those facing economic struggles, and try to buy loyalty. In many cases, this strategy is effective, not because people don't value their vote, but because they feel that this is the only time politicians bring anything to their communities. Furthermore, Eunice has shared her experience, which

supports the view that vote-buying is prevalent in Ghana and extends beyond mere suspicion to active participation by politicians. According to her

,...vote buying in Ghana seems to be becoming more common with each election. It is no secret that party representatives go around and share incentives as vote-buying strategies. The incentives include small cash amounts or items such as rice, cooking oil, among others. While these may seem like minor incentives, they can be very tempting for individuals struggling financially, particularly in low-income communities. Politicians are aware of this vulnerability and use it to their advantage.

Again, Freda also shared his view and indicated that, much as politicians are seen as active participants, voters are also actively involved, telling these party agents that, until they are given something, they will not vote. Thus, she said that

The prevalence of the vote market has gone beyond just perception. It is done openly, without any attempt to hide it during election periods, and it is a sad thing. Elections have become a time when politicians distribute money and gifts to secure votes. Some voters also see elections as an opportunity to gain something from politicians. This mindset shows the problem runs deep. It highlights not only economic struggles but also a lack of trust in the political system.

In contributing to the perception that the vote market is prevalent in Ghana, Nkuma highlighted its impact and potential to harm the democratic process. She asserted that

... Elections in Ghana are not without the giving of items to voters. This has led some voters to also expect these things to be provided. This kind of thinking is harmful. When people vote based on what they get rather than what a person can deliver, it leads to bad leadership. So politicians who buy votes are less likely to be accountable once they are in power. After all, they didn't earn the vote through hard work or good policies.

Furthermore, Dansowaa also stated that she has experienced vote buying, especially during campaign periods in general elections. According to her, she observed people handing out cash to voters to court their support. She said,

Yes, I have witnessed vote buying in my neighbourhood during election times. It occurs quite openly and has, over the years, almost become a normal part of the election process. Politicians and party agents typically move through suburbs with the intention of convincing voters, but often end up distributing items, especially money. These gifts come with a clear expectation that the recipient will vote for a specific candidate or party.

This view is similar to Afia's, who concluded that she was aware of the vote market in Ghana. In her view, because of its prevalence, elections are seen as an opportunity for people to benefit from politicians. Thus, she said that

Many people, especially those facing money problems, find election promises very tempting. I've seen that some people express excitement during election times, not because they care about the candidates, but because they expect to receive something from them. This practice has become a regular part of elections in Ghana, and I believe it contributes to our democracy.

Also, Abena agreed with the views already shared that the vote market is prevalent in Ghana. She recounts what is typically seen during general elections, where representatives of various political parties visit the electorates with items to offer as incentives to vote for them. She said that

Party agents begin visiting households, attend local events, and approach individuals in areas such to convince them to vote for particular candidates. However, they do not go with empty hands but go with incentives such as money and items, and distribute the same to these electorates. It is realized that people also receive these items for various reasons, such as economic hardship. Others also view it as the only opportunity to gain from politicians, as the election period is the only time they seem to remember them.

Again, another participant, Dufie, also shared her opinion on the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana. Her perception is based on what she has heard and said that

some individuals have experience in buying and selling votes, particularly during elections. I've heard that those in power often invest a significant amount of money to ensure their re-election by persuading others to vote for them. Unfortunately, many people compromise their principles for the sake of money, accepting payments in exchange for their votes. While I have come

across news reports indicating that certain citizens in various regions sell their votes and some politicians offer financial incentives for them, I have personally never participated in such activities.

Furthermore, Esi also shared her views on what happens during general elections, which further emphasises the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana. She shared the view that

it is undeniable that in Ghana today, the buying and selling of votes is very much prevalent. This is common even with elections that are not very competitive, and others can attest to this. The biggest culprits are politicians who amass wealth and hoard money for election periods. Then they will share these monies with the electorates when there are a few days to voting. I cannot say that everyone who takes such money ends up voting for such people, but I think it works for the politicians; otherwise, they would have stopped it. Rather, the situation is on the rise. This is because, now, electorates also insinuate that they should be 'motivated' to go and vote.

Again, the study conducted three main focus group discussions, including participants from all three age groups: young adults, adults, and the elderly. In their discussions, participants shared detailed opinions on the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana. It is important to note that the opinions shared all converge on the thought that the vote market is very prevalent in Ghana. For instance, Juliet shared in the first focus group discussion (FGD1) that

buying votes is common, and the things offered are always accepted by the electorate. Hardly will anyone see electorates openly reject items donated by these politicians during the election period. Normally, the politician will not say that these items are intended to buy votes, but both the one giving and the one receiving them know that it is supposed to influence your vote for a particular candidate. It can therefore not be denied that it is on the rise in Ghana today.

In furtherance, another participant shared her view to corroborate her discussants' views and asserted that she has seen the buying of votes occur and that it is prevalent, especially during political campaigns. She said,

I know some friends who have experienced this, but in the end, they did not vote for those candidates. Yes, I've seen it happen. In my area, party agents come around with money and sometimes even bags of rice or sugar to persuade people to vote for their candidate. The news and other information we receive, especially during political campaigns and when electing delegates, clearly indicate that these practices are very common in our political environment. I've heard that during elections, those in authority who want to return to power spend large amounts of money to persuade others to vote for them. Unfortunately, some people sell their conscience and support those who pay them, and although this is not a good practice, it has been a long-standing phenomenon.

Similar views about the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana were shared in the second focus group discussion (FGD2) where it was established that participants had personally experienced instances of vote buying. For instance, Thess said that the vote market is a common phenomenon, as reported in the news media. She said that

Even if a person has not personally been approached with items meant to convince them to vote for a particular candidate, the evidence of its prevalence is all around. The news media and social media do not cover up such instances when politicians present such items to the electorate. In fact, opposition parties are also a source of showing how political opponents use money and other items as bait to win votes. These acts of using items to convince others to vote are part of what the vote market entails.

In the same group, Albert shared his grounds for claiming that the vote market is very prevalent in Ghana. He asserted that

I have personally seen the phenomenon of the vote market. I witnessed it during the recent elections when both the dominant parties had their agents come to my constituency to campaign. Their campaign involves sharing items with people, and in return, they also take them. Again, people who are bused to political rallies are given money as incentives, and these are all instances of the vote market. Personally, I consider these incentives to vote as wrong, and I think voters need to uphold their integrity over such small considerations when deciding to vote for such politicians.

It is also important to note that the views expressed in the first and second focus groups were consistent with those in the third focus group discussion (FGD3). Here, participants

shared their views and the grounds upon which they claim that there is a prevalence of the vote market in Ghana. For instance, Esther said that,

Until I personally experienced it during the last general election, I had thought it was merely a perception. As someone who was voting for the first time, I thought of allocating resources to bribe everyone. However, I was wrong. This is because, during the campaign period, party agents came to the house where I stay and tried to tell us to vote for a particular candidate. After that, he said he had given us money for our time. I looked at what he was holding, and I rejected it. Honestly, I thought the money was too little to take his money and felt obligated to vote for his candidate. So it is very true that the vote market is prevalent in Ghana.

To this, Abu added that he had been offered money for similar reasons, that he had taken but did not vote for the candidate. Such experience was also corroborated by Abbey, Ruth, and Philo. It is generally the case that participants' responses on the perception of the prevalence of the vote market indeed converge on the view that there are open instances of the vote market in Ghana.

5.3 Theme 3: Lived Experiences in the Vote Market

To further establish the prevalence of the vote market beyond perception, the study also collected data on participants to determine whether they had first-hand experience in the vote market. These experiences concern whether, first, such participants have been involved in buying votes as agents of office seekers, or whether they have sought to sell their votes before. Furthermore, the study questioned these participants to determine whether, when given items to solicit their votes, they are amenable to changing their votes in favour of the office seekers.

5.3.1 Young-Adult Participants

The lived experiences of young adults are important to emphasise, whether or not the perception that the vote market exists is true. Again, there is a need to determine whether such participants have the mental state to be persuaded by items and money offered by office seekers. In sharing his opinion, Leo asserted that,

Although he knows that buying and selling of votes are common in Ghana, especially during elections, he has personally not engaged in it before. What I know about it is based on observations and what I have heard or seen through social media and other outlets. In all honesty, if I am offered something substantial for my vote, I think I would take the money, but I would still vote according to my conscience.

The experience shared above aligns with Steve's further experience, which he said he has not personally experienced. Steve, however, said that if anyone attempted to buy his vote, he would refuse it because he is unwilling to sell his vote, even if he were enticed to do so. He thus said that,

...as it is now, I have yet to meet anyone who will want to give me money or any item as a way to convince me to vote for someone. I think that I will not reject anything that is offered to me for my vote, although I will not vote for the person unless I have already decided to vote for the person, even before the item was offered. I think that vote is valuable, and if I should trade it for such items, then I have devalued it. Taking the item and voting for the person is not the same as taking it and not voting for the person.

In the same vein, Lamin also shared his experience of not having been personally approached by anyone to sell his vote for money. Again, he reiterates that even if he is given any such item, it will not change his mind. He said that,

as for his personal experience with vote buying and selling, there has been no instance when he has been offered anything for his vote. There has been no one who has come to offer me anything to buy my votes. Perhaps because I am always in school during the general election period, I don't encounter party agents very often. I know my friends at home who told me they got things such as money and other stuff. If I were home and also received such items, I don't think it would change my mind in any way about who I will vote for.

Lamin's view is also similar to James's, who emphasised that he has not previously experienced the vote market. In sharing his experience, he said that his integrity will not allow him to be convinced to sell his vote to any candidate. He said that,

Surprisingly enough, I have never been directly involved in vote buying or selling. I will likely refuse any incentives from politicians in exchange for their votes. For me, even if I had initially intended to vote for that candidate,

the act of trying to sway my decision through such means would lead me to rethink my choices entirely. I think I should be allowed to vote for the candidate I prefer.

Furthermore, Simon also shared his personal experience. According to him, his experience in the voting market stems from student elections at the University of Cape Coast. He said that

...I have personally encountered vote buying during my time on campus, particularly while I was campaigning for the position of hall president. As part of my strategy, I allocated a portion of my campaign budget to provide certain incentives to student voters before the voting time. I was not the only aspirant doing this; all the aspirants were doing the same, and some even went to the extent of providing customized items, such as pens, exercise books, and other items that students ordinarily use on campus.

Amina also shared her experience of having to travel to vote for a candidate. According to her, she was given money and travelled to vote for that candidate. She said,

...Yes, I have once encountered the practice of vote buying. While I was in Accra, I was approached by an individual who offered me money to travel to my hometown, where I had registered to vote and cast my vote in favor of his party's candidate. The sum he proposed was quite tempting, especially considering my financial situation at the time. I needed money and also wanted to go home, so I took the money and went to vote.

The experience shared above is similar to Joe's, who also asserted that he was approached by party agents in his neighbourhood to convince him to vote for a particular candidate. He said that

I remember that during the campaign period of the just passed elections, some party agents came to my area to campaign, and they ended up giving us money. They did not tell us we were to take and go vote for their candidate, but we knew what it was for. I took the money, alright, but went and voted for the person I had already planned to vote for.

Again, Grace confessed that, in the recent past elections, he had actually been given money to vote for a particular candidate, and the money given had swayed him. According to him,

his experience suggests that these politicians are actually successful in convincing the electorate with money. He said that

...in the past election that was recently held, I encountered party representatives and agents who came around with incentives and gifts to encourage us to vote for them. I took the incentives, but what happened was that I had already planned to vote for the candidate, and so for me, the money was only a bonus.

Additionally, Bene shared her account of being directly offered money to vote for a particular candidate by the ruling party. In her estimation, that is what all politicians do, except those who lack the funds to influence the electorate. She said that,

...during the last national election in 2024, some delegates of the ruling party approached me with incentives such as money to convince me to vote for their candidate. I was not the only one they gave money to; others in the area received it as well. A short time later, representatives from the opposition party also came to our area, hoping to convince us. However, they did not provide any monetary incentives. It seemed evident to me that they were lacking the funds necessary to engage with our community in the same way. If they had possessed the financial resources, I believe they would have also made similar offers to gain our votes.

This experience is also not different from Ekua's, who shared her personal experience in the marketplace, where agents of political parties were sharing items with people to indirectly attract their votes. She said that

...I have a personal experience with vote buying. This experience took place at the marketplace, where I saw representatives of the main political parties campaigning and speaking with people to win their votes. In their campaign, they were also sharing party paraphernalia and other items. In fact, people were trooping to take the items that were being distributed. I also went and collected some of the things. For me, they are things bought with our money, and so I was not going to allow myself to be convinced into voting for them through these items.

Furthermore, Hans shared his experience not through national elections but through student politics, where one candidate won votes from many students, including himself, based on the incentives the candidate offered before the elections. He said,

...Yes, I have witnessed vote buying personally during a student election at my university. In that particular election, candidates employed various tactics, including offering incentives such as free rides and gifts to persuade voters. One evident incident was when one aspirant started distributing 10 gigabytes of mobile data to students for free. This gesture earned him a lot of votes, and he ultimately won.

Again, Vida shared her personal experience of accepting money from agents of a political candidate but still refusing to vote for the person. She said that,

During the heated campaign period of the last elections, I experienced vote buying. An agent of one political party, whose name I cannot mention, offered me money. The money was small, but I had done nothing to be given money. He added, after giving me the money, that I should show appreciation by voting for the particular presidential candidate he had mentioned. Of course, I accepted the money, but I did not vote for the person he had told me to vote for; it was not because of the money, but I had already made up my mind.

The responses given by participants establish the personal experiences or the witnessing of the vote market. Furthermore, participants shared their views on whether they would accept any incentive and the extent to which an incentive would influence their decision. It was generally realised that few were swayed by such incentives. Thus, whilst some accepted the incentives, they still went ahead and voted according to their conscience.

5.3.2 Adult and Aged Participants

The experiences of adult and aged participants are also crucial for further establishing the earlier views gathered on their perceptions of the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana. Thus, Dansowaa shared her experience as a person who has voted in several general elections and other district-level elections. She asserted that,

In times past, our elections were not like they are now. In those times, politicians organize party rallies, and then we all go and listen to them. In recent times, things have changed. I have personally been given money and some food items by people who belong to a political party. I asked them what the things are for and they told me they are little tokens for us, the elderly, for our trouble to go and vote for their candidate. I see this as an attempt to buy my vote. I am a retired civil servant, and I know a bribe when I see one. I told them to take the things, but they insisted, so I took them, but I didn't vote for their candidate.

Also, Frank shared his experience of being active in persuading people to vote for a particular candidate by offering money and other incentives. He recounts acting as an agent for a candidate in a district-level election and being assigned to distribute money to polling agents. He said that

...I have been a party agent for one candidate in the district-level elections as an assembly member in my electoral area. Even though it is not a keenly contested election, all the party agents were given money and other things to take with them on the campaign. We convinced people with these items. There were also instances where the electorates themselves would ask us about what we brought and whether we came to talk to them empty-handed.

However, some participants had not personally experienced the vote market. For instance, Max shared that he has not been personally involved in the vote market before, but said that if he were given an incentive to vote for a particular candidate, he would take it but refuse to vote for that candidate. He said that

I have not personally experienced the act of buying and selling votes, but I am well aware that it is a common thing in Ghanaian politics. By this, political parties and politicians use their agents to distribute items and incentives to convince voters. Personally, I have not been offered such incentives by these party representatives before. Should that opportunity come, I will by all means collect those incentives and still go ahead to vote against that party or candidate.

The experience shared above is similar to that of Jan, who also said he has not personally experienced the vote market before, but will not be convinced to vote for a particular candidate should such a person offer him items or money. He said that

I do not think that I will be induced by the little money and items that these politicians share with the electorate during the election period. I have witnessed it done, but I have not personally been approached by these agents before. The fact that they continue to bring these items means that when people take them, these people vote for them. For me, it is a no way, and there is more to my vote than such incentives.

Again, Letti recounted the event, stating that she was offered a certain amount of money to vote for a particular candidate, but she had to refuse, despite the tempting offer. She said that

...I was approached by an individual who offered me 300 Ghana cedis and asked that I vote for his candidate. Honestly, I needed money at the time, but I refused. I have been told that these politicians attach some juju and spiritual incantations to these gifts, so it was a put-off. As tempting as it was, I rejected and went and voted according to my conscience.

Kobby also states that on various occasions, there have been opportunities to take money during the election period. For him, even though there was no express statement to the effect that his vote was being bought, he understood it to mean that taking the incentives meant selling his vote, and so he refused to take them. He said,

Yes, I have encountered situations like this both in my school and within my community. It comes in the form of being offered money or some items, but there is no explicit statement that it is meant to bribe you to vote for their candidate. Even though I have been offered such incentives before, I have refused to take them. My thinking is that once I take these small items, I have committed myself to voting for them. This has been the reason why I have not been taking such items.

The fact that casting our vote without selling it is seen as a civic duty prevented Ken from succumbing to the offer to take money for his vote. He said that

I have faced such situations in the past where party representatives have offered me some incentives meant to sway my vote in their favour. In all those instances, I didn't take those incentives and have always voted based on my

own decision. For me, I have a civic duty to cast my vote with integrity and without any material influence.

Furthermore, Mike, who was approached to accept money and other incentives in exchange for voting for a particular candidate, states that he accepted them but remained true to his original decision and voted for the candidate he had planned to vote for. He said that

I will say yes, I have had a personal experience in the voting market. In the recent past election, one aspiring member of parliament came with his agents to my area for a door-to-door campaign. They shared money and food items, and many people rushed to take their share. I was given very little money, but I took it anyway, and still did not vote for the candidate. These politicians only bring these things to convince us to vote for them, and after the elections are over, they disappear. I could not allow myself to be convinced by such.

It is worth noting that similar experiences of personal encounters with the vote market were also shared during the focus group discussion. For instance, in the first focus group discussion (FGD1), Ruth said,

Yes, I've encountered party agents or those on campaign trails who came to where I stay to campaign. After speaking with us, they began distributing some money to those of us who were present. I rejected mine even when they insisted that it was only an appreciation token. For me, though I need money, I do not think that such incentives should lead me to vote for someone that I do not want to vote for.

Similar experiences were shared at the second focus group discussion (FGD2). For instance, Philo said,

As for being approached with money or other items to vote for a party, it is common; especially in the past elections, there were many instances when party agents went around distributing items. I had the same encounter where I was given a party shirt and money to attend one of their rallies. I told them I was not a political activist, and so did not take the money and shirt.

There is no doubt that many participants engaged in vote buying and have also sought payment and other incentives for their votes. These further reinforce the perception that the vote market is widespread in Ghana.

5.4 Theme 4: Considerations in Participation in the Vote Market

The vote market is undoubtedly perceived as a prevalent phenomenon in Ghana's body politic, with many participants asserting that it extends beyond mere perception. The views on why people will participate or not participate vary, and this theme seeks to elicit the extent to which individuals will participate. Thus, this theme examines data to determine whether participants would voluntarily sell their votes, buy votes if standing for political office, or even encourage others to participate in the vote market. The responses to these enquiries go to show participants' conceptualisation of the acceptability or otherwise of the vote market. This section is categorised into two main sections: responses to voluntary participation in selling votes and in buying votes. It is also worth noting that the responses to participation in either selling or buying votes have been predominantly influenced by economic factors.

5.4.1 Voluntary Participation to Sell Votes

Most of the responses gathered so far indicate that people have exchanged their votes or been persuaded to do so for material incentives through the approach of politicians, party agents, or representatives. There was no instance in which a participant said he/she went to such people to offer his/her vote for any incentives. This section seeks to ascertain whether participants will take the step of selling their votes, go to the politicians, or make insinuations suggesting they want something in exchange for their votes.

5.4.1.1 Young-Adult Participants

Here, the objective is to determine whether young voters would voluntarily sell their vote if given the chance. This involves active participation in the vote market. It is distinguished from mere presence and the mere offering of items by politicians. To actively participate in selling one's vote means a person's resolve to engage in the vote market for stated reasons. In the response of Sika, she will not sell her vote if she had the opportunity to sell

because she considers such an act a bad thing; she asserted that ...*I believe that selling my vote is not a good thing to do. This is because it will have bad effects on the country if everyone decides to sell their vote. So if I am given the chance, I do not think that I will sell my vote.* Further, Rose explains her refusal to sell her vote: it is an immoral act and violates a citizen's duties and responsibilities. She said, ...*No, there is no way that if I am given the opportunity, I will sell my vote. My reason is that it is not even moral for anyone to trade a vote for money or any other item. As citizens of Ghana, we must obey the rules and regulations of the country.* The above views also align with Andy's position, which is that he would rather focus on voting competence than sell his vote, even if he had the opportunity to do so. According to him,

there is no way that I will contact anyone to sell my vote. Whoever deserves my vote does not need to pay me anything for that vote. I look at competence based on the promises that will be given and not the money or anything. This is why I will not make any effort to get my vote bought for any reason.

There is also the view on the nature of having the right to vote. According to Tom, voting rights represent a citizen's power to participate in the democratic process, and so selling his vote means ceding that power. He shared the view that, *My vote is my power. These politicians will always take us for granted when they realize that we can be manipulated. I will not sell my vote if I get the chance. Since my vote is my power, the moment I sell my vote, I have sold my power.* Again, Fred shared a different opinion on whether he will voluntarily sell his vote. For him, if it means helping his friend gain political power over an opponent, he will sell his vote. Simply, the situation will determine whether he sells his vote. He said,

Okay, given the chance, let's assume a situation, my friend and I are going for political power, and I realize that the opponent we are competing with is winning, and I want to support my friend. I can sell my votes to my friend for him to win; it is a decision. So, for me, if the situation demands it, then I will sell my vote. It has to benefit me directly.

It is interesting to note that other participants were very emphatic and unequivocal in their assertion that, given the chance, they will sell their vote. Here, they gave several reasons

for their decision to actively participate in the vote market to sell their votes when given the opportunity. According to Ian, the only time he can obtain something directly from politicians is during elections, and so he will also use his vote to get something from them. He asserted,

Yes, I will sell my vote if the opportunity presents itself. This is because these politicians only come around during elections; after that, you won't see them again. Selling my vote will be the only opportunity that I can get something from the politicians. I have to benefit personally because the power that they are seeking is also going to benefit them directly.

Further, Johnson shared the view that even though selling of votes will corrupt the society, it is not his lone act that will corrupt the society, especially when corruption already persists, thus he said,

Yes. Because we have to meet corruption and bribery in the country already. Everybody is selling their votes, so if you are going to be like, "I'm not going to sell my votes", you are going to be looked down on as stupid or someone who doesn't have sense, so I will sell my votes. So, I think that it is not my selling that will bring corruption; everyone is seeking their interest, so I will also sell mine.

There was also an interesting perspective from James, who said that he will sell his vote because politicians never fulfil their promise when you vote for them, and so he will sell it so that even if they don't fulfil their promise, he will have benefited already. Thus, he said that,

if given the chance, I would sell my vote. You see, aspiring candidates come and talk in a very nice manner, you vote for them, and you don't see them again. So, at least sell it to get your small coins or get something to put in your room to remember that,... ohh, at least I got this in the 2024 elections. This is why I will sell my vote.

The view shared above was reiterated by Goddy, who also said he will sell his vote because politicians only come to the masses during the election period, and so selling a vote is a means to personally benefit from them. He said that,

Yes, I will, Most politicians, when they come around for us to vote for them, we don't see them again, so the best option is to get something when voting, so we will not be deceived. So if I sell my vote and I don't see them again till the next election, I will know that I have also personally benefited.

Furthermore, Emma also gives what he considers to be reasonable grounds to sell one's vote when the opportunity presents itself. For him, politicians, such as parliamentarians, only meet their constituents every four years. They do not work for any development, so if citizens also get the chance, they should seek direct benefit from them, and selling your vote is one such opportunity. He said that

...it depends. Yes, I will sell my vote because we know these politicians, we only see them during elections, and you vote for them so that when they go to Parliament, they carry your needs and make sure that your problems are being solved in the constituency, but they won't come. So there are some people they only see their MPs every four years so they have the mindset that ok, if I risk my life to vote for this person then after all he's not helping us, our roads are still not fixed, our clinics have problems, then it's better next time around he takes money so that within that four years even if he doesn't come at least I have taken money. It's reasonable to sell your vote if you get the opportunity.

Also, Joan, who said she will sell her vote if given the chance, asserted that once what she gets from the sale benefits her personally, she doesn't see why she shouldn't sell her vote. She asserted that,

Given the chance, I think I'll sell my votes because I'll probably need what the politician is offering. If I am in a state where the money or the item that is being offered in exchange for my vote is something that I need and will benefit me personally, I will sell my vote without thinking twice.

The view shared above is similar to another position by Seidu: if selling votes is bad, then being in need is equally bad, and to the extent that selling will benefit him personally and resolve his neediness at that moment, he will sell. He said that,

When it comes to selling my vote, I sincerely think I will sell my vote. Especially in the instance that I need money and the politician is available to buy my vote, I will go and sell my vote. It is bad to be in need, and I don't think selling my vote will make any difference, so I will go and sell my vote

and get the money that I need.

Additionally, Augustine appealed to the masses, urging them to voluntarily sell their votes if given the opportunity. According to him, it is something people do in Ghana, so it will not be out of place to sell his vote. He said that

I will sell my vote because it is the order of the day; if I don't do it, someone will. Plenty of politicians have come to power due to the buying and selling of votes. Everyone is doing what benefits them, even politicians are looking out for their own interests, and so I will sell it. I know many people will also sell it and not be thinking of the interests of anyone else.

Similarly, John makes the point that the politicians have already corrupted the country, so everyone is doing what they can to survive, and if he gets the chance to take something from these politicians by selling his vote, he will. He asserted that,

...It depends on the situation; the country is already corrupt, and if I am in dire need of money, I will sell my vote. The politicians have already corrupted the country. They come to power and steal money and make themselves and their family rich, and so if I also get the chance to sell my vote and benefit, I will sell my vote.

Liz also makes the point that everyone has a price, and so if the amount she will get for the vote is substantial enough, then she will sell her vote. She also emphasises that politicians are corrupt, so it is not wrong to benefit from them. She said,

Yes, I would. Everyone has a price, and if the offer is right, why not? If the amount I will get is substantial enough to do something beneficial, I will sell it. Honestly, politicians are all corrupt anyway, and they do not care about us. Therefore, if I can get something tangible in return for my vote, I will consider it.

The view shared above is also similar to that expressed by Lamin, who asserted that it is not just anything that will convince him to sell his vote, but rather something very substantial and something he needs at that particular moment. He said that

I will sell my vote if I get the opportunity. If then I'm in much need of what my vote has been sold for. There is no situation at all that will make me sell my vote, or anything that will push me to sell my vote. What I will get from the sale must be something that I need at the particular moment. It will not happen that I will keep my vote and go vote for someone who is seeking office for his gain and not also benefit from my vote when I am in need.

Further, Leo says that he will sell his vote if given the chance, but it will also be contingent on whether the promises being made by the one seeking to occupy the office will benefit him directly. Moreover, Evans suggests that once a person is willing to buy a vote, he will not mind selling it for personal gain. Thus, he said,

Of course, I will sell my vote. Because if the money or items involved are something valuable, then I will sell my vote for that. If the person vying for the position is also willing to buy my vote and offer me something valuable, then I will sell my vote.

5.4.1.2 Adults and Aged Participants

The interesting thing about the responses from the adult and aged participants is that they soon reached saturation, as they were almost *ad idem* on whether, given the opportunity, they would sell their vote. The response was almost univocal that they will not sell their vote. This view seemed divergent from that of the young-adult participants, as most said they would sell their vote, whilst a few said they would not. For the adults and the elderly, such acts were seen as unpatriotic, wrong, and against their conscience, among other reasons. For instance, Max said,

No, I wouldn't sell my vote. It's my right as a citizen to choose my leader, and I wouldn't trade that for anything. I have voted in many national elections and in student elections. Even though there were instances when I could have asked aspirants to give me something if they wanted me to come and vote, I never did. I will not sell my vote. As a citizen, it is my only opportunity to take part in the selection of a leader.

Jason, in his response, reiterated the question whether it is the right action to sell o a vote. For him, it is a justifiably wrong act, and so there is nothing that will make him want to sell his vote.

For me, the reason why I will not take any steps to sell I believe it is not a good thing to do. There are things that we can do, but they may ultimately prove not to be the right choice in the long run. So selling my vote is part. So even if no one comes to me but I need money, there is no way I will make any attempt to sell my vote.

Alfred responded that it is a form of cheating, and that if one decides to sell their votes, it means the very politicians standing for office are determining who becomes a leader, which is wrong. He said, *No, I will not sell my vote if given the chance. This is because I see it as be a form of cheating. After all, everyone had the free will to choose their leader, and a leader cannot be determined by politicians because of the incentives they tend to offer.* The above view is similar to what Clara said: that her choice of a leader is precious, and if she sells her vote, she has compromised that choice, so she will not take any step to sell it. She said,

No, there's no way I will sell my vote because it's my obligation and my choice, so there's no way I will sell my vote. It's not good. As part of the choices that I have as a citizen is to choose whom I want as a leader of the country, and this is done through voting. If I go and sell my vote, it means I have lost this choice as a citizen. So, I will not do it. As I said, it is not even good to do that.

Again, Kay was of the view that selling his vote would be a very selfish act that, in the long run, would not benefit anyone. He said that,

...Honestly, I will not take any steps to sell my vote if I have the opportunity. First of all, I don't see the point of selling my vote when we are all trying to find a good leader to lead us. It will be a selfish action that will not benefit anyone. My selling my vote means that I don't want a good leader who will be accountable.

Moreover, Tim reiterated that the only way to participate in the decision-making process for selecting an authority is through voting, and if he sells his vote, he will be deemed to have sold the power to be a decision-maker. He claims that,

No, I wouldn't sell my vote because I believe my vote is my power. It is my only opportunity to contribute to decision-making in the political environment. If I sell my vote, it means I am giving up my power to make a real choice. The money or favour I receive in exchange will only last for a short time, but the political decisions made will have a lasting impact on me for years to come. If I receive a favour, like a job position, it still does not justify selling my vote, as it compromises my role in the democratic process.

The above notwithstanding, some participants were also of the view that they would sell their votes. For Ray, it is not always the case that selling your vote results in bad leadership, because there are instances where you genuinely vote for someone but still end up with a bad leader. He said that

Selling my vote means supporting a leader I don't truly want, just because they are convincing me with money. As a citizen, I have the right to vote for a competent leader, not someone who influences people with money. Yes, sometimes you can sell your vote and still end up with a good leader. Other times, you might get a bad leader. Yes. If the majority of people sell their votes, their choice will win, regardless of whether some of us refuse to sell ours. Politics is about the majority. So, in this instance, I will sell my vote and gain personal benefit.

Ben also reiterated the views of others who will sell their votes, stating that, since politicians are also seeking their own interests, he will sell his vote when the need arises. He said that

I will sell my vote if I am given the opportunity. The exchange of votes for money or other items is for personal interests. While I am seeking my interest, the politician is also seeking their own interest. Yes, believe that the person trying to buy a vote wants power, and I will sell my vote to give you the power you want.

In the focus group discussion, similar views were expressed regarding the voluntary sale of votes, specifically the step of soliciting votes for purchase. There were varied opinions which centred on views such as one shared by Esther that

Voting is a right that I have as a citizen. This is what I was even taught in school in my government class at the secondary school. If I have this right, then it means I can also exercise this right during elections. If I were to sell my vote, then it means I have sold my right. This is why I will not go to anyone to try to sell my vote.

To this, Thess also gave two main reasons: first, that selling votes is wrong and against her religious principles, and second, such an act will make the wrong people occupy political positions, which will not help the country in any way. She said,

No, please. I'm not going to sell it, because it puts the wrong people in positions. My first reason is that I have well-defined moral values, and I was brought up in a good Christian background. So, taking money to do something for someone is a sin against God, and secondly, it will put the wrong people in a position. This will make the wrong people occupy the right position. When this occurs, perhaps because the wrong people have been placed in the right position, they may not even have any idea of what they are supposed to do in that position they have occupied. However, due to financial considerations and other factors, they have been put there.

Notwithstanding the above views against selling their votes, some participants also shared the view that, given the chance, they would sell their votes for various reasons. For instance, George said,

Yes, I would sell my votes because of what I will gain from it, rather than not selling my votes and getting nothing. It's all about what I will gain and how substantial what I will gain is. After all, when the party or candidate comes into power, I would gain nothing from the administration.

Again, Abbey also asserted that his reason for selling his vote, if he gets the chance, is that politicians do not do anything of benefit if they get to occupy political office. He said that

I will sell my vote if I get the chance, because when they come into power, they don't do anything for us. And our chance of benefiting from them is by taking the money before they come into power. If the politicians were committed to doing something to benefit us, then I would consider not selling, but since we are all seeking our interests, I will sell.

5.4.2 Voluntary Participation to Buy Votes

After eliciting whether participants will, on their own, take the steps to sell their votes, this section asks whether they will also take the step to buy votes if they were vying for political power.

5.4.2.1 Young-Adult Participants

This section presents the views and opinions that were shared by young adult voters as to whether they would take steps to buy votes if they were seeking to occupy an office. The views shared largely support the idea that there will be an active effort to buy votes to win power or secure the positions they seek. For instance, one participant said that

If I were vying for a political position or any other position, I would buy votes if necessary. My reason is that it is a strategy to win elections, especially since I know it is a common practice among those seeking to occupy an office. So, I will buy votes; should I seek to occupy a political office just to win?

Another participant who also said he will buy votes said it will depend on whether he wins or is unpopular, and that if he realises his opponent has a greater chance, he will, by all means, buy votes to win.

Yes, I will buy votes to win the position I want. As I may be new and unfamiliar to people, buying votes will help me secure the position. So it depends on my popularity among the people who will be voting. If I realize that I am not very popular and it will be difficult to win, then I will buy votes to win power.

The above view is similar to what another participant said, that it depends on what he realises during the campaign, and that if he realises people are not really interested in hearing policies, he will resort to buying votes because the aim is to win. He said that

I will buy votes if I am vying for a political position. First of all, I will try everything to convince people with my policies, and that will be the best option if it touches the hearts and minds of the people. However, if I realize that people are not paying attention to that, then I will resort to buying votes, as I will have to do everything possible to win.

For another participant, once he has opponents who will also try to win the same electorate's votes, he will resort to vote buying to win. He said,

Yes, I will buy votes. Because it is not only I who is going for the position, there are many. Let's say we are two, and since we are two or many, not all of us can vote for me. Some will vote for the others, so I will try to buy the votes of those who are going to vote for the others to cast them in my favor.

Another participant also made the point that, in politics, it's about winning, so whatever means are necessary to gain power are good. He will thus buy votes when he is sure it will make him win. He said that

I would seek to buy votes because I want to win. In politics, it is about winning because all my opponents are doing whatever they can to gain power. It is a competition, and so I would use every means to win. We are all seeking our interests, and so there is no way I will not buy votes if that is what will take me to win.

Further, a participant referred to what he considers to be the situation in Ghana. For him, if he does not do it, his opponents will, as it is common practice in Ghana. Therefore, he will buy votes if he is vying for a position.

Certainly, I will buy. Because in the political arena we find ourselves, if you don't do it, your opponent will do it, and you will lose. In Ghana, it is a common thing for people to be doing it. I will not be the only one doing it, and so I will surely buy votes and gain political power. It is about personal interest.

A participant shares a similar sentiment and adds that in Ghana, policies do not win elections, and so he will buy votes to win.

Yes, because my other colleagues are trying to convince people to buy their votes, so I have to buy votes too. I want to win. The way things are running in the country, you have to buy because, if you try to do it the normal way, being real with the people, they wouldn't vote for you. They say policies don't win elections, so for that one, if I'm a politician, I will engage in it.

Additionally, another participant shared a similar opinion, stating that she would buy votes because, in politics, it is about winning. If she has the financial means, then she would consider buying votes. He asserted that

If I were vying for a political position, I would buy votes because I need the position, so definitely, if I have the money, I will pay others to vote for me. Politics is about winning and doing anything to win power and pursuing personal interest. So, paying money for votes is normal in politics.

A participant made his point in a very assertive manner without any condition. him, he will buy votes because money changes people, and since paying money for votes is normal in politics, he will do it. He said that,

Under no circumstances will I say that I am standing for a position and not do everything to win. Once I have the means, I will take advantage. Money influences people, even in personal decisions. Because I might be very eager for that position, I would do everything for the position. Paying money for votes is normal in politics, and so if I am seeking to occupy a political office, I will buy votes.

Yet another participant also echoed the views of previous participants that politics is about winning, and so he will do whatever it takes to win, even if it means buying votes. He said,

Yes, I will buy votes if I am seeking votes to buy. Politics is all about winning, and sometimes you have to do what it takes. I will not think twice at all because I know that any money that I spend, I will be able to get back when I win power. So nothing will prevent me from buying votes to win.

Another participant also shares the opinion that the main reason he will not buy a vote is about fairness. For him, it is not fair to use money to influence others when you know it is not good. He said,

Oh no, I do not think that I will want to buy votes if I am seeking political office. I think in equity, everything needs to be treated fairly, so I don't think it will be fair to others if I have money and I use my money to attain power by buying votes or something like that. That's how the world is going: people use their money to get what they want in the end, and they don't even have the potential.

Again, another participant also shared her view that she would not buy a vote if she were vying for a position, and said it is fundamentally against the very principles of democracy. Thus, she said,

No, I wouldn't. Buying votes is dishonest, and it goes against the principles of democracy. I'd rather lose fairly than win through corruption. Because I believe in fairness, and to be fair, you don't need to cheat, so I wouldn't buy it. I want people to vote for me because of what I can offer them.

The view shared above is similar to the opinion shared by another participant that:

No, because we are in a democratic country and people are allowed to make their own decisions as to who they want to lead them so if I'm vying for a particular position I would want the people to believe in my worth, know what I can do and believe in me rather than buying the votes.

5.4.2.2 Adults and Aged Participants

Here, the study elicited responses from participants in the adult and aged voter categories.

Participants provided varied responses. For instance, Prince shared the view that

I may choose to do the right thing by not buying votes, but what if my opponent plays a dirty game? So my way out is to use every means possible to win political power. The best way to do that is to buy votes. It is all about personal interest and what I will gain after winning, so I will buy votes if I am vying for a position.

Further, Max also shared the view that, if given the chance, he would buy votes, and he adduced the reason that, since it is about seeking political power, any means to win is justified. He said,

Yes, I will buy votes, because I want to win. So I would buy votes to get more people to vote for me. Also, because of power struggles, politics, and the benefits I will seek to gain when I am voted into power, I would definitely buy votes. Politics is about power, and money is used to get power.

The view shared above is similar to Mike's, who also said that he will buy votes because it is all about politics, and politics is about winning. If buying votes will make him win, then he will buy. He said, *"Yes, I would buy votes if I were vying for a political position, because I cannot afford to lose." This is because I will put a lot of effort and money into the election. And so, if I notice that things are not going my way and I am bound to lose, I would buy votes.* According to Jason, it is common in Ghana to use items and money to buy votes, so he will not be the only one using them to convince voters to buy them. He said that

It is the norm in Ghana now. As long as I have the financial resources, and I know that it is what will bring me success, I will do it. Politics is not whether or not something is good or bad; it is about doing everything possible to win political power. So I will seek my interest and buy votes to win power.

The above affirmative views notwithstanding, other participants shared the view that they would not seek to buy votes if they were standing for office for various reasons. For instance, Ian said that,

I wouldn't seek to buy votes, I would want to be a leader out of the people's choice, I would want the people to see me as the rightful owner of that position by allowing them to vote for me freely. I believe in fair competition and winning based on policies and vision, and also because it is not the right thing to do. So I wouldn't seek to buy votes because it is something that the laws in the country are against. I wouldn't like to buy votes.

In her contribution, Ekua states that she will not seek to buy votes if she vies for a political office. Her reason is that it is always better to get the nod of the electorate naturally, rather than seek to influence it with money. She said,

No, I will not seek to buy votes. This is because you cannot force someone to do something they do not want to. A lot happens in politics, so you just have to let the people know who you are, your policies, and your vision. If this

aligns with what the people want, they will surely vote for you naturally. If you buy their votes or support, there may come a time when you genuinely need their votes, but you will not get them. People might also take the money and decide not to vote for you.

Again, Albert will prefer upholding integrity over using any other means to win political power. He said that,

I don't see the essence of buying vote; when the person feels you are the right one for the work, he will vote for you. In the long run, people don't do the expected job after buying the vote. I believe in winning through integrity, not manipulation. Let the delegates vote from their hearts and suffering because we are in a democratic system.

The discussions in the focus group (FGD1) also yielded various views the pattern of which showed that they would not actively seek to buy votes. For instance, according to , George said that he would not buy any votes, no matter what, if he were standing for a position. His reasons are predominantly religious and deterministic: if it is the will of God, then he will. He said that

I will never buy. And if it is God's will that I aspire for that position, I will definitely win. Yes. If it is God who gave me the permission to go and aspire for that position, no matter what the people around me do. I will win without doing that if it is God's will for me to be there. People should vote based on fairness and merit, not financial incentives. I believe that political leaders should give people a reason to trust them rather than resorting to dishonest means like vote buying. Integrity matters, no matter the position.

A similar opinion pattern was seen in FGD2. For instance, Abu said he would not buy votes and gave the reason that,

No, I would not buy votes. If I decide to run for a political position, I want it to be a genuine process where people support me because they believe in my leadership. If I buy votes, the people will not truly support my ideas and policies; instead, they will have voted for me because of the money or benefits I gave them. This would weaken the legitimacy of my leadership.

The predominant opinions expressed in FGD1 and FGD2 seem to differ from those in FGD3, where participants shared forceful views in line with taking active steps to buy votes. For instance, Abbey said that, *If I wanted to win and I knew that I wouldn't get votes unless I provided something, then yes, I would. Though it's not a good practice, sometimes it's the only way to secure victory. However, the key is ensuring that after winning, I fulfil my promises to the people.* Furthermore, Thess shared similar views when she said that,

...Yes, I will buy votes. Because the system is corrupt to get a vote, I have to buy it because that is the system we are in. Inasmuch as the country we live in, if you decide not to do anything on that sort, there is no way you can get to power, so if he precisely needs power, then he has to do something small about it, but in my view, it is not the right thing to do.

5.5 Theme 5: Moral Considerations in the Vote Market

This section is dedicated to looking at the extent to which moral obligations, moral duty, or morality in general play a role in the decision to participate in the vote market. Indeed, participants' responses are necessary to determine whether moral imputations can be made in the context of the vote market and to what extent moral theories are reflected in Ghanaians' views on the vote market.

5.5.1 Young-Adult Participants

Views on whether morality should play a role in deciding whether to participate in the vote market have been varied. Among young-adult participants, the dominant opinion was that morality ought to play a role. This view was even shared by those who have participated or would participate in the buying and selling of votes if given the chance. For instance, Goddy said that,

When it comes to morality, it should stop us from getting involved in buying and selling votes. I mean, I think the whole vote market is pretty bad. But honestly, with things like needing cash and other pressures, I haven't let morality hold me back from selling my vote. It's a tough spot where life's circumstances often mess with our ethical choices.

Also, James asserted that despite his involvement in the vote market, he still thinks that reflections on the injunctions of morality must play a role in decision-making. Thus, he said that,

As I had stated in an earlier question, I have been personally involved in the selling of votes before and even taken money and other items for my vote. I know it is not good to sell or buy votes, but it is the situation that demands it. Morality is important and should play a role in preventing everyone from engaging in it. I know that morality should be used to prevent the vote market.

In the view of Tom, since morality emphasises good character, it must be emphasised very well if we can positively deal with the market. To this, morality should be appealed to in stopping the vote market, and then it should be strongly emphasised. He said that

Good character is important in making decisions. But in some situations, character is not enough, especially when one is faced with very difficult situations. So situations such as needing money, it becomes difficult to use morality. For instance, I knew taking money to vote for someone was wrong, but I did it. I think that if we want to use morality to consider whether we should stop the buying and selling of votes, then we should do it strongly.

Augustine expressed an interesting position, in which he seemed to justify engaging in the vote market, yet emphasised that moral considerations must be used forcefully to prevent its prevalence.

Participating in the buying and selling of votes is based on many factors. For me, the main reason is money, or getting something from the politicians. So even though I know it is wrong to sell a vote or buy a vote, I will do it when I get the chance. I believe that morality should play a part in stopping it because if it is allowed to continue, it will affect the democracy we should cherish.

In sharing her view, Hannah also said that developing good moral character is important for effectively addressing the prevalence of the vote market. She said that

I believe moral character should help us to check our lifestyle. I also think that it should help us to always do what is right. There is no way that we can

all accept that it is good to sell or buy votes. So if we have good moral character, then we should not engage in that which is bad. This is why I think that morality should help us to stop the buying and the selling of votes, but in my personal experience, I have engaged in taking items from politicians for my vote, but I never considered morality.

For Emma, he did not make any moral consideration in participating in the vote market. His justification was that, when it comes to need, moral justification is less persuasive, even though it should play a role. He said,

I did not make any moral consideration when I got involved in selling my vote. It doesn't mean that I do not think that morality is important in deciding whether to sell or buy a vote. For me, the circumstances that I faced around the time of the general elections were bad, so anything, small money and transportation to go home, was enough for me. So when I was offered free transport and something small, it was good. You see, when you are in need, it is difficult to consider morality.

Again, Evans also shares the view that, even though morality must be used to determine the grounds for participating in the vote market, the quest for self-benefit has been stronger. He asserted that,

...What I think is that morality should be vital in considering whether to participate in the buying or selling of votes. This is because morality deals with what is good or bad, and so, since we know it is bad to sell or buy votes, we should not engage in it. The reason why I know it is morally bad, but I will do it if I get the opportunity, is that I will gain personal benefit from it through the items or the money that I will get.

The above view synchronises with the view shared by Liz when she said that,

...We all know that morality should play a role, but we don't all consider it. The politician who is seeking power is not using morality to win. They are interested in their selfish course to get power, and when they win power, too, they continue to follow their course. So even though I should consider morality to prevent me from participating, I will not consider it because I also want to personally benefit.

Furthermore, Mary's view is that the vote market is about upholding a person's integrity. Morality is also based on living up to the integrity a person holds; on this basis, she will agree that morality must play a role in vote market participation. He said that,

For me, integrity plays a central role in the decision to buy or sell a vote. To participate in it means that one is selling his/her integrity for personal gain or money and other items. I believe this borders on morality because it is immoral to sell our vote or integrity. This is why I will personally refuse to engage in the vote market, and also say that morality should play a central role in preventing us from taking part in it.

The view shared above is similar to that of Jess, who said that

I have personal experience in the buying of votes, as I have said in answer to previous questions, but I did not do it. My decision not to do so was based on the fact that it is not the right thing to do, and also that it will mean that I am contributing to electing bad leaders who will eventually come and destroy the nation. These issues are all about morality. This is why I think morality plays an important role in the decision.

Notwithstanding this, Steve also shared the view that, in his estimation, moral considerations ought not be taken into account when deciding whether to participate in the voting market. He said that,

For me, I don't think morality should play a role in the consideration of either joining or refusing to join the vote market. I think morality is good, but in this sense, it has nothing to do with morality. It is purely in the interest of personal gains, and so even if anyone wants to make morality an issue in the buying and selling of votes, I don't think it will work.

5.5.2 Adults and Aged Participants

This sub-section also seeks to elicit responses from adults and the aged group on whether they consider moral considerations relevant to their decision to participate or refuse to participate in the vote market in Ghana. Here, Gifty shared the opinion that buying and selling votes is, in itself, wrong, and once it is wrong, it becomes a moral issue. She said that

It is about the democracy of the country. If we were to all decide to sell or allow politicians to buy our votes, what it would mean is that we will not get credible leaders. These reasons mean that it is also a moral issue. Before one decides to participate, we must ask ourselves whether it is the right thing to do. Since it is not right, then it is also a moral issue, and so, for me, my decision not to take part in it is also based on morality.

Similar views are held by Kay, who also agrees that, in the long run, the vote market may lead to the destruction of the country through bad leaders, and that morality must be considered before participating in it. He said that,

Speaking from the side of a voter, I think that I need to consider morality. This is because the politician is coming with selfish interest without having the country at heart. If I were to sell my vote to that person, it means that I have helped that person to destroy the country. So it is a fact that when you decide to sell your vote, you are engaging in an immoral act.

Again, in Jason's view, his refusal to participate in the vote market has been based on the belief that it is a wrong action, and that morality does not allow us to knowingly choose wrong actions over right ones. Thus, he shared the view that

There are instances when, during elections, political representatives have come to my community and distributed items and money for people to vote for them. I have refused to take such things, and my reason has been that it is wrong and not the right thing to do for the country. This is a moral issue because it takes moral consciousness to know whether to take those things or not. And so I believe that moral considerations must be considered.

For Max, the fact that the country's moral fabric has deteriorated is the reason for considering morality in dealing with the vote market. He said that,

Where the country has gotten to, many people don't consider morality. Worse than them are the politicians who bring money and other items to convince us to vote for them. The moral decadence in the country is too much. But I think that it is time that citizens also rise and use morality as a basis to refuse such acts by the politicians. If we know that buying or selling a vote is wrong, then we must refuse it when these politicians offer it.

The view shared above is also similar to that reintegrated by Dansowaa, who said that,

Among the most effective ways to ensure that we end the prevalence of buying and selling of votes in Ghana is to ensure that we also emphasise morality. It must start by inculcating into the youth morality and making them know that it is good to prioritise doing what is right over anything that will also lead to achieving selfish interests. For me, it is a good way to start dealing with the canker of vote buying and selling in Ghana.

The fact that morality also concerns actions deemed right or wrong has been a ground for moral considerations to participate in or abstain from the voting market. This view was shared by Dufie when she said that

It is my view that morality must be part of the things to determine whether we should take part in the buying and selling of votes. This is because it is always good to do what is always right, and this is part of what morality says. In the buying and selling of votes, even though we all do it, we know that it is wrong. So yes, I agree that morality must play a part, but we don't allow ourselves to let morality play that part.

In agreeing with the view shared above, Afia approached it from the perspective that morality is about staying true to one's conscience and doing what is right. He said that

The decision to buy and sell involves the use of conscience to refuse to benefit for selfish gain, no matter what. This is also an aspect of morality since conscience also tells us about what is good or bad. I have the view that buying and selling of votes is not a good thing, but we still do it. Morality is involved, and so it should be used to prevent its spread.

In the view of Ben, morality is an intricate part of the African's life, and so every decision taken must have moral considerations, especially for the community. He said that,

In Africa, morality is taken seriously, especially when it comes to issues such as respect, integrity, doing what is right, and others. So it is considered one of the things to consider in making decisions. I think that involving myself in the buying or selling of votes is also a decision, and so ordinarily, I should

consider morality. Honestly, I have not made moral considerations, even though I think it is very important.

The view above aligns with Tim's opinion that morality is part of our everyday life. As a result, it should form part of our decision on the vote market. He said that

I believe that morality plays a crucial role in the decisions we make every day. It guides us in distinguishing between right and wrong, especially in matters that affect our society, such as voting. Selling or buying votes is not only unethical but also undermines the very foundation of democracy. Unfortunately, I have to admit that I have engaged in it despite knowing it's wrong. It creates a conflict within me, as I value integrity and fairness. It's a stark reminder of how easily principles can be compromised, but I strive to learn from these experiences and make better choices in the future.

Then again, Kay shared a contrary view that morality should not be considered at all because the buying and selling of votes is a political issue. He said that

The buying and selling of votes is a purely political issue. As a result, I do not think it is appropriate to consider moral issues in it. This is because no one will decide to participate with moral considerations, as they are far apart. And so I do not think that we need to make any moral consideration before deciding on whether or not to participate in the buying and selling of votes.

During the focus group discussion FGD1, various views were expressed. However, the pattern that was evident in the discussion was that moral consideration is not given any attention in the decision to participate in the vote market. For instance, George said that,

Nobody can deny the importance of morality in our lives, but it is not the only thing that we have to consider. I think that the decision to buy or sell votes should not have morality in it. This is because it is a time when everyone is focused on either doing anything for power or gaining something from what they have. And so I think that morality should not play a role.

However, a different pattern was realised in FGD2, which was that morality does and ought to play a role in vote market decision-making. For instance, Juliet asserted that

I will start by asking the question of whether engaging in the selling and buying of votes is right or wrong. We will be lying to ourselves if we say that it is not wrong. So morality is associated with it. Once we consider certain actions as right and wrong, then it involves morality. I think that morality should play a role in the decision to take part in the selling or buying of votes. Even though I have said earlier that I will sell my vote or buy a vote if I am standing for a position, I still believe that morality should be considered in stopping the vote market.

A similar pattern in FGD2 was also observed in FGD3. For instance, Abbey, a member of the group said that,

I take morality very seriously, and I think that as part of the upbringing of everyone, morality should play a very important part in how we make decisions. For me, the decision to either participate or not participate in the selling of votes is a moral issue. Selling or buying votes is a wrong act, and so we cannot take morality out of it. This is why I think that we should not engage in it. Personally, I do not think that I will do it if given the opportunity.

5.6 Theme 6: Political Considerations in the Vote Market

The vote market is also considered a political phenomenon. To this end, this section seeks participants' responses on whether political obligation, such as the duties of a citizen, plays a role in deciding whether to participate in the vote market. It is realised that responses go beyond what political considerations are made to the point that these political considerations are actually vital in ending the vote market.

5.6.1 Young-Adult Participants

The views of young adults are vital to determining whether the younger generation considers duties of citizenship. This is vital because it suggests that people are aware of the flaws in the voting market, yet they still participate in it. The views given were all to the point that political obligation is crucial to any decision on the vote market. For instance, Fred shared the view that,

I think as a citizen, I have some duties towards the nation, which include taking part in the selection of leaders to form a government to rule the nation. This duty is done through elections. When I sell my vote, it means that I have

not performed this duty well. Therefore, I believe that my duties as a citizen should be considered when participating in the buying and selling of votes.

Furthermore, Rose also shared the view that political obligation is essential to the decision-making process regarding participation in the buying and selling of votes. She said that,

...It is my belief, as I have said in earlier chats with you, that buying and selling of votes is not a good thing. It tends to destroy the democracy and the governance of a country. This is because bad leaders will be selected, and they will come and seek their own interests. This is why political duty as a citizen should be used to prevent people from getting into the buying and selling of votes.

In his contribution, Andy also made the point that,

...For me, the political consideration is the duty that a citizen has towards his/her country. One of the duties is that a citizen must act to protect the interests of the state. Vote buying and selling do not protect the state; rather, they promote corruption and destroy the progress of the state. And so there should be an emphasis on political duties in talking about the buying and selling of votes in Ghana.

For Emma, even though he once participated in the vote market, he still thinks that emphasising the duties of a citizen and the fact that selling or buying a vote is wrong will go a long way to prevent its occurrence. He said that,

...I have shared my experience in the selling of votes about how I once participated. I am aware that as a citizen I have certain duties towards the state, and I am not supposed to do things that will jeopardize the nation, which I see the buying and selling of votes as something that can eventually cause that. I think that in preventing this, the duties of a citizen should be enforced.

Jess agreed with the above shared opinion with her own view that,

...yes, political considerations as a citizen should be used as one of the bases to decide whether or not a person should take part in the buying or selling of votes. This is because political duties teach us patriotism, and a patriotic citizen will not engage in selling votes, knowing that it will affect the nation.

According to Steve, the country has lost its patriotism, which helps citizens to uphold their duties. As a result, to use citizens' duties to curb the menace of the vote market, we need to start with education. He said that,

I agree that political duties are important and should be used as a yardstick if one wants to sell his/her vote. However, from where the country has gotten to, nobody is patriotic, not even the politicians are patriotic, and that is why they are very corrupt. So, I think that if we can do that, then we should increase citizen education.

Again, Goddy emphasised the need to use the duties of citizenship and political obligation to condemn vote buying and selling. He said that,

...every citizen has some obligations towards the state, and this also requires that he/she does the right thing. I have taken the initiative to vote before. But I actually did not consider anything about the state; it was for my benefit. But I think that it will be good if, in the future, we all consider our duties towards the state before engaging in the selling of votes.

5.6.2 Adult and Aged Participants

The views of experienced voters have also been sampled and presented to indicate whether they think that political considerations and the citizens' obligations are central to any participation decision in the voting market. These responses also converged on the view that the vote market must be addressed, and that the obligations of the citizen are vital to doing so. For instance, Nkuma shared the opinion that, even though everyone knows that engaging in the vote market is wrong, we still do so. To address the vote market, there is a need for attitudinal change and a focus on the political obligation of citizens. She said that,

...You see, I think in Ghana, most of us are hypocrites. We know what is right, but we do what is wrong always, yet still preach that we do what is right. The first culprits are the politicians. They know that it is wrong to buy votes, but

they are the first to come to us to buy our votes with money and items. I think we all need attitudinal change and say that political duties as a citizen do not allow us to engage in the buying or selling of votes.

The view shared above aligns with Abena's opinion that the decision on whether to engage in buying and selling votes must take into account political considerations, including the duties we all have as citizens. She said that,

...even though we do not all consider the effect of political duties that we have as citizens and do what will benefit us, it is just as important to stress the point that it should be vital in deciding whether to engage in the selling and buying of votes or not. This is because of the effect that engaging in that will have on the country.

In addition, Jason lays the greater part of the blame at the doorstep of politicians and advocates who, since they will not change, must start the change from the citizens. Also, such a change starts with knowing and practising the political duties that we have as citizens.

It is either that many people are not aware of their duties as citizens, or they are motivated by their selfish interest to engage in acts such as the selling of votes. As for the politicians, they are our problems in Ghana. So, the change must start with us, the citizens, by knowing that before one decides to sell his/her votes, we should ask ourselves if it will help the nation.

Max looks at it from a different angle. For him, the focus should be on improving citizens' living conditions, since when people are less in need, such small incentives will not be attractive. He said that,

...the situation that makes people decide to accept money or items when they know that those are being given to buy their votes is basically about poverty. A person in need does not consider his/her duties to the state. So in fact, we all know that political duties are important, but there should also be a conscious attempt to improve the conditions of citizens so that these small amounts will not be attractive.

Freda reiterates Jason's opinion, emphasising the politicians' culpability as initiators of the vote market. To curtail this, she proposes that citizens consider actions that promote the country's interests and progress in general, and that focusing on doing so is the political duty of the citizen. She said that,

...the greatest culprits in the buying and selling of votes are the politicians who only come to us as electorates and give out these items to entice us. They know that because we are poor, little money will convince us to vote for them. If we start to see things as working for the progress of the nation, which is a political duty, these politicians will not succeed.

In FGD1 the pattern that was evident was that political obligation has a role to play and as a result pursuing citizenship education is an effective way to prevent the vote market. For instance,, Abbey said that,

...We cannot doubt the devastating effect that buying and selling of votes can have on a nation, including its development and even the future leadership the nation will have. This is why everything possible must be done to curb the growing buying and selling of votes. In doing this, I agree that the political duties of citizens should play a very central role.

Philo and Esther corroborated the view that when everyone focuses on actions that will lead to the country's growth, it will help end the vote market. Further, the perspective observed under FGD2 is the recognition that citizen duties and responsibilities help in nation-building and since political obligation is seen in duties of the citizen, such duties are important. For instance, George said that,

...in other countries, things such as patriotism, national duty, etc, are taught at a younger age, and so when the child is growing, he/she knows what is to do and not to do against the state. This is not so in Africa, and especially in Ghana. There is no sense of patriotism; everyone is thinking of their stomach. This is why the politicians will always come with money and little items to buy or votes. It will be good if we all start by practicing things that are our duties as citizens.

Again, the patterns observed in FGD1 and FGD2 were also seen in FGD3 whereby political obligation has an important role to play in the participation decision in the vote market. For instance, Kay hared his view that,

...having participated in the selling of votes, I have not really paid attention to the political obligation of a citizen and the effect the action will have on the state. My focus has been on what I am going to get. In Ghana today, I doubt if anyone thinks of the other person, let alone the state. But I think it will be a good step to say that we should all consider the duties that we have to the state, and then refrain from doing something, including taking part in the buying or selling of votes.

It is generally evident from participants' responses that political considerations centre on the duties of the citizen. Again, participants have expressed the view that this consideration is crucial to curbing the vote-buying market in Ghana.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Theme	Young-Adult	Adult&Aged Participants	Similarity	Difference
Nature of the Vote Market	They see the vote market as buying/selling votes, often with money or goods; some see it as a corrupt practice, others as a norm.	Mostly see it as politicians buying votes; less emphasis on voters actively selling.	Both groups recognize material exchange, but adults focus more on the politicians' role.	
Perception of Prevalence	Believe vote buying/selling is widespread; many have heard or witnessed it, some see it as	Also, see it as rampant, especially during elections; some have direct experience.	Both groups agree on prevalence; adults cite more personal experience.	

Lived Experiences	Some have participated in or witnessed vote buying, especially in student or local elections; they have mixed feelings about accepting incentives.	Several have been offered incentives; some refuse on principle, others accept but vote their conscience	Both groups report experience, but adults are more likely to refuse incentives	
Considerations for Participation	Mostly accept to sell or buy votes. Motivations include personal benefit, lack of trust in politicians,	Mostly refuse to sell votes, citing civic duty, morality, and patriotism;	Young adults are more pragmatic; adults are more principled, but not universally.	
Moral consideration	Accept that morality and moral obligations must play a role in preventing the prevalence of the vote market.	Moral considerations are crucial to averting the vote market. The knowledge that it is wrong ought to prevent anyone from participating.	Both agree that moral obligation should play a role in curbing the vote market.	A few instances of responses show that morality and politics are parallel. Again, poor economic conditions make one forget all about morality.
Political considerations	Even though political obligations play a role in preventing the buying and selling of votes, people do not perform such political duties well.	Political considerations such as civic duty, patriotism, etc, play crucial role in preventing the vote market. There must be increased	Both recognise the role of political obligation as crucial to preventing participation in the vote market.	

		political education.		
--	--	-------------------------	--	--

5.7 Personal reflections

The prevalence of the vote market in Ghana has gone beyond mere perceptions of its existence to reality, with people having firsthand experience of participating in it or being convinced to consider it. The various considerations for participation have been based on economic conditions, distrust of politicians, and the quest to promote personal interests. Again, the considerations for refusing to participate in the vote market have been predominantly on moral grounds, such as the view that it amounts to corruption, as well as on political grounds, such as the principle of civil duty, among others. Eliciting participants' views on the buying and selling of votes is somewhat delicate, as people are not willing to immediately share, nor to open up and provide information about their actual participation. However, those who also agreed to share their experience provided rich information. In general terms, the view is that accepting participation in the buying and selling of votes cannot be justified either morally or politically.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter presents the data gathered in line with the study's themes and objectives. Here, the study presents the raw data collected from the participants. The study has not added any embellishments or responses beyond those provided by the participants in their responses to the interview questions and focus group discussions. This data will then be analysed in light of the theories outlined in Chapter Three. The aim is to ascertain the extent to which the theories will be grounded in the data. In doing this, the next chapter will engage in an analysis of the data, the literature as reviewed, and the theories as outlined in chapters two and three of the study, respectively.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in the previous chapter. The previous chapter presented the findings and reported the data gathered using the research approach outlined in chapter four of the study. The discussion of the findings will be conducted in line with the research methodological approach, grounded theory. With this, the study assesses the extent to which the theories applied to the study are grounded in the data presented. Thus, the chapter also interprets the findings within the various themes and categories under which the data were presented in the previous chapter. These themes are designed to address the study's objective of understanding the extent to which moral and political obligations ought to be reflected in the vote market in Ghana.

6.1 Representative democracy and voting

The concept of representation is simply the idea that the governed participate in governance. The historical background and practice of democracy have largely been through direct democracy, in which citizens participate in decision-making. The excesses of direct democracy led to the attractiveness of representative democracy. Representation then becomes the contemporary practice of democracy, allowing citizens to participate in governance through their representatives. This is why representative democracy is often associated with elections. According to Alkan (2021:444), representative democracy is closely associated with voting. It is considered that citizens participate in governance by selecting others to represent their interests. The selection process for representatives takes various forms, and voting in elections is part of the popular, widely practised method. Thus, according to Dalton et al. (2001:142), as cited by Alkan (2021), representative democracy basically takes the form of parliamentary rule, in which representatives are elected.

The relationship between representative democracy and voting is summarised by Urbinati and Warren (2008:389). Firstly, the sovereignty of the people is expressed through the election of individuals to represent them. Secondly, the electoral process will ensure that elected representatives are responsive to the voters who elected them. It is the case that, since direct participation in governance is impracticable (as alluded to by Dalton et al., 2001:142), especially with increased population, limited accessibility, and certain demographic barriers, the option of representation is a plausible one. In the selection of representatives, elections have presented the fairest and generally participatory mode by which citizens can be deemed to have participated in governance by selecting their representatives through voting. Further, the voting process becomes a tool for legitimising and transferring power and consent from citizens to these representatives. To this, whilst the representatives have the obligation to be responsive to the electorates and the voters that have given the mandate, the voters also have an obligation to transfer such mandate in an incorruptible manner. The linkage between the representative democracy and voting can therefore not be overemphasised.

6.2 Representation and voting in Ghana

Ghana gained independence from British colonial rule in 1957 and initially adopted a system of liberal democracy. However, the country's democratic experiment was short-lived, as Ghana soon descended into a quasi-dictatorial regime, culminating in its first military coup in 1966 (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002:2). According to Frempong (2008), although Ghana made efforts to return to democratic governance during the periods 1969-1972 and 1979-1981, each attempt was cut short by subsequent coups. The last military regime, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), held power for eleven years before transitioning to civilian rule under the 1992 Constitution, thereby ushering in the Fourth Republic.

As the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to attain independence in 1957, Ghana has undergone four republics, representing four attempts to return to constitutional rule. Since the Fourth Republic began in 1992, there have been several elections that have even led to a change in government from one political party to another and to a peaceful transition of power. The Fourth Republic has thus witnessed many elections and voting processes, at both the national and local levels. Among the main features of the Fourth Republic is the establishment of multi-party democracy. Even though there have been certain ill features in Ghana's multiparty system, as outlined by Kumi Ansah-Koi (1993), there is also the opportunity for general citizen participation in governance through voting, in which many political party options are presented to the electorate. Subject to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, national elections are held every four years. Again, voter eligibility is as prescribed by the same Constitution: a person must be 18 years old and of sound mind. These provisions demonstrate the general suffrage guaranteed by law and the right of citizens to elect their representatives every four years. It is important to note that Ghana's general elections include the election of the president and members of parliament, which are held on 7th December every 4 years. There are also national elections for assembly members held in the decentralised district, municipal, and metropolitan assemblies.

Then again, there are other elections, such as the election of members of the Council of State, an advisory body established under the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to advise the

president of Ghana on matters of national interest. Notwithstanding these, political parties also organise other elections to select their leaders and flagbearers who compete for the presidency in national elections. There are also other elections by organisations and others. These reflect the instances when citizens are engaged in legitimising some authorities through voting. The concept is that these individuals, elected through national elections, are perceived as representatives of the people. These persons are deemed to go to parliament or ascend the seat of government to represent the interests of the people who voted them into power. This feature represents what representative democracy entails in terms of the process by which leaders are selected to represent the interests of the electorate. According to Osei (2013), the role of political parties in multi-party democracy cannot be overemphasised. It is through them that citizens express their choices through voting.

6.3 Nature of the vote market in Ghana

Voter behaviour in Ghana is shaped by a multitude of factors, including ethnicity, party loyalty, economic conditions, religious affiliation, and individual identity. Scholars have noted that, across Africa, voter behaviour is significantly influenced by ethnicity, familial and community ties, economic conditions, and religion (Agomor & Adams, 2014; Ferree et al., 2014; Hoffman & Long, 2013). In their study of voter behaviour in the Ghanaian constituency of Achanso, Benson, Achanso, and Zuure (2021) observed that economic factors, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping electoral behaviour. Additionally, Bossuroy (2011) echoed Erdmann's (2007) assertion that ethnicity and material incentives significantly impact election trends in Africa, in assessing the role of ethnicity in electoral outcomes. Lindberg and Morrison (2008) also found evidence of ethnic and clientelist influences in Ghanaian elections. Bossuroy's (2011) analysis of the 2004 general elections in Ghana highlighted the prominent role of incentives; however, he observed that this influence did not extend to district-level elections. The vote market is influenced by factors such as economic conditions, party loyalty, and even ethnicity. The vote market is used to engage in a campaign based on issues and policies. According to Cesi Cruz, Philip Keefer & Julien Labonne (2016), vote buying arises because politicians cannot credibly commit to future policies or public services. Further, politicians instead rely on immediate gifts or

inducements to secure votes, particularly where institutions are weak or trust in governance is low (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2008).

The general conception of the vote market is that it is a dual-agency activity involving those seeking political office and those considered voters. Here, those seeking political office who are ordinarily considered politicians make offers to buy votes, whilst voters expect consideration for their votes in exchange. Dual agency between politicians and voters occurs when there is a reciprocal exchange in the buying and selling of votes. Thus, a participant (Andy) said that *people buy votes to increase their chances of winning elections, especially for political positions. The other side is when voters also sell their vote to those standing for a position. This happens both ways.* This means the vote market is a dual-agency market, with both buying and selling. The dual agency of the vote market is also evident in another participant's (Tom's) understanding that *it's about the means used by those standing for a position to secure many votes from those who will vote. And then those going to vote are trying to get money before they vote.* Again, yet another participant (Steve) also emphasised that the vote market is something that happens from both sides in terms of the politician and the voter. He reiterated the point that *in this case, it happens when a politician goes from house to house and shares incentives like provisions and money with the people to solicit votes. That is one side; on the other side, we see that when a person takes items, it is for the reason that he/she will vote for the person giving the items.* The findings from data gathered from participants on the nature of the vote market indicated that some participants shared the view that it is a dual-agency phenomenon, in which one person sells his vote, and the other seeks to buy it.

In fact, a participant (Sika) made the analogy that the vote market is literally like what happens in the marketplace. These views notwithstanding, other participants had a one-sided view of the vote market. By this, they hold the view that it is the buyers who are active, whilst the sellers are passive. In other words, politicians are active participants who take the step to buy votes, whilst voters are only recipients who decide to collect the incentives and vote for the politicians. For instance, while some participants, like Tom, Andy, and Afia, acknowledge that voters also sell votes, this role is often secondary. By

this, voters are frequently depicted as passive recipients or reactive actors, responding to the offers made by politicians. Thus, participants' narratives suggest that the vote market is politically driven, where demand from politicians for electoral victory fuels the exchange more than any voter initiative to sell votes. This view makes the vote market one-sided since one party is active, whilst the other is passive.

6.3.3 The vote market and nature of the exchange

The vote market is also conceptualised as electoral clientelism, whereby individuals use material inducements to persuade others to vote for them. Generally, participants understand the vote market as a process in which politicians or candidates seeking political office exchange money or material incentives for votes. In explaining what they consider to entail the vote market, several participants provided their views. For instance, John explained that the vote market is when a political party gives money or resources to voters in exchange for their votes. Rose also described it as occurring mostly during elections when someone asks you to vote for them and gives you something, even though you may not be willing to vote for them. There is the view that the vote market is rife during election periods. This is the period when politicians are very active in convincing others to vote for them.

It is further established that the content of the exchange between the politician and the voter is explicitly described by participants. Here, the material exchange for votes has been predominantly in money, though sometimes in other items. Thus, the findings presented indicate that politicians allocate funds or resources to voters in exchange for their votes, as John alluded to. Again, Fred says the vote market is seen as a corrupt practice in which voters receive money or gifts to influence their vote. In Mary's opinion, politicians often offer incentives or pay people to secure political positions, sometimes resorting to extreme measures. There is also the description by participants, such as James and Frew, that the vote market entails the phenomenon whereby candidates distribute material goods to convince voters to vote for them, whilst political delegates receive money from candidates in exchange for votes during party elections. In the view of participants such as Liz, Steve, Jess, Lamin, and Hannah, the vote market involves the instances when politicians use

money or gifts to increase their chances of winning elections, on the one hand, and the act of accepting money or gifts in exchange for votes constitutes selling one's vote on the other hand. It is thus realised that in the vote market, there is the instant provision of the material inducement. These views differentiate the vote market from merely convincing voters by sharing ideas, policies, and perspectives. Here, there must be the active provision of money or other material things. Again, the incentive to acquire votes is not based on promises to be fulfilled in the future. Thus, the buyer immediately commissions the seller by offering material incentives, and the voter is expected to vote on the basis of those incentives. Generally, therefore, the vote market is consistently described by these participants as an active exchange whereby politicians or candidates give money or goods to voters in exchange for votes, with some acknowledgement of voters' role in accepting or demanding such inducements. The practice is mostly framed as occurring during election periods and is generally seen as corruption or unethical behaviour.

6.3.4 Role of politicians in the vote market

The role of politicians and political office seekers in the vote market is central. These individuals are not just participants but key initiators and instigators of the vote market and the associated clientelist systems. For instance, Susan C. Stokes (2011) defines the vote market within the framework of political clientelism, where politicians provide material goods in exchange for votes. It is the politicians who determine who is to be the target and beneficiaries of the incentives for votes. This determination is influenced by where their support base is. Thus, for Stokes (2011:649), the criteria for distributing the incentive are based on whether they will gain the voters' support. In Ghana, most incentives to persuade voters to vote for a particular candidate tend to occur in swing regions, towns, or cities. In this vein, politicians do not worry themselves so much about areas that are termed their strongholds. In Ghana, there are fewer incidents of vote buying in the parties' strongholds and in areas where they have little support. Rather, the promises and incentives for vote inducements are made in areas considered swing districts.

In their contribution, Robinson and Verdier (2003) assert that politicians offer jobs or employment opportunities in exchange for votes to voters deemed to need them and to

areas of interest to these politicians. This also supports the position that it is the politicians who initiate the vote market. Across both young adult and adult/aged participant responses, politicians are consistently seen as the main drivers of the vote market. Further, participants emphasise that it is politicians or their agents who initiate and sustain the vote market by offering voters money, gifts, and other incentives. According to John, when a political party gives money or resources in exchange for votes, there is a vote market. To this, Mary also said that when politicians offer people incentives or pay them to vote so they can reach a particular position, it makes them play a central role. Then again, Hannah said that people vying for political positions bring money and other things to urge others to vote for them. Also, Mike averred that politicians find a very enticing way to buy people's votes by giving out money and gifts and providing transportation. In her contribution, Eunice (FGD 3) also said that politicians will entice voters by giving them money so they vote for them during the election period.

In initiating the vote market, politicians are also strategic in how they target the population to convince them with material items. Basically, they target the poor and the vulnerable in society. According to Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007:10), politicians target the poor, vulnerable, and needy with inducements, knowing they are more likely to surrender their votes for short-term material gains. Additionally, Calvo and Murillo (2004) and Desposato (2007) reinforce this by showing that politicians exploit the poor's risk aversion, offering immediate handouts rather than long-term promises. Also, politicians are perceived as exploiting voter needs, especially among the poor, uneducated, or vulnerable populations, to increase their chances of winning. For instance, according to Abbey (FGD 3), because politicians are wealthy, they gather people and persuade them with their money to sell their votes. Also, for Eunice (FGD 3), vulnerable people like the illiterate are those targeted. Again, Rose says that when someone asks you to vote for him and gives you something, even though you are not ready to vote for him, it indicates that the person has seen you in need or economically weak. According to Satz (2010) and Archer & Wilson (2014), vote buying by wealthy politicians leads to political inequality, as the rich can afford to buy more votes, thereby distorting democratic representation. The responses show that participants see politicians not just as actors but as perpetrators of electoral corruption.

Scholars such as Gersbach and Muhe (2011), as cited by Andrés Cendales (2012), argue that politicians often use intermediaries to engage in vote buying at the grassroots level. This protects these politicians' visibility and creates layers of deniability while sustaining the clientelist mechanism. It is also noted that in the vote market, politicians often operate indirectly, using agents or delegates to conduct transactions discreetly. For instance, according to Frew, aspiring candidates use delegates and give them money in exchange for votes. Again, Nkuma (FGD 2) observed that agents of political parties go to their members to entice them on behalf of their parties. Further, Max shared that politicians do it directly, or they use their assigns or agents.

6.3.5 Role of voters in the vote market

In the conception and activities of the vote market, voters, as recipients of incentives, also play a crucial role. The role they play does not make them mere passive recipients but vulnerable and sometimes complicit actors in the vote market or electoral clientelism. According to Friedman (2014) and Brennan (2011), voters are economic actors in the vote market who voluntarily sell their votes in exchange for material benefits. Friedman argues that vote selling is mutually beneficial, in which the voter exchanges a right to their vote for something they value more. More so, for Brennan (2011), voters are performing a paid action, and this transaction is morally permissible if freely entered into. Some participants acknowledge that voters are not always passive; they may also actively demand money or gifts in exchange for their votes, especially when they recognise that politicians need their support to win. For instance, according to Tom, those going to vote try to get money before they vote. Additionally, there are times when even voters will say that if they do not receive money, they will not bother to waste their time voting.

Again, some voters actively expect or demand compensation for voting. For instance, Andy shared the view that voters also sell their votes to candidates, and it all depends on the candidate who wants to win the election. These observations align with Susan Stokes's (2011) view of voters as clients in a clientelist system, in which they offer electoral support in return for material goods or favours from politicians. Thus, voters are not just selling their individual votes, but they may also be expected to mobilise others on behalf of the

politician. On this basis, Stokes adds that voters may feel obligated to reciprocate after receiving gifts, due to social norms or fear of their benefits being cut off. Also, Lippert-Rasmussen (2011) suggests that even if voters accept money or gifts, they may still evaluate party platforms and policies, because the secret ballot protects their final decision. Thus, voters may even negotiate the price of their vote, demanding more from parties they are less inclined to support ideologically. A few participants note that voters sometimes take goods or money but still vote differently, suggesting they are aware of their power and leverage in the vote market. For instance, Jess observed that people take the things meant to convince them to vote, but not all of them vote for such politicians. Again, Rose shared the experience that even when one is not ready to vote for a particular person, but incentives from that office seeker are still received when offered. These examples point to a kind of double agency, in which voters exploit the system for material gain while retaining their voting discretion.

Furthermore, Calvo and Murillo (2004), Desposato (2007), and Kitschelt (2000) argue that poor and uneducated voters are particularly vulnerable to vote-buying. These voters are often risk-averse and prefer immediate, tangible benefits over abstract promises of future redistribution. With this, Kitschelt (2000:857) notes that such voters are more likely to respond to short causal chains and instant advantages, making them prime targets in clientelist exchanges. Several participants describe voters as individuals targeted by politicians who often accept gifts, money, or favours in exchange for votes, even if they do not initiate the process. For instance, Rose gives the analogy of someone asking you to vote for him and then, because of what he wants you to do, giving you something even though you are not ready to vote for him. This shows that voters may not originally intend to vote for a candidate but are swayed by gifts. Again, Hannah observed that people are convinced and so take the money and the things offered, such as food and other goods, to vote for those people.

6.4 Perception of the Prevalence of the Vote Market

The vote market or electoral clientelism has been considered a recurring and deeply entrenched feature of Ghana's electoral system. Here, electoral clientelism has been

conceived as another name for the vote market, especially when they both fit the same definition. Clientelism refers to the exchange of material goods or benefits for electoral gain. Further, Susan Stokes et al. (2013) argue that in distributive politics, there are programmatic and non-programmatic distributions. By this, clientelism falls under non-programmatic distribution, in which an individual's access to resources depends on the political support they provide. This definition of electoral clientelism equates it with the vote market, in which voters receive targeted, often material benefits, not based on broad policy but in exchange for electoral loyalty. The responses gathered from participants in the focus groups affirmed the prevalence of the vote market. For instance, Juliet (FGD1) said that buying votes is common because few people refuse donations from politicians. Also, Albert (FGD2) observed that he had witnessed vote buying during the recent elections. Further, Thess (FGD2) responded that the vote market is a common phenomenon; even if a person has not been approached, it's all over the media.

According to Levy in Oduro et al. (2014:2), elections in Ghana are characterised by clientelism and patronage, mostly carried out by the ruling party. This reflects the fact that the vote market is prevalent in Ghana, where the ruling party uses state resources to reward supporters and influence voting behaviour. Here, Asamoah (2020) and Asante (2012) support this, noting that the ruling party controls the state's resources and has the power to distribute them, which it exercises to benefit voters and party foot soldiers. Again, Asamoah (2020) confirms that ruling parties often distribute jobs, money, and contracts to supporters, especially during election seasons. This is a clear form of institutionalised vote-buying. The practice is not isolated, and it is described as a recurrent trend. For instance, Andy observed that this troubling practice takes place openly during every election cycle. Also, Gifty observed that she had personally witnessed the distribution of items, which occurs only during election periods. Again, Clara said it is common for aspirants to pay delegates, especially in internal party elections.

Additionally, Gyimah-Boadi (2002) notes that, despite Ghana's relatively stable democratic environment under the Fourth Republic, electoral malpractice, such as vote-buying, persists, especially in closely contested elections. This shows that vote buying is

not isolated but prevalent, particularly where the ruling party uses state resources to influence voter behaviour. Also, Stokes et al. (2013) classify vote buying as non-programmatic distribution, in which benefits are exchanged for votes rather than based on policies. This model fits Ghana's practice of distributing cash, food, and favours during campaigns. Participants in the study indicate that the practice of buying and selling votes is commonplace and accepted. For instance, according to Fred, it is no secret to hear individuals talk about its practice in Ghana. Again, for Jess, it seems to be something many people are aware of, and some have accepted as a normal part of electoral campaigns. Also, Freda observed that the vote market operates openly during election periods without any attempt to hide it.

There are also scholarly opinions and those of participants, which further solidify the position that voters are also active participants in the vote market. For instance, according to Kwame A. Ninsin (1993), the Ghanaian electorate is predominantly influenced by the community's interests, hinged on the need for development, rather than as sovereigns seeking to promote democratic ideals. Thus, participants responded that voters themselves are sometimes complicit and expectant. For Lamin, it is evident from some young voters that they will not vote unless they are given money. Thus, these individuals see voting as a business. Again, Afia also emphasised that some people express excitement during election times because they expect to receive some incentives from politicians. Again, voters choose representatives through elections and conceive of them as 'economic brokers' who are expected to mediate and secure development projects and material benefits for their communities. To this, Austin (cited by Ninsin) further explains that representatives are seen as 'economic brokers,' reinforcing the idea that electoral choices are made in anticipation of material reward rather than ideological conviction.

The prevalence of the vote market in Ghana has made political engagement more transactional, and as a result, the vote has been commoditised. Thus, Kumi Ansah-Koi (1993:67) observes that there is an extremely economistic and instrumentalist perception of politics, in which politics is seen as a gold mine for personal enrichment. This shows that not only politicians, but also voters treat politics as a transaction. By this, they vote

based on what material benefits they may receive. Again, certain factors, such as economic conditions, drive the vote market and have also made it prevalent in Ghana. According to Adams Achanso, Benson & Zuure (2021), economic factors play a key role in voter behaviour in Ghana. This implies that voters respond to promises or material inducements such as money, particularly in times of economic hardship. When linked to the conception of the vote market as explained by scholars such as Stokes et al. (2013), it reinforces the idea that voters may trade their votes for short-term economic relief, a classic form of vote buying. Participants link vote selling to economic hardship and rational incentives. For instance, Abena said that people receive these items for various reasons, such as economic hardship, whilst others see it as the only opportunity to gain from politicians. Again, for Eunice, these may seem like minor incentives, but they can be very tempting for individuals struggling financially.

There is also the view that even the use of ethnicity for voting has been conceived as clientelistic in nature. For instance, Anja Osei (2013) and van de Walle (2003) both show that ethnicity plays a clientelist role rather than identity-based loyalty. Thus, for van de Walle (2003:313), even in the absence of tangible benefits, voters support co-ethnic candidates, believing they will better defend their group's interests. While this may not be direct vote buying, it reflects an indirect form of clientelism, in which ethnic solidarity is used as an alternative to securing group-based benefits from elected officials. Furthermore, the use of ethnic affiliations as the basis for the vote market has also been pushed strongly by scholars. For instance, according to Ichino and Nathan (2013), political parties have ethnic affiliations, and voters use the ethnicity of candidates or political parties as such, which is considered likely to deliver targeted benefits. Here, Ichino and Nathan advance the instrumental ethnic voting theory, which hold that voters support co-ethnic candidates in exchange for material or symbolic rewards for their group. This is a form of ethnic clientelism or vote-buying, in which ethnic identity is used as a proxy for anticipated benefits rather than policy orientation.

Participants' responses on perceptions of the vote market in Ghana can be grouped into several categories. Firstly, there is the perception of the prevalence of the vote market based

on direct personal experience. Thus, many participants personally witnessed or experienced vote buying, which forms the strongest basis for their perceptions. For instance, Mike said he knows for a fact that vote-buying occurs in Ghana, and he remembers a specific incident in which a candidate distributed money. Furthermore, Tom's personal experience also shaped his perception. Thus, he shared that he had witnessed party agents putting money in matchboxes and giving it to people going to vote. Again, Prince also shared his personal experience with the vote market, noting that he had been offered money before, even though he did not accept it, and that this made him realise how easily our democratic values can be weakened. Thus, these experiences go beyond mere rumour and constitute tangible encounters that validate the existence and normalisation of vote buying.

Secondly, participants' responses indicate that the perception of the prevalence of the vote market is also based on common knowledge. By this, participants who had not personally engaged in vote selling or witnessed it still formed their perceptions based on consistent reports from others. For instance, Andy's perception is based on common public discourse. He said that, while he has not personally witnessed such transactions, he has certainly heard numerous accounts. Again, based on her observations and hearsay, Jess said she believes she has seen and heard people engage in the vote market. Further, James also observed that, even though he has not personally experienced vote buying, the number of people who talk about it suggests it is happening. For Jason, though, he has never sold his vote; he has heard stories and seen people do it. The shared nature of these responses cements the perception that vote buying is real and widespread, even among those not directly involved. Thirdly, other participants shared their knowledge of the prevalence of the vote market based on observations made during the election and campaign periods. Thus, many participants observed that distributions of money and goods by politicians happen only during election periods, reinforcing the instrumental nature of these gifts. For instance, Gifty said she has personally witnessed the distribution of items, which occurs only during election periods. Thus, the timing of gifts suggests intent to influence votes. Furthermore, perceptions of the prevalence of the vote market are based on portrayals and information from social and news media. The media reinforces these perceptions by broadcasting

stories and images of the alleged vote market. For instance, according to Steve, there are various reported incidents on social media and some news reports that convinced him of the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana. Again, Thess (FGD2) also shared that the vote market is common because news and social media do not cover such instances.

It is thus generally observed that many participants, such as Tom, Mike, and Esther, report witnessing vote buying, including money hidden in matchboxes, party agents distributing items like rice or cooking oil, and the receipt of cash incentives during campaign periods. Even those who have not personally accepted or witnessed the act, such as James and Jason, consistently affirm its existence based on frequent accounts, news reports, and community experiences. Further, other participants, such as Freda, Lamin, and Afia, also stress that vote buying is no longer seen as taboo but is instead accepted or even expected by some voters as a routine part of Ghanaian elections. The interviews and focus group discussions provide evidence that both vote buying and selling are not only happening in Ghana but are also widely acknowledged, normalised, and practised, particularly during election seasons. Again, the prevalence in Ghana is confirmed across various age groups, regions, and electoral contexts.

6.5 Lived Experiences in the Vote Market and its basis

The drive to participate in the vote market has been based on rational choice theory, as popularised by Anthony Downs (1957) and Kenneth Arrow (1951; 1986). The theory asserts that voters and parties behave as rational actors seeking to maximise their utility or gains. There have been various reasons for the participation or non-participation in the vote market. In some cases, the motivation is not just desire but fear of exclusion from public goods or services. On this basis, Stokes (2011) argues that citizens fear that benefits and resources will be cut off. Further, vote buyers specifically target undecided or slightly opposed voters. Again, Stokes (2011) asserts that the ideal target for vote buying is the indifferent voters. Here, loyalists may also benefit, but the most effort goes into persuading undecided or less politically engaged individuals. Furthermore, others participate in the vote market from a rational choice perspective, seeking to maximise their utility. Here, voters weigh the benefits of accepting material goods or money against their political

preferences or party loyalty. In establishing the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana, it is imperative to ascertain participants' personal experiences. Participants shared several responses indicating they have personal, direct experience with the vote market in Ghana. For instance, Amina shared the experience of being offered money to travel to her hometown to vote for a specific candidate, which she accepted. Furthermore, Grace also confessed to being influenced by the money she received, even though she had already decided to vote for the candidate, confirming that vote buying worked on her by convincing her to vote for that candidate. Also, Bene confirmed receiving funds from the ruling party and observed similar actions in her community. Similarly, Joe also indicated his personal participation in the vote market, stating that he took money from party agents in his area during the election period. Mike, who had also received money for votes, confirmed a similar experience to Joe's.

Further, participants such as Max, Jan, Vida, Kobby, and Ken all acknowledged receiving offers or gifts but stressed their commitment to vote their conscience, indicating personal experience in the vote market. Some participants reported engaging in vote buying themselves, as campaign agents or candidates standing for office. For instance, Frank said he once acted as a party agent, distributing money and items to voters to secure their votes. According to Simon, when he was an aspirant for hall president in campus politics, he deliberately allocated the campaign budget for gifts to be distributed to voters to convince them to vote for him. Hans's view aligns with Simon's regarding his role and experience in student politics. It was also obvious that whilst there was open sharing of incentives, this was done without explicit indications or statements that the distribution was intended to persuade one to vote for a particular candidate. Thus, even when party agents did not explicitly state that the money was in exchange for a vote, voters understood the implication, demonstrating a shared political culture of a vote market. For instance, according to Joe, in receiving material inducements for his vote, even though the agents did not say anything as to the purpose of the items, he knew what they were meant for. The same experience was shared by Kobby, who said that, even though there was no express word accompanying the incentives, he understood it to mean that he was selling his vote.

Again, some participants shared the view that they have not personally participated in the vote market, but also confirmed that even if they had been approached to sell their vote or given incentives to vote for a particular candidate, they would take the items alright but refuse to vote for that candidate. For instance, according to Leo, if he were offered material inducements for his vote, he would accept the inducements but would still vote according to his conscience. Also, Steve had said that if he was approached with inducements, he would not reject a gift but would not vote based on it. Where institutions are weak and politicians are not held accountable, voters may trade their votes for immediate benefits. For Keefer and Vlaicu (2008), the vote market is partly driven by politicians' inability to make credible policy commitments. Again, Cesi Cruz et al. (2016) assert that politicians resort to vote buying because they lack the credibility to deliver public services effectively.

Thus, for Brusco et al. (2006), while poor people are more risk-averse, this does not always mean they will sell their votes; however, their condition increases their susceptibility. For instance, Letti shared that she rejected the money given to her because she had been told that politicians normally attach some spiritual incantations to the items and money they distribute in exchange for votes. For Kobby, once he takes the money, he has committed himself to voting for that person by all means as a matter of principle. Ken rather gave the reason that his rejection of incentives was based on his civic duty to vote, grounded in his integrity rather than material influence. According to Ruth (FGD1), she rejected the money given to her by party agents; she did not perform any tasks to deserve such gifts, and when she was told it was only an appreciation, it only strengthened her resolve not to accept it. Additionally, Philo (FGD2), who was given political party-branded items, rejected them because she was not a political activist.

Furthermore, some scholars suggest that income inequality fosters the vote market. For instance, Hicken (2007) and Stokes (2017) argue that the vote market is more closely tied to inequality than to absolute poverty. Further, Robinson and Verdier (2003) observe that vote market structures maintain inequality to preserve elite political dominance. This explains why some voters actually expect to be given incentives and thereby be recruited

to participate in the vote market. In sharing their experiences, some participants also indicated that voters were even expecting incentives, suggesting active participation and the normalisation of giving money or items for votes during the election period. For instance, Bene averred that all politicians engage in vote buying except those who do not have money. This implies that the vote market is a normal practice. Frank also said that voters themselves will make the request, and that the agents will come to these voters empty-handed, meaning they expect something to be given to them when the agents go around. Also, Ekua narrated how people, including herself, were rushing to take items being distributed by party agents at the marketplace. For Wantchekon (2003), poor voters are more attracted to short-term material benefits than long-term ones. Some accepted gifts while believing they had little long-term value from politicians, so they might as well take what was offered in the short term. For instance, according to Mike, politicians bring these things up only to convince voters, and after the elections are over, they disappear. Thus, his motivation was partly pragmatic: if politicians offered incentives, he would take them without necessarily being swayed.

6.6 Considerations before participating in the vote market

The considerations people make when deciding to sell their votes lean toward active participation in the vote market. Here, there is a difference between active and passive participation. Passive participation occurs when others approach individuals with incentives intended to induce them to participate. However, active participation is when individuals initiate or willingly accept the incentives and offers directly from politicians or their agents. In either case, whether active or passive, participants' responses are intended to elicit whether they intend to sell or refuse to sell their votes. The responses from young adult participants were mixed, but they showed a stronger inclination to sell their votes voluntarily. Here, they gave a wide range of reasons, including personal interest and gain, majority participation and acceptance, and corruption by politicians, among others. Again, the responses from adult and aged participants indicated that the majority rejected the idea of voluntarily selling their votes. They gave various reasons, including patriotism, morality, conscience, and civic duty. The sale of votes involves obtaining material benefits from an individual's vote. Another aspect of the vote market is the buying of votes. This involves

actually giving others the material benefits or incentives. By this, what one gains from buying votes involves the legitimacy to occupy an office, among others. Here, participants also gave various responses on whether they would actively buy votes from voters if they were standing for office. To this, they gave various responses to legitimise the considerations they would make in buying votes from citizens if they were standing for a political position. In his position, Kaper Lippert-Rasmussen (2011) explains that some politicians and voters view vote buying as a private contract in which both parties understand and accept their obligations. The voter receives a gift and, in return, agrees to vote accordingly. Although secret ballots reduce enforceability, this contractual logic shapes the behaviour of both vote buyers and sellers. Also, Cesi Cruz, Philip Keefer & Julien Labonne (2016) show that vote buying often comes at the expense of quality public service provision. Politicians invest in short-term inducements rather than long-term governance or public goods, especially in competitive electoral environments. This is particularly true when public institutions are weak and political actors view voters as transactional rather than rights-holding citizens.

6.6.1 Personal gain and interest in selling and buying votes

The literature indicates that the vote market can also be viewed as a rational economic exchange, especially for swing or indifferent voters who feel little ideological or party loyalty. According to Stokes (2011), these indifferent or swing voters are ideal targets for vote-buying, as they are not emotionally or politically committed to any candidate. Also, Kaper Lippert-Rasmussen (2011) adds that vote sellers may set a price for their vote based on the strength of the candidate's policies, demanding higher payments from less preferred parties. The most prominent response among the participants was that the voluntary decision to participate in the vote market is based on the satisfaction of personal interests through gains that will accrue from politicians and their agents. Their responses imply that politicians are self-serving and, as a result, it is justified to accrue personal gain by any means, including the sale of votes. The quest for personal interest and aggrandisement is also driven by poor economic conditions and vulnerability to the allure of material items and incentives. Scholars argue that poor and economically vulnerable voters are more

susceptible to vote buying because of their immediate need for survival or short-term benefits.

According to Calvo and Murillo (2004), the poor are more easily convinced to receive handouts, making them ideal targets for clientelist exchanges. Moreover, Desposato (2007) and Wantchekon (2003) emphasise that risk-averse individuals tend to prefer immediate tangible benefits, such as cash or goods, over uncertain long-term political promises. Furthermore, Kitschelt (2000:857) notes that the uneducated and poor rely on short causal chains, prioritising instant gratification, which aligns perfectly with the logic of vote selling. For instance, according to Ian, the justification for selling his votes is that these politicians only come around during elections and disappear afterwards, so vote selling is the only opportunity to gain something from them.

In a similar response, James said he would actively participate in the voting market because politicians never fulfil their promises, leaving people always disappointed. Thus, the consolation for such disappointment is to sell his vote to, at least, gain something from them. Goddy also asserted that the best option is to get something when voting since politicians do not return to the electorate after elections. For Evans, he would sell his vote if the money or items were valuable and the candidate was willing to buy. In her testimony, Liz stated that she will actively sell her vote and that everyone has a price; if the price is substantial, she will sell her vote. She also emphasised that politicians are all corrupt anyway. Additionally, Ben asserted that both voters and politicians seek their own interests, so selling votes is just part of the exchange. Ray also said that sometimes, even if you do not sell your vote, a bad leader could still win. So, he prefers to sell and gain something, especially since the majority decision determines the outcome anyway. For George, it is better to gain something substantial than to benefit from nothing in the elections. The various responses given attest to the fact that economic factors and conditions play a central role in the decision to sell votes. Scholars such as Adams S. Achanso et al. (2021) and Zakari Bukari et al. (2022) argue that economic factors, especially unemployment, inflation, and poverty, heavily influence voter behaviour. Thus, voters facing acute

economic hardship may see elections as a rare opportunity to extract immediate material benefits from politicians through vote-selling.

Apart from vote selling, participants were also asked whether they would buy votes if standing for political positions, and the considerations or reasons that would make them participate in or refuse to participate in vote buying. Here, among the reasons that participants gave for their decision to buy votes was the satisfaction of personal interest. Thus, the number of participants justified vote buying based on what they stand to gain personally from being elected. For instance, Prince said that it is all about personal interest and what he will gain after winning; on that basis, he will buy votes if he were vying for a position. Also, for Max, because of power struggles, politics, and the benefits he will seek to gain when he is voted into power, he would definitely buy votes. Another participant (a young participant) pointed out that if he were unknown or unpopular, vote buying could help bridge that gap and secure him the votes he needed. Again, other participants emphasised that politics is about winning, and therefore, vote buying is justifiable if it guarantees victory. For instance, another young-adult participant said that the main objective in standing for political office is to win, and since his political opponents will do whatever it takes to gain political power, he will buy votes if it gives him an advantage over them. This point was also emphasised by Mike, who said that politics is about winning, and that since he cannot afford to lose, he would buy votes if he were standing for a political position. These responses emphasise the view that the decision to actively participate in the vote market is largely driven by personal self-interest on the part of either the voter or the politician.

6.6.2 Distrust in Politicians and normalisation of the vote market

Among the strong positions that participants consider before firming up their decision to sell their votes is the stark distrust they have for politicians. Another major reason for vote selling is deep scepticism about election promises or about politicians' ability to deliver on policy commitments. The recurrent opinion was that politicians only approach voters during election periods and disappear after elections. This makes voting a hedge against unfulfilled promises. Keefer and Vlaicu (2008) argue that vote buying arises when

politicians cannot credibly commit to future benefits. Hence, voters prefer to be paid up front. Stokes (2011) also links vote buying to patron-client relationships, in which reciprocity is enforced not by trust but by fear. Thus, if the voter does not support the candidate, they risk losing future benefits. For instance, Emma averred that members of parliament only come around every four years and do not work for the people, so citizens should take the chance to benefit through vote selling. Joan also said she would sell her vote if the item being offered is something she needs and will personally benefit her. Scholars such as James Harding (2015) and Susan Stokes et al. (2013) discuss how non-programmatic (clientelist) distributions predominate when voters feel abandoned between elections. In sharing his distrust of politicians, Abbey believes that once in power, politicians do not do anything for citizens, so citizens must benefit beforehand.

Furthermore, the consideration of selling votes is also based on the normalisation that everyone does it, or that politicians will always engage in it. On the basis of these expectations, there is a lack of trust or of its reciprocity. The normalisation of the vote market also makes voters expect to be engaged in it, even when the offer comes from non-politicians. Kitschelt (2000) and Stokes (2011) analyse how this norm of reciprocity drives behaviour in vote markets. Even though voters are free agents, they often feel obliged to vote for those who gave them something. However, this reciprocity can also be manipulative or coercive, especially when linked to the fear of losing future benefits (Stokes, 2011). Additionally, Debrah (2014) and others point to undemocratic practices within political parties that create a culture in which politics is about loyalty rather than policy. In this study, participants emphasised that the normalisation of the vote market plays a role in their decision to actively and voluntarily sell their vote. For instance, Johnson justified selling because everyone is selling their votes, and he did not want to be seen as ‘stupid’ for not selling his vote when everyone was seeking to benefit from their votes. Furthermore, Augustine stated that vote buying is the order of the day and that many politicians have come to power through this means. As a result, it will not be strange for a voter to sell his/her votes. Then again, Leo averred that if all the candidates seeking political office are unworthy and offer nothing beneficial after they assume political office, then it can be deemed logical for a voter to sell the vote for personal gain.

The same sentiments on the normalisation of the vote market were expressed when participants were asked whether they would buy votes if they were occupying a political office. Here, several participants justified vote buying on the basis that it has become normal or accepted in Ghanaian politics. For instance, according to Jason, vote-buying is now the norm in Ghana. So, if he were running for political office, he would buy votes as long as he had the financial resources. Again, Thess (FGD3) emphasised that the Ghanaian political system is corrupt, so if she were standing for a political position, she would buy votes. This is because there is no way to get power unless a person does something, such as buying votes. For other participants, it is about the competitive aspect of elections, and since opponents are already engaging in vote-buying, they would do the same to stay competitive. For instance, a young-adult participant shared the view that vote buying is a strategy to win elections, especially when he knew it was common for those seeking to occupy an office to engage in it. Another participant emphasised that he will certainly buy votes, because in politics, if one does not do it, his opponents will, and they will win power.

6.7 Reasons for not selling and buying votes

Notwithstanding the many responses indicating that participants will actively engage in the vote market if given the chance, other responses indicate that participants will not voluntarily sell their votes if given the opportunity. As a result, they gave various responses and views on the considerations they will make before selling their votes. Their responses are as earlier shared by scholars on the views involving the vote market and clientelism. Thus, Harding (2015) argues that some voters try to hold governments accountable through elections. Drawing on Anebo's (1997) concepts of party voting and issue voting, some voters are deemed issue-driven and so look beyond the sale of votes. On this basis, there are issues such as moral and political obligations. For instance, according to Rose, she will not voluntarily sell her votes because vote selling is immoral and violates the duties and responsibilities of a citizen. Also, Jason said that even if he needs money, he will not sell his vote because it is not a good thing to do. He emphasised long-term moral consequences over short-term gains. For Thess, vote selling is a sin against God and against her Christian upbringing. She added that it puts the wrong people in positions.

Other participants also gave their reasons for refusing to participate in the vote market, citing it as against civic responsibility and democratic principles. For instance, Andy rejected vote-selling, saying that whoever deserves his vote does not need to pay him anything. He votes based on competence and campaign promises. Furthermore, Clara said voting is her obligation and choice as a citizen, and selling her vote would mean losing that choice. Max viewed voting as his right as a citizen and said he would never ask aspirants to give something in exchange for his vote. Again, Tim shared the view that his vote is his power and that selling it means giving up his power to make a real choice. He emphasised that the effects of elections last longer than the temporary gains from vote-selling. Alfred called vote selling a form of cheating that allows politicians to determine outcomes unfairly. He believes it undermines the principle that everyone should have the right to choose their leader. In his view, Christiano (2003) argues that vote buying should be rejected because it undermines the principle of equal consideration of all citizens' interests in democratic governance.

Some participants also provided reasons for not actively selling their votes when given the opportunity, stating that patriotism for the nation is sufficient to prevent them from engaging in vote selling. For instance, Sika said selling votes is not a good thing because it would have harmful effects on the country if everyone did it. Also, Kay called vote selling a selfish action that does not benefit the nation and argued that it undermines the selection of a good leader who will be accountable. Further, according to Tom, since his vote represents his power, selling it means surrendering that power. He believes that politicians take people for granted when they realise they can be manipulated. Tom's view is similar to Esther's, who explained that since voting is a right, selling her vote would mean she has sold her right.

6.7.1 Reasons for not buying votes

Participants also provided various grounds that they considered legitimate for refusing to buy votes when seeking to occupy a political position. One reason was that vote buying violates democratic principles. Thus, some participants argued that vote buying is

fundamentally undemocratic, as it undermines the principle of free and fair elections. For instance, a young adult participant stated that buying votes is dishonest and contradicts the principles of democracy. So, he would rather lose fairly than win through corruption. Another participant echoes the view that Ghana is a democratic country, where people are allowed to make their own decisions about who they want to lead them. On this basis, if he were vying for a political position, he would want people to believe in his worth rather than buying votes. Furthermore, some participants reject vote buying because it creates an uneven playing field. A young adult participant shared the view that everything should be treated fairly, so she does not think it would be fair to others if she had money and used it to gain power through vote-buying. A similar opinion is shared by Albert, who believes in winning through integrity, not manipulation. Again, participants in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), such as George and Abu, cited religious and moral convictions as reasons for rejecting vote buying.

Generally, young adults showed a wider range of responses but leaned more toward pragmatic and self-interested motivations. Many justified selling and buying for economic reasons, peer pressure, or mistrust of political elites. Older adults and aged participants were more consistent in rejecting vote selling and buying. Their responses were rooted in long-held values about citizenship, patriotism, and the sacredness of the vote, suggesting a generational gap in perceptions of democratic responsibility.

6.8 Moral considerations and obligations in the vote market

The decision to participate in the vote market, either by buying or selling votes, presents a clear ethical dilemma for many voters. The data from young adults, adults, and the aged, as well as focus group discussions, reveal that moral obligations are widely recognised but inconsistently applied in decisions about whether to participate in the voting market. To this, Jason Brennan (2009) argues that voting is not just about whether to vote, but about how one ought to vote. Thus, Brennan insists that voters have a moral responsibility not to vote badly, meaning they should not vote based on ignorance, irrationality, or immoral beliefs.

The vote market has been generally considered as an action that lacks transparency, undermines public deliberation, and replaces collective interest with personal gain. This reflects Michael Sandel's (2000, 2012) argument that some goods, such as votes, should not be commodified, because doing so diminishes their civic value. Further, the vote market undermines political equality. As Christiano (2003) argues, vote buying fails to give equal weight to all citizens' interests, a fundamental requirement for moral legitimacy in democratic systems. Furthermore, Cesi Cruz et al. (2016) argue that the trade-off between vote-buying and public service delivery highlights how short-term gains for a few undermine the long-term benefits for many, raising moral concerns about justice and fairness in representation. Across the board, many participants acknowledge that buying and selling votes is morally wrong. This means that there is a unified opinion that the vote market cannot be morally justified. The majority of the participants assert that morality should play a role in determining their engagement in the vote market. Thus, participants like Goddy, James, and Tom explicitly recognise that moral values such as integrity, honesty, and good character ought to discourage participation in such practices. Even those who admitted to participating in the vote market also affirmed that their actions violated personal or societal moral codes.

Furthermore, moral critiques are evident in concerns about exploitation, the manipulation of the poor, and systemic inequality. The scholarly work of Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007) describes vote buying as a strategy targeting vulnerable, poor, and needy individuals, implying a morally asymmetrical relationship between powerful politicians and economically desperate voters. Additionally, Kitschelt (2000) notes that poor and uneducated voters often rely on immediate benefits and may discount future policy gains, making them vulnerable to clientelist strategies. This paints vote buying as a form of coercion masked as voluntarism, which undermines the autonomy of the voter, a key moral concern. A recurring moral concern among scholars is whether vote-buying compromises the voter's autonomy. In this vein, Kaper Lippert-Rasmussen (2011) raises the issue that vote buying undermines voter autonomy, especially when voters are swayed not by reasoned policy preference but by short-term material gain. However, Lippert-Rasmussen also entertains the counterargument that if a voter chooses to sell their vote and still weighs

policy options, then autonomy may not be entirely violated. This debate revolves around moral agency, specifically whether the vote seller is acting freely and responsibly or under economic duress, and whether the vote buyer is exploiting vulnerabilities for unfair political gain. A strong theme that emerges across participants' responses is the conflict between moral duty and economic survival.

Here, even though participants recognise that morality ought to be considered in the participation in the vote market and actually ought to prevent an individual from participating in the vote market, such moral restraints are often outweighed by economic factors and the satisfaction of human needs. In line with this thought, participants such as Emma, Evans, and Augustine reveal that while they acknowledge the immorality of the vote market, their economic conditions override any moral considerations they will make. In times of hardship, moral reflection often takes a backseat to practical needs, such as money, food, and transportation. For instance, according to Emma, 'When you are in need, it is difficult to consider morality.' This introduces a dimension of situational ethics where moral obligations are subordinated to pressing personal needs. It highlights the limits of morality in contexts of deprivation, where the vote market becomes a rational coping mechanism.

There are also the postulations of the concept of reciprocity in vote markets, especially in Stokes (2011). Reciprocity is described not as mutual respect but as a norm enforced through fear or social pressure, in which accepting gifts implies a moral debt to reciprocate with a vote. This instrumental use of moral obligation is morally dubious because it distorts the voluntary nature of democratic participation. It undermines the ethical foundation of democracy, which rests on free and reasoned consent rather than manipulated obligation. In this vein, some participants treat morality instrumentally, aiming to achieve a particular end. This means that morality is useful when it aligns with people's interests, but is easily set aside when such moral considerations do not favour their personal interests. For example, Liz and Steve argue that since politicians themselves often lack moral integrity, voters are justified in prioritising self-interest over morality. In contrast, other participants also use moral obligations to refuse to participate in the vote market. Here, adult

participants such as Mary, Jason, and Gifty emphasised morality as an expression of personal integrity and civic responsibility. For them, resisting the vote market is a way to uphold democratic values and protect the public good. For instance, according to Mary, participating in the vote market means selling one's integrity for personal gain. Such responses suggest that individual values and morality can serve as civic resistance against corrupt electoral practices and the erosion of democratic norms.

It is important to note that, generally, voting is portrayed as an act of civic responsibility with moral implications. Scholars such as Harding (2015) argue that Ghanaian voters use elections to hold their governments accountable. This idea is that citizens are not merely self-interested actors but also engage in a public-spirited exercise that contributes to democratic governance. Guerrero (2010) extends this point by suggesting that voting carries a moral obligation, even if one's vote has little instrumental effect on the outcome. This implies that voting is a duty of democratic citizenship, grounded in ethical considerations of justice, fairness, and participation. Some participants have conceptualised morality as the actions that promote the general well-being of society. Here, participants such as Ben, Tim, and Dansowaa link morality to communal practice, in which right conduct is not only personal but also has consequences for broader society. These perspectives emphasise that moral education and cultural values should guide political behaviour. For instance, Ben makes the point that morality is an integral part of African life, and so it should be considered in decision-making. On this basis, moral considerations ought to play a role in any decision to participate in the vote market.

Again, there are responses that argue that morality ought not play any role in the voting market. As a result, some responses also exhibit signs of moral disengagement, a process in which individuals rationalise their behaviour to avoid guilt. For instance, George (FGD1) argues that morality is irrelevant in the vote market because elections are inherently transactional. Others, such as Juliet (FGD2), express cognitive dissonance, simultaneously affirming that selling votes is wrong while still participating in it. This demonstrates the psychological conflict between internalised moral standards and the external pressures of real-life situations, particularly in a political culture where clientelism

is normalised. Therefore, moral obligations in Ghana's vote market are acknowledged by the majority, but they are unevenly applied. They serve as a standard of right conduct, a source of resistance, and at times a source of inner conflict. However, economic hardship, political disillusionment, and systemic corruption often diminish the practical force of moral considerations. In this sense, the vote market is not simply a failure of individual ethics but also of political institutions that fail to uphold trust and fairness.

6.9 Political obligations and considerations in the vote market

Considerations for engaging in the vote market include political obligations and responsibilities that an individual must weigh before deciding whether to participate or refuse. Thus, this study has elicited responses that show significant implications for understanding the role of political obligations and responsibilities in democratic participation. These political obligations underpin many arguments about practices such as vote markets and clientelist politics. The idea that citizens have a responsibility to participate in the democratic process is implied in the concept of political responsibility and obligation, and this is also tied to the functioning and legitimacy of electoral systems in Ghana. According to Alexander Guerrero (2010), voting carries a moral and political obligation. Also, voting is a means of holding governments accountable, so it is not just a choice but also a responsibility. By this, voting becomes how voters ensure the delivery of public goods, among other things. In explaining his position, Harding (2015) observes that Ghanaian voters use elections to hold governments accountable. Thus, the individual act of voting is a collective political responsibility, reinforcing the idea that citizenship entails duties beyond private interest. In this vein, Ava Ayers (2021) and Lawrence Blum (2007) argue that voting is an expression of good citizenship, an altruistic, socially engaged act that affirms one's membership in the political community. The concept of political obligation is closely tied to civic belonging. By voting, citizens affirm their place in society and fulfil their responsibility to help shape its governance.

Furthermore, Ayers (2021) argues that denying voting rights amounts to denying a person's citizenship, implying that participation in elections is foundational to democratic inclusion. Across both groups of participants, political obligation is framed primarily in terms of civic

duties, patriotism, responsibility toward national development, and a moral commitment to good governance. The views collectively suggest that although many acknowledge the corrupting influence of vote buying and selling, citizens often engage in the practice despite knowing it undermines their political obligations.

There is also a distinction between having the right to vote and exercising it responsibly. It is noted that Brennan (2009) and Ayers (2021) both affirm that voting is a legal and political right. However, Brennan adds that this right comes with a moral constraint, and so it should not be exercised recklessly. As a result, voting rights are not morally neutral. Thus, possessing the right to vote includes a duty to consider the collective good, justice, and informed reasoning. Under the concept of political obligation, the most common theme among participants is the idea that citizens have a duty to the state, particularly through responsible electoral participation. For instance, Fred articulates this clearly when he says that voting is a civic responsibility, and selling a vote violates that responsibility. Additionally, Rose emphasises that the vote market undermines democracy and governance, and therefore, political obligation must guide behaviour to protect democratic institutions. Again, Andy highlights that part of a citizen's duty is to act in the interest of the state, and voting for sale subverts that obligation by promoting corruption. This means that participants equate political obligation with preserving democracy's integrity, making informed voting decisions, and resisting corruption. It suggests a normative belief that voting is more than a transaction and also involves a trust in citizens to act for the common good.

In furtherance, Bart Engelen (2007) and Joshua A. Douglas (2013) emphasise the importance of voting as the core mechanism of democratic legitimacy. Elections are the primary mode of political participation in representative democracies, and voter abstention weakens democratic legitimacy. When fewer citizens vote, governments lack strong mandates, and the ability to hold elected leaders accountable diminishes. Some participants state that reinforcing political duties can help curb the vote market. Participants strongly believe that moral and civic education about political obligations can serve as a countermeasure to vote-market practices, which are often driven by short-term material

incentives. For instance, despite having sold his vote in the past, Emma believes that stressing civic responsibilities could discourage vote selling and further sees political obligation as corrective and preventive. Additionally, Jess links political duties with patriotism, arguing that a patriotic citizen would refrain from selling their vote.

While participants recognise the importance of political duties, many express doubts about their practicality due to widespread apathy, poverty, and political hypocrisy. According to Steve, patriotism is largely absent in Ghana, and even politicians who should set the example are corrupt. He argues that citizen education is needed to restore civic commitment. Additionally, Nkuma highlights the disconnect between knowledge and behaviour, and says that Ghanaians are hypocrites because people know what is right but choose what benefits them materially. In the same light, Jason views the political class as the root of the problem, but calls on citizens to begin changing from within by upholding their political duties. These reflections show that political obligations are understood as aspirational ideals, often at odds with the realities of political culture, poverty, and distrust in leadership. Political obligation is thus viewed not only as an internal principle but also as one that is eroded by systemic dysfunction.

The expressive theory of voting, as described by Brennan and Lomasky (1993), posits that voting is symbolic or expressive, rather than necessarily instrumental in achieving results. From this view, the obligation is to express values and preferences, regardless of the effects of the vote. However, the above position stands in contrast to the causal and moral responsibility view, which sees voting as instrumentally and morally significant. In this vein, Christiano (2003) adds that when vote buying occurs, citizens cannot trust that their interests are being equally considered. in the best interest of the entire polity. Another recurring idea is that economic hardships undermine citizens' capacity to fulfil their political obligations. For instance, Max argues that people ignore their civic duties not out of ignorance, but out of need. Thus, poverty makes vote-buying more appealing because people are in a state of survival. Additionally, Freda agrees with the views above, adding that politicians exploit citizens' vulnerability, knowing that small amounts of money will

persuade them. This also means that strengthening political obligation and responsibility must involve a strong commitment to socio-economic reform.

Furthermore, the vote market undermines core political responsibilities by shifting electoral decisions away from civic reasoning and toward personal economic gain. In their views, Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007) and Stokes (2011) demonstrate that clientelist strategies distort the voter-politician relationship, transforming it into a transactional one rather than a deliberative or representative one. By accepting bribes or inducements, voters abandon their responsibility to evaluate candidates on public issues and instead act in pursuit of immediate personal gain. This practice erodes the representative function of elections, replacing collective obligation with private interest and gains, which is also considered a deviation from the political responsibilities embedded in democratic participation. In several responses, political obligation is conceived as a means of resisting the vote market and holding leaders accountable. For instance, Goddy admits to voting for personal benefit in the past but believes that a sense of political duty could motivate more selfless decisions in future elections. Further, Abbey, Philo, and Esther argue that focusing on actions that advance national development, a key element of political obligation, can help end the vote market. Again, George links the failure of political duty to the lack of civic education, comparing Ghana unfavourably to countries where patriotism and national service are taught from an early age. This means that political obligation is not just about voting but about ongoing ethical commitment to national progress, which includes rejecting corrupt practices and insisting on accountability from political leaders. In another vein, Felix K.G. Anebo (1997) distinguishes between party voting and issue voting, suggesting that responsible voting involves evaluating policies and governance performance rather than merely reaffirming partisan or ethnic identities. This view supports the argument that voters carry a deliberative obligation to critically assess political platforms, candidate qualifications, and public goods delivery before casting a vote. Some participants demonstrate growing self-awareness about the conflict between personal gain and political responsibility. For instance, Kay (FGD3) admits to previously ignoring his civic duties and acting based on personal benefit. However, he reflects that citizens need to ask whether selling their votes helps the state. This reveals a transformative dimension

of political obligation; citizens may not always act on it, but they increasingly recognise it as a moral compass, even if circumstances prevent them from following it.

6.10 Deontologism and the vote market in Ghana

In explaining the deontological position, Kant and later thinkers argue that morality must be grounded in duty and in acting from the moral law, not in outcomes or self-interest (Rawling 2023; Hallgarth 1998; Weiss 2014). Here, the moral worth of an action lies in its adherence to principles such as honesty, fairness, and respect for autonomy. Based on deontological principles, some participants, such as Fred, Jason, Mike, Albert, and Rose, conceive of vote buying as ‘unethical,’ ‘corrupt,’ and a betrayal of one’s civic duty. Thus, these responses reflect a deontological orientation, in which actions are condemned for violating duties and obligations to rules, not for their consequences. Central to the ethics of deontology is Kant’s position. In his categorical imperative, Kant (1994) explains that actions must be universalisable and that individuals must never be treated merely as means but as ends in themselves (Kant 2017; Singer 2011; Marques 2015). This imperative means that acts that cannot be generalised ought not to be pursued, since they do not count as moral actions. In their responses, participants such as Rose and Fred stress that citizens must uphold their democratic duty for the sake of the nation, not for immediate benefit. Others, like Gifty and Prince, emphasise that politicians betray their duty by distributing gifts only during elections, rather than showing goodwill universally.

The ethics of deontology also emphasise that certain acts are intrinsically wrong, regardless of the outcomes, for instance, lying, corruption, and selling votes, because they violate duty (Thomas 2015; Benlahcene et al. 2018). Thus, participants like Jason and Albert condemn vote buying because it violates integrity and duty, not because of its consequences. Additionally, Rose emphasises that it is not even morally right to sell one’s vote, pointing to the wrongness inherent in the act. In the exposition of his deontological position, Ross (1930) introduces *prima facie* duties. In instances of conflict of these *prima facie* duties, moral agents are admonished to use intuition to determine the stronger duty. Some participants reveal this inner conflict when participating in the vote market. For instance, Tim admits the tension between upholding integrity by not selling one’s vote and

succumbing to temptation through being convinced by incentives to vote for a particular candidate. Additionally, Esther refused money because she felt it would compromise her vote, while others, such as Mike, accepted money but still voted according to their conscience.

Again, Kantian ethics stresses that morality is grounded in universal law, that this duty applies to all equally, and that it must respect human dignity and democratic order (Tseng & Wang 2021; Donaldson 2003). Some participants, such as Fred, Jess, George, and Afia, emphasise collective traits that reflect moral obligations, such as patriotism, civic duty, and the responsibility to safeguard democracy. Notwithstanding this, other respondents, such as Ian and James, also emphasise the pursuit of personal needs as overriding any obligation. It is important to note that from the deontological perspective, leaders are bound by moral duty to uphold justice, fairness, and respect for citizens' autonomy (Weiss 2014; Krummel & Siegfried 2021). On this basis, failure to act in accordance with the requirement of duty is a violation of moral law. From participants' responses, such as those of Leo, Dansowaa, and Freda, there is a frequent description of politicians as greedy, manipulative, and failing in their duties. In other instances, some voters, such as Mike, justify selling their votes because politicians already fail in their obligations, and they disappear after elections.

Furthermore, Kant (2017), Rawling (2023), and Weiss (2014) insist that the moral worth of an action depends on whether it is done from duty, rather than from self-interest or consequences. By this, duty is unconditional and binding. In this vein, participants like Fred and Rose describe voting honestly as a duty to the nation and to democracy. This aligns with Rose and Jason's views that selling a vote is immoral and a betrayal of civic duty. This position implies that voting is a duty owed to democracy, regardless of the consequences one may gain or lose. The respondents' appeal to civic responsibility mirrors Kant's principle that morality lies in acting from duty rather than from expected benefits. The conception of obligations is that every moral agent has a moral obligation to act in accordance with the moral law. The moral law does not only apply at the convenience and discretion of an individual. This aligns with the positions of Gifty and Prince, who criticise politicians for only showing generosity during elections, suggesting that moral duty should

be constant and universal, not tied to self-interest. For Fred, voting is a universal obligation, and as a result, one must vote for the good of the country, not personal gain. These views from some participants seek to establish that the obligation to uphold democracy must apply to all citizens and politicians alike, not just in selective, self-serving moments.

Moreover, Donaldson (2003) notes that deontology emphasises treating others as ends, not means. By implication, exploiting citizens for votes violates this principle. Dansowaa and Freda criticised politicians for failing to serve the people after elections. Again, George (FGD3) noted that citizens sell their votes because politicians will not fulfil their promises anyway. These critiques reflect Donaldson's Kantian concern that politicians reduce citizens to means for electoral gain, thereby violating their moral duty to respect them as autonomous ends. Additionally, Tseng & Wang (2021) and Krummel & Siegfried (2021) extend Kantian deontology into social and political contexts, arguing that leaders and citizens have duties to uphold justice, fairness, and democratic integrity. In this regard, participants such as Fred and Jess emphasise patriotism and the duty to safeguard democracy. In the same vein, Afia condemns the sale of votes as a betrayal of the nation. It is evident that their appeals align with a deontological perspective on civic and political obligation, upholding democracy as a duty beyond self-interest. Again, Kant holds that moral worth derives from acting from duty, meaning that the moral agent's motive ought to be respect for the moral law rather than desire or benefit. This position is reflected in the opinions of participants such as Rose, Fred, Esther, and Albert, who refused inducements to vote when benefits were offered. In Kantian terms, their actions can be deemed to have moral worth because the motive is duty. Kant's test asks whether an action that a moral agent seeks to perform can be willed as a universal law. For instance, if a maxim such as 'I may sell my vote when it benefits me' were universalised, it would undermine electoral legitimacy. To this, participants such as Rose and Max, who insist on never selling, implicitly apply a universality test: they treat vote selling as a rule that cannot be universalised without destroying the practice of voting itself.

6.11 Ethical egoism and the vote market in Ghana

The phenomenon of vote buying and selling, commonly referred to as the vote market, has become a defining feature of Ghana's democratic politics. Interviews with voters across various age groups reveal a striking consistency, indicating that both politicians and citizens are motivated less by civic duty or the collective good than by the pursuit of personal gain. This pattern resonates strongly with the theory of egoism, which posits that human action is guided by self-interest and that the rightness of an action is often judged by the extent to which it advances the welfare of the moral agent (Tilly, 2022). The study argues that by bringing together the lived experiences of Ghanaian voters and the tenets of egoism, deeper insights emerge into questions such as why the vote market persists, why it is normalised, and how it reflects both descriptive and normative dimensions of self-interest. There are apparent views in the responses to the effect that whilst politicians are described as seeking office for power and private gain, voters, in turn, price their ballots and justify selling them as a rational response to broken promises and material need.

As a normative theory, egoism prescribes that the right action is that which advances the interest of the agent (Timmons 2012:14). In his view, Smith (2006:19) maintains that morality begins from the individual's satisfaction of his or her interest and only afterwards extends to society. Fang and Slavin (2018:22) similarly argue that human beings are inclined to act in their own self-interest, even at the expense of collective benefit. In applying the egoism thesis to sustainability, Daniel Flage (2008:5) distinguishes between sustainable and unsustainable interests. Sustainable self-interest secures long-term welfare, whereas unsustainable self-interest is short-lived and often causes long-term pain. This is particularly relevant to the vote market in Ghana, where short-term gains from selling votes often undermine the delivery of public services, leaving citizens worse off. Ayn Rand (1964:7) famously defended egoism as a rational ethic and asserted that morality consists in defining and pursuing one's proper values and interests, and humans ought to be considered as ends in themselves, not as means to others' ends. For Rand, a rational egoist pursues long-term interests consistent with liberty and respect for others. Applied to the vote market in Ghana, this implies that while citizens and politicians are justified in seeking self-benefit, a rational form of egoism would reject vote buying as destructive of the very

institutions that safeguard liberty and prosperity. Participants' responses also resonate with the tenets of psychological egoism, the claim that all human actions are ultimately self-interested (Feinberg 2004:479; Ivlampie 2017:377). The central thesis of egoism is therefore the pursuit of self-interest. These scholarly views reflect participants' responses to the reasons they will participate in the vote market. For example, Ian, a participant, admitted that he would sell his vote simply because it is the only opportunity to get something from politicians. In her view, Liz believed that seeking self-interest is a natural human phenomenon, and as a result, "everyone has a price." In this vein, Goddy explained that since politicians only engage with voters during elections, one should at least expect to receive money from them.

It is essential to note that even when participants acknowledged the moral wrongness of participating in the vote market, they admitted to overriding their moral principles in favour of immediate need and self-interest. For instance, James admitted that he knows selling votes is not good, but that it is allowed if the situation demands it. In the view of Emma, when the conditions of life are bad, anything that a person gets from selling his votes will be considered enough. Similarly, Evans recognised vote selling as morally bad but still justified it because of the personal benefit involved. These responses illustrate Feinberg's claim that human actions are motivated by selfish desires and that morality is often subordinated to necessity. It is also realised across the responses that politics is framed as a means to private ends. By this, politicians are described as individuals who will do anything to win, including distributing items people may need, to convince them to vote for them. Thus, it is evident in the responses of participants such as Mary, James, Esi in FGD2, Abbey in FGD3, and Fred that the goal of these politicians is to attain victory, rather than public service.

The responses show that both politicians and voters invoke egoistic reasoning to explain and justify their actions. Theory of egoism, especially in its rational form, suggests that genuine self-interest should be oriented toward long-term welfare and respect for others. As Rand (1964) and Machan (2018) emphasise, liberty and responsibility are preconditions for pursuing self-interest meaningfully. Assessing egoism in Ghana's vote market, there

seems to be a distorted, short-sighted form of self-interest. This is because there is the recognition that, by participating in the vote market, politicians undermine the very legitimacy they require to govern effectively, while citizens erode the accountability mechanisms that would improve their lives by holding politicians to their words. A more enlightened form of egoism would recognise that protecting the integrity of the vote is not only a moral duty but also a rational strategy for securing lasting personal and collective benefits.

Again, several participants admitted in their responses that they knew selling or buying votes was “not good” (Abbey, Goddy, James, Emma, Evans, Liz), but still prioritised financial gain. To this, Max added that participation in the voting market pushes people to ignore civic duty. This is reflected in Timmons's (2012:26) scholarly thoughts, which state that, in egoism, an action is moral if it benefits the agent, regardless of its effects on others. The extreme egoistic position is evident in Feinberg (2004) and Abraham (2019a), who argue that people often deceive themselves, believing they act on duty when, in fact, they act for personal gain. Here, Bentham (1991) reinforces that selfish motives are grounded in one's own pleasure. Some young adults, such as Prince, Max, and Jason, admitted that they would buy votes themselves if they sought to occupy an office through the voting process. Thus, it is about winning and doing whatever it takes. The motive is not service but power and personal gain. Generally, therefore, the Ghanaian vote market can be understood as an expression of egoism, as both politicians and voters prioritise immediate self-interest over civic duty. The theory of egoism provides a lens to explain why such behaviour appears rational, while its critics expose why it is ultimately self-destructive. What emerges is a cycle where short-term gains reinforce long-term losses. Breaking this cycle requires reframing incentives so that even self-interested actors recognise that safeguarding electoral integrity is the best way to secure their own future welfare. In this way, egoism does not merely explain the persistence of the vote market; it also offers a path toward understanding how it might be overcome.

6.12 Conclusion

This chapter provides an analysis of the data presented in chapter five, in response to the research questions and the study's objectives. Here, the chapter has assessed the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana by establishing that there are lived experiences with various considerations and attractions to participate. The fulcrum of the attraction to participate has been predominantly economic and political. That notwithstanding, the chapter has examined the roles of moral and political obligations in preventing the entrenchment of the vote market in the Ghanaian body politic. Even more, this chapter has analysed the extent to which the ethics of egoism and deontology inform the vote market in Ghana. It is recognised that there are deontological imputations to the performance of duties, and the extent to which the vote market prevents such performance. Further, the responses to participating in the buying and selling of votes support the egoism thesis, which holds that it is commendable for an action to promote the interest of the person performing it. The analysis in this chapter addresses the questions and objectives of this study. This creates the opening to develop an ethics of voting using Afro-communitarianism as a prescriptive theory in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ETHICS OF VOTING IN GHANA.

7.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to develop an ethics of voting, based on reflections drawn from the analysis of collected and analysed data on the vote market in Ghana. It was realised in previous chapters, specifically chapters four and six, that theories such as egoism and deontology form part of the theoretical influences on decision-making regarding participation in or abstention from the vote market. Again, the moral and political obligations of citizens have specific roles to play in informing moral agents about what is acceptable and/or preventing individuals from engaging in the vote market. Evident in the discussion done in Chapter Six is the revelation that most participants will, more often than not, actually participate in the vote market, with the main motivation being the satisfaction of their personal interests. Participants' perceptions of the prevalence of the vote market in Ghana were unanimous in the affirmative. This makes it pertinent to develop a moral module and to theorise on the ethics of voting and the proper treatment of votes, which this chapter is dedicated to. To achieve this, the chapter applies Afro-communitarianism as discussed in chapter four of the study and uses its basic tenets as the foundation for the ethics of voting and for how votes ought to be treated in both the practical and theoretical senses. The aim is to develop a more responsive ethics of voting using an Afro-centric theory, in response to the grounded theory method adopted by the study. Ethics of voting as a framework is defined as the situation whereby vote is deemed as having intrinsic value and voting as an activity is undertaken for its own end without any commoditisation intent.

7.1 Voting in Ghana: Afro-communitarian Approach

As the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence, Ghana offers an interesting case study of voting and the voting market. Since the Fourth Republican Constitution came into effect, Ghana's electoral system has undergone several phases, including the use of transparent ballot boxes and biometric verification devices. Even more importantly, is the conceptualisation of votes and voter behaviour, as well as the treatment of votes, which, in one way or another, affects voting patterns and electoral trajectories.

Voter behaviour in Ghana has been influenced by several factors, including ethnicity and political party affiliation. According to Kumi Ansah-Koi (1993), Ghana's political landscape has presented several opportunities for citizens to participate in elections through voting. The study has established that the prevalence of the vote market is more than a perception, as many participants have shared their lived experiences beyond mere hearsay. The factors driving participation in the vote market in Ghana have mainly been self-interest and distrust of politicians who disappear after elections and resurface when it is time for the next elections, among other reasons. These and other factors have increased voter participation in the vote market over the years. There is also the internal party elections, which have seen an overt show of vote buying and selling.

The nature of the vote-buying market in Ghana has predominantly been about offering material incentives and cash to voters to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate. This explains why participation in the vote market has largely been driven by personal gains and the satisfaction of personal interests. Many participants have expressed interest in the vote market for various reasons, including egoistic tendencies. Thus, much as some participants recognise the wrongness of participating in the vote market, the fact that their vote and indeed voting is the only available means to bargain for material incentives from politicians and seekers of political offices, such voters are willing to receive the incentives provided in exchange for their votes. Generally, therefore, active participation in the vote market makes it imperative to reassess the conception of the vote to ensure the protection and recognition of the intrinsic value of votes. This study establishes that the ethics of voting in the Ghanaian context ought to be grounded in the Afro-communitarian thesis. It is from this perspective that the thesis posits that Afro-communitarianism presents workable principles to avert the vote market and its corruptible nature, whilst promoting electoral integrity and the ethics of voting.

As extensively discussed in chapter three of the thesis, Afro-communitarianism focuses on the interests of the community over those of the individual. This basic thesis is applied to the question of whether treating a vote as a commodity aligns with the Afro-communitarian position. The justification for using Afro-communitarianism as a normative prescription

for voting ethics is that the theory presents an African-centred approach to behaviour, attitudes, and conduct. Again, the theory encompasses prescriptions of how the general socio-political life of a member of a society should be, including decision-making such as legitimising or selecting authorities and leaders. According to Jonathan O. Chimakonam & Uchenna Ogbonnaya (2022: 1-2), the basis of Afro-communitarianism is the influence of African culture. To this, Taiwo (2016:93) adds that axiological Afro-communitarianism concerns the prescriptiveness of communal living among humans. Here, the theory dictates how a person must behave in society and the acceptable behaviour each member must exhibit. As a result, the basic tenet of Afro-communitarianism has been that the individual's interest is subsumed under the community's interest, and that the community's interest must be pursued if an act is deemed to have moral content. In the same vein, Aborisade Olasunkanmi (2016:30) observes that the fundamental thesis of Afro-communitarianism is that the autonomous self is shaped by the community.

In that sense, the individual cannot extricate himself/herself from the community, and as a result, the communal interest of the community ought to be pursued since such interests are only a conglomeration of the interests of the various individuals that make up the community. It is important to note that, under Afro-Communitarianism, the individual's interests are not wholly diminished. Thus, there is the assertion of an individual's interest; however, such interest ought to align with the interest of the community, and in times of conflict between the individual and the community, the interest of the community holds sway. That notwithstanding, the community has the duty to resolve any problems individuals within the community face, whilst individuals also have the reciprocal duty to pursue the community's interests. The effect is that the community's interest is also the individual's interest.

The principles underlying Afro-communitarianism, such as community or communal interest, togetherness, common sharing (Matolino, 2009:163), among others, are a fit for the conception of voting within the ethics of voting and how votes ought to be treated. Voting is an activity used to select individuals to represent voters' interests. There is no doubt that voters and those seeking political office have their own personal interests.

Voters' interests could include improving living conditions. The data presented indicated that many participants engaged in the vote market because they saw it as an opportunity to gain something from politicians. Thus, poverty and economic needs acted as push factors for voters to seek to participate in the vote market (Stokes, 2011). Further, it was realised that egoism plays a crucial role in the considerations to participate in the vote market. For politicians, their primary interest is acquiring more votes to win political office and achieve their personal goals. This interest is enough to push such individuals to provide incentives to convince voters to vote for him. Thus, participants were emphatic that they would seek to buy votes if they were seeking political office, especially if that was the only way to win. It was also realised from the data and analysis that whilst some participants recognised that they have a duty to vote, egoistic tendencies and the effects of poverty were sufficient reasons for people to forego such duties and obligations and engage in the vote market. Thus, when a person is hungry, duty and obligation to refrain from the market as well as morality are not enough. Thus, the self-interest of individuals, be they voters or politicians, cannot be glossed over.

While the individual has an interest, the larger community or society at large also has an interest. In national elections, the state's interest is to have representatives who can effectively run the state's affairs, duly apply the laws, and implement policies that also care for the state's citizens. There are, therefore, the interests of individuals as voters or office-seekers, and the interests of the state as a political community. On this basis, in applying the communitarian thesis, the egoistic interest of the individual voter or politician ought to be subsumed under the interest of the state or society at large. The ethics of voting conceptualises that voting and the treatment of votes ought to be based on the Afro-communitarian principle, which establishes that any action that does not promote the interest of the larger society of which the vote market forms part ought not to be pursued over those actions which promote the interest of the larger society.

The justification for grounding the ethics of voting in the principle of community interest in Afro-communitarianism is that voting outcomes always go beyond the interests of the individual. Indeed, when leaders are selected through voting, they become public officials

with a public duty to perform. Thus, the process of selection ought to be devoid of subjective dispositions, and communal and community goals ought to underlie such a selection process. It is on this basis that the vote itself must be treated as valuable beyond monetary and other incentives. Again, interests, approaches voting as an avenue to foster the community's course over the individual. Afro-communitarianism, with its pursuit of the community's interests, views voting as an avenue to advance the community's interests over the individual's by selecting leaders accountable to the people. This explains why Afro-Communitarians' pursuit of community over the individual (Menkiti 1984:172) is a fit for the ethics of voting.

Apart from the community's interest, Afro-communitarianism promotes principles of togetherness and common sharing, among others (Obioha, 2014). By these principles, even individual interests become the interests of all members of the community. This is because the idea of common sharing makes every act of one person affect the other person. Thus, the interest, decisions, and acts of individuals in society are intertwined, and so one ought to act with the thought that any action or decision that a person takes, one way or the other, has an effect on others in the community. These principles also apply to the ethics of voting and how votes ought to be treated. This is because, based on togetherness, any act of an individual in society is seen as affecting other members of the society, including the choice of leaders who ought to promote the good of the society. On this basis, if an individual pursues self-aggrandisement, which leads to acts such as selling votes or buying votes, such an individual has acted without the basic principle that such an act will invariably affect others. In effect, the concept of togetherness and shared responsibility dictates that every decision an individual takes be guided by its effect on others. to the effect that treating votes as a commodity could result in the selection of leaders who will not promote the good of society, an individual acts against the principles of Afro-communitarianism when he/she monetises voting.

Furthermore, Afro-communitarianism recognises that the community has a duty towards the individual by ensuring that all problems the individual faces are addressed to the extent of the community's capabilities Gyekye, 1992). Here, the community provides for the

individual in terms of security, freedom, and land, among others. Generally, the community helps improve its members' living conditions. This also applies to the state as an entity that bears the same duties towards its citizens. In a representative democratic state, these duties are performed by representatives elected by voters to represent their interests. For such duties to be adequately performed, it is necessary to ensure that representatives are properly elected. When votes are made transactionally, it diminishes the further obligations elected officials have to citizens to ensure the state's duty to them is fulfilled. Further, it also prevents voters from demanding that these duties be performed, especially when such voters have already exercised their right to accountability. On this basis, when voting is conceptualised and established on the principles of Afro-communitarianism, the effect is that whilst the egoistic pursuit of the voters is diminished for the interest of the society to be promoted, the society also becomes capable of performing its functions towards the members of the community by taking care of their basic needs. Again, the consequential posture of the vote market indicates that it eventually corrupts society and erodes the legitimacy to hold politicians accountable. On that basis, the principle of the community's duty towards individuals in society means that if an individual's action affects others, and the individual pursues personal interest by selling his or her votes, then such an action will lead to the election of corrupt leaders who will in turn, not perform the duties that the community ought to perform towards the individuals. For instance, if the society has the duty to care for the welfare and security of its members, and such duties are placed in the hands of the society's elected leaders, then selling votes to elect those leaders will prevent the society from fulfilling its security duties to its members. In this vein, the duties of the community or society to its members do not stand in isolation from the elected, who are responsible for ensuring their performance. Whilst Afro-communitarianism recognises that the community has a duty towards its members (Chimakonam & Ogbonnaya, 2022), the ethics of voting posit that when votes are treated as a commodity through the vote market, the community is unable to perform these duties, since leaders who will not be accountable to the people will be elected to office.

Again, Afro-communitarianism holds that acts that harm society are immoral (Wiredu, 2008). This is because the interests of the individuals in the society combine to form the

interests of the community. Thus, if an individual acts to harm society, they are also harming the members of that society. According to Ross, in his conception of prima facie duties, moral agents have a duty of non-maleficence. This is a self-evident duty and thus available to every moral agent. To act to cause harm to others is to act immorally. With respect to voting, Brennan (2011) believes that the duty not to vote poorly also entails the duty not to vote in a manner that harms society, and voting in a manner that harms society is tantamount to voting irrationally and ignorantly. The issue, therefore, on the basis of material inducement will harm society and, by extension, the individual members who comprise it. The individual has a duty to protect society, whilst society also has a duty to protect the individual. The individual's obligation does not permit them to pursue egoistic interests, but rather to act in an altruistic manner. On this basis, the ethics of voting as proposed by this study establish that the vote market and citizen participation in it are antithetical to the basic principles of Afro-communitarianism. The test of harm is done by assessing the kind of leaders who will be elected through the vote market. In other words, will the buying and selling of votes result in the election of leaders who will be responsive to the citizens while promoting the good of the society? The response to this question is negative because when an individual sells her/his votes to a politician, or when a politician buys votes from an individual, there is no further obligation to society should the politician hold a subsequent office. In this sense, the politician's acts will be to maximise his profit and recoup all resources used to secure the office. The effect is that society will be harmed, which Afro-communitarianism considers immoral. Based on the discussion on Afro-communitarian perspectives of voting, I proceed to establish an ethics of voting in the succeeding section.

7.2 The Ethics of Voting

In a representative democracy, citizens exercise authority through representatives who are directly elected or chosen by the people. Thus, it is when citizens are deemed to govern themselves indirectly through individuals that they have chosen to act on their behalf. The power to act on behalf of citizens is then granted through selection processes such as voting. Thus, through voting, citizens can choose individuals authorised through the same process to act on their behalf. Thus, as defined in chapter one of the work, voting is the process

through which citizens express their preferences. Here, the preference is for persons deemed capable of representing such a voter and exercising power on his/her behalf. Chapter five confirmed that several factors are used for such preferences, including political affiliation, ethnicity, ideological leanings, and agreements, among others. To this, the study has established in the literature review, as found in chapter two, that voting in Africa is predominantly informed by ethnicity, kinship, and neighbourhood, and as a result, when a particular candidate is deemed to be advantaged by possessing these three attributes, such a person has a greater chance of winning. Whilst the study recognises the presence and effects of factors that affect preferences, the focus is mainly on what is termed the vote market, in which voting preferences are anchored in material benefits or the buying and selling of votes. According to Kramon (2013) and Schaffer (2007), vote buying involves offering material benefits to influence voters during election campaigns. Here, political parties, candidates, and their agents use materials as incentives to convince voters to prefer them over other contestants. The same principle applies to vote selling, in which voters demand and require political office seekers to offer material incentives in exchange for votes.

The ethics of voting, in part, concerns the conceptualisation of how voting as an activity ought to be perceived. Within the discussion of the vote market, scholars such as Msekwa (2012) and Mi Yung Yoon (2020), among others, conceive of the vote market as corruption and a cancer that must not be allowed to fester in a democracy. Generally, conceptualising the ethics of voting also involves assessing theories of voter behaviour, including the expressive and epistemic ethics of voting (Brennan and Lomasky, 1993). The expressive ethics of voting is the theory that voting is merely a process through which citizens express themselves (Brennan and Lomasky, 1993). This position opposes the epistemic ethics of voting, which holds that voting is an activity undertaken because it is a person's duty to vote (Christiano, 2003; Beerbohm, 2012). By this, the call to duty and the recognition of obligation describe the reason for voting. It is essential to recognise that the theoretical underpinnings of why a person votes shape how votes are treated. For instance, in arguing for the rightness of the vote market, Allen Buchanan (2002) proposes legalising it and treating votes as a resource. In such a conceptualisation, resources ought to benefit the

holder thereof, and as a result, it is not immoral for the holder of a vote to seek to maximise profit on such a resource.

It is important to recognise that voting as an activity is not an end in itself but a means to an end. By this, the results of voting are the selection of representatives to pursue the collective interests of the voters. Thus, there are ethical obligations to voting, namely voting for a person who has the potential to protect the collective interests of society's members while advancing society's progress, among others. The additional obligation is to ensure that one does not diminish the right to hold such political office holders accountable through all legitimate means, which means is diminished if the voter engages in the vote market to select the leader. To this, the ethics of voting, in terms of conceptualising votes, are central to the recognition and exercise of power given to representatives to act on behalf of voters. This means that elected representatives have ethical obligations, and the fulfilment of those obligations is based on the voting process that legitimises them. According to Urbinati and Warren (2008), elected representatives also have ethical duties to perform in the positions they have been elected to. This means that, as part of the duties of occupying such an office that they have been voted for, there are obligations of service that they need to fulfil as occupants of such an office. Thus, for Mansbridge (2003), a common value is shared by the voter and the individual being voted for, which is why ideal voting ought to consider the character of both the voter and the representative. To this extent, the voter's treatment of votes affects the recognition and fulfilment of the elected representative's obligations. In this vein, Adetula (2011) has recognised that elected representatives are required to reason like the voters who have given such individuals the mandate to exercise power on their behalf. In conceptualising voting, there has been the widely pushed view that voting is a civic duty of citizens. According to Ayers (2021), citizens can participate in the community through voting, and thus voting is seen as a civic duty. As a civic duty, voting is seen as a virtuous act in which citizens select suitable individuals to serve as representatives.

In this vein, once voting is a duty, the suppression of voting could also amount to the suppression of a citizen's right. In this sense, Fishkin (2011) and Ayers (2021) argue that

voting and the right to vote are closely tied to the concept of citizen equality. Additionally, Bart Engelen (2007) also observes that voting is the avenue through which citizens can participate in public life. By linking voting to citizens' participation in governance, it becomes an obligation for citizens, as members of the community or society, to perform certain duties towards the state. These duties include participating in the society's activities, imposed either by law or as a moral requirement. Apart from conceptualising voting as a duty with an attendant obligation to participate in governance, as well as perform other civic duties through electoral participation, there is another view that voting is only an individual's expression.

From another angle, Brennan (2009) asserts that, just as voting is a right, individuals have the duty not to vote poorly. By this, individuals should abstain from voting rather than vote badly. In this case, there is no obligation on an individual to vote, as it is a right that can be asserted once guaranteed. However, immediately an individual asserts such a right, there is an obligation to exercise it in an informed and rational manner. To say that a vote is a bad one is to mean that such a vote is exercised based on immoral beliefs, ignorance, and epistemic irrationality. Such bases for votes are harmful to society and the community. Once a person has the obligation not to act in a manner harmful to society, then voting against the public good is considered immoral. Among the pertinent questions in the ethics of voting are why people vote and, ethically, why they ought to vote. The fact that voting is a guaranteed right in a democracy is without doubt. However, the reasons for a citizen or community member to assert this right have been the subject of various discussions. This explains why some believe that citizens vote because it is a duty they ought to perform. That notwithstanding, the view that voting as an activity has its own accrued benefits to the voter, and it is for such benefits that individuals are motivated to vote. For instance, according to the rational choice theory, people decide to vote because the expected benefit of voting outweighs the cost of not voting. This theory aligns with the expressive ethics of voting theorists, who also assert that voting is merely an expression of a voter's support for a candidate.

The expressive and rational choice theories conceive of voting within the egoist perspective. Here, the expression of preference extends beyond an emotive feeling for or admiration of a particular candidate. Rather, it emphasises expressions that are subject to, such as monetary and other material incentives. According to the egoist position, as detailed in chapter three of this work, an action is right if it expresses or satisfies the individual's interests and preferences. On this basis, the expressive theorists prioritise egoism as the motive for voting beyond any other considerations. Similarly, the rational choice theorists also satisfy the thesis of egoism. This is because the main consideration for voting is that the net benefit of voting for the individual outweighs the cost of not voting. By this, the primary consideration in voting is the voter's subjective judgment. It is important to note that, whilst treating a vote, the egoist prioritises the voter's personal interests; as with other considerations, the egoist prioritises the voter's personal interests over all others. In this vein, when a vote is conceived within the ethics of egoism, there is subjectivism underlying the reason that a voter decides to vote. This also extends to the extent to which a voter treats votes. Here, the vote serves a particular end for the voter. Egoism proposes that the highest good (*summum bonum*) of an action is the promotion and satisfaction of the self-interest of the person acting. On this basis, the result of an action is the satisfaction that the moral agent derives from the action. In terms of voting, the ethics of voting becomes acceptable within the egoist's view when the consideration for voting is to promote the interest of the voter. This simply means that the vote is only a means to the voter's ends. This makes sense in instances such as the vote market, where votes advance the interests of the voter or the person seeking political office. To the extent that the vote market is considered to have a negative effect on society and to be an affront to the promotion of ethical ideals, the egoistic conception of voting undermines the right moral conception of voting.

The study conceptualises that as long as egoistic tendencies cannot be fully eradicated from the treatment process, there are ethical obligations to consider votes beyond personal interest. Thus, when votes are seen as promoting the personal interests of the voter, it opens up several characteristics and reasons for engaging in the vote market. As a result, the study emphasises that the ethics of voting requires that voting be a public good and that the public

interest be protected. Furthermore, it is based on upholding the value of voting beyond the egoist perspective, which will, in the end, also require that elected representatives perform their obligation towards society. In this vein, fidelity to moral principles and the values of voting begins with the voter conceiving of voting as more than mere personal benefit and as resulting in the election of representatives who fulfil the moral obligations associated with the office they were elected to occupy.

7.3 Vote and the Vote Market: Ethics of Voting Applied.

The vote market has been discussed from various perspectives, the most popular being political economy. Its discussion within political philosophy as a social ethics has not enjoyed much academic space in the literature. The vote market, as extensively discussed in chapters two and three of the study, has been understood as the buying and selling of votes through material inducements, including money. Stokes has conceived of the vote market as political clientelism, a system that uses material incentives to secure electoral support. For Kitschelt & Wilkinson (2007:10), clientelism also involves the use of material inducements to persuade electorates, especially the poor. Stokes (2011) also agrees that clientelism is strongly linked to poverty. By this, the target of voters buying their votes is those considered poor and, therefore, easily persuaded by financial inducements. Thus, in the vote market, when it comes to material inducements, poor voters are considered risk-averse (Desposato, 2007; Wantchekon, 2003; Kitschelt, 2000). Here, the voting areas where citizens are easily persuaded to participate in the vote market are those with low living conditions; inhabitants in such areas are easily persuaded to sell their votes or accept material inducements in return.

There seems to be a consensus that the vote market ought not be encouraged in a democracy, and the evidence for this is the perspectives shared by participants as discussed in chapters five and six of the study. According to Michael Sandel (2000:114-115) and Debra Satz (2010:102), there could be no defence of its encouragement in any political system. To the extent that the value of the vote is weakened by commodifying it, it cannot be encouraged, especially when the vote market diminishes values such as fairness and accountability. For Wilson (2014), the vote market will lead to wealth-based political

inequality. By this, politicians with economic means will always have an advantage over those without, enabling them to buy more votes. Taken from another angle, scholars such as Saul Levmore (2000) and Hansen (2000) have argued that it is intrinsically wrong to say that voting should benefit the rich, when such people are seeking political office, which wrongness is promoted when individuals argue that crucial in politics and seeking political office politics is the maximisation of utility. These notwithstanding, Brennan (2011) and Friedman (2014) have also argued for the moral permissibility and legalization of the vote market, respectively. To them, the vote market leaves both the buyer and the seller better off. This is because economic exchange is always mutually beneficial. For Friedman (2014), voter liberty ought to be upheld, and by this, voters must be allowed to treat their votes in the manner they want, including selling them. To this, David Estlund (2007:261) adds that the state must not interfere in any manner in how a person decides to treat his/her votes. These are considered economic interpretations of the potential benefits of the vote market, arguing that the market is unethical and that the focus should be on profit and utility maximisation.

This study establishes that whilst economic interpretation and political economy assessment of the vote market may yield reasonable positions and conclusions, the same cannot be extended to moral considerations. Ethical considerations for the permissibility of the vote market could not be forcefully canvassed. The position that voters should be allowed to treat their votes as they see fit, including trading them, is problematic in certain instances. It is established in chapter two of this study that central to democracy is the practice of its attendant ideals, such as liberty, freedom, and protection of rights, among others. As a result, citizens are deemed to have rights that are either inalienable or granted. To the extent that these rights are granted and guaranteed, it becomes the duty of the citizen to exercise these rights *bona fide*. This means that rights, in themselves, are not unreasonable. Thus, the right to association is restricted by the type of association and by whether it harms society. To this extent, unfettered freedom seemed illusory. That notwithstanding, the right to vote is different from the treatment of votes. In other words, the right to vote does not necessarily translate into the right to treat the vote as the individual sees fit, including openly trading it for material incentives.

Whilst the right to vote relates to the freedom of the citizen to participate in the choice of a representative, the treatment of voting concerns how a citizen handles the very activity, voting, which she/he has a right to perform. In other words, voting is a right, but the very treatment of the vote is not a right. This is because a person has the right to vote or not, as stated in another form and understood as the right to exercise his/her voting rights or decline to do so. In this vein, a person's decision not to vote does not mean she/he has lost the right to vote. This study asserts that the exercise of the right to vote entails the duty to treat votes in a manner that promotes public morality and allows for just and fair representation. In this vein, the vote market is the product of how voters tend to treat votes. Here, when votes are treated as a resource, as conceived by Brennan, the effect is that voters and politicians will seek to maximise the resource or get more value from a vote. Again, voters will also seek to maximise their utility by selling their votes for material incentives.

It is important to note that once a person decides to exercise the right to vote, such a person has a duty to treat their vote in a particular manner and, thus, vote right. Voting rights mean that the vote a person exercises ought not to harm society and the community in which the person lives. The vote market treats voting as a transaction with no further obligations after it is completed. Here, neither the voter nor the politician has any further obligation to hold the politician accountable, nor does the politician have any further obligation to ensure the provision of public goods for the progress of society. However, the ideals of representative democracy, through which voting is exercised, do not require that, whilst in office, politicians sever all obligations to the state and the voters. Conversely, voters have ongoing obligations even after voting, such as calling for accountability and holding elected officials to account to better represent the interests for which they were elected. The vote market diminishes the assertion and the recognition of these obligations of the voter and the elected person. This is because the value of a vote and the treatment of a vote, which allows for the performance of further obligations, have been transacted. Thus, the moral impermissibility of the vote market stems from the inability to impose further obligations on both the voter and the elected official after participation.

Among the considerations for participating in or refraining from the vote market are the moral and political obligations of persons, as established in chapter six of the study. According to Ved Prakash Varma (1977:610), to have a moral obligation means that a person has a moral duty to act even when such an action is against his/her enlightened self-interest. In the classical work of H.A. Prichard, knowledge of what we ought to do, or our moral obligations, is self-evident, making moral obligations and their knowledge identical to mathematical truths. A similar position is held by W.D. Ross, who argues that some duties or obligations are *prima facie*. The recognition of moral obligation cuts across both teleological and deontological perspectives. Further, the appreciation and achievement of the highest good, be it through the egoist self-interest or Kant's goodwill or categorical imperative, is a moral obligation. Moral agents, as individuals with the capacity to determine which actions are right and which actions are wrong, are also endowed with the capacity to determine the requirement of moral obligation to act in accordance with the actions that are considered right. Thus, acting in accordance with prescribed rules and principles, and with actions deemed to promote society, is an obligation.

In another vein, political obligation has generally been conceived as the duty to obey a society's laws. These laws could be written statutes, conventions, norms, or settled practice. Thus, according to Ved Prakash Varma (1977:610), political obligation is, in simple terms, the duty to obey laws. The conception of political obligation is traced to the Hobbesian and Lockean conceptions, in which citizens pledge to submit to an authority and therefore to obey the laws of the society. It is important to note that there are obligations that arise only when something happens or when they are voluntarily undertaken, as in a duty that entails performing certain acts beyond voluntariness. For instance, a person has a duty to tell the truth or protect a life regardless of who is involved. However, if a person has an obligation to keep a promise, that obligation arises when something requires it. Additionally, Bhikhu Parekh (1993:240) argues that, in practice, a civil obligation. This obligation also involves the recognition and respect for the political authority. In his contribution, Raz (2006:104) asserts that political obligation goes beyond the duty to obey laws to include the duties to advance the interests of the polity or the society. By this,

individuals not only have the duty to obey the laws of the society but also to seek to promote the communal and community interests of the society. This also means that acts deemed detrimental to society's interests and progress are not to be pursued, and, as a result, citizens have the obligation to refuse them.

It is evident in the preceding chapters, specifically chapters five and six, that moral and political obligations play a significant role in the decision to participate in or abstain from the vote market in Ghana. Thus, the responses by Ben, Tim, and Dansowaa, among others, indicated that the obligations to society contributed to their decision not to engage in the vote market. This study establishes that moral agents have a duty not to cause harm, whether a moral or a political obligation. For Brennan (2011), voters have a duty not to vote badly, which means voting in a manner that harms society. This study establishes that society does not benefit, even remotely, when voters decide to engage in the voting market. This is because the vote market gives the rich an undue advantage over the poor, as well as diminishing the accountability available to voters. Further, apart from obedience to the laws of society, political obligation also prescribes that a moral agent performs actions that promote society's interests, as posited by Raz (2006). In this vein, the vote market cannot be justified under political obligation when its promotion and participation are not in society's general interest. This is because the commoditisation of votes erodes accountability and any further obligations the buyer and seller would have towards society after elections. In this vein, it becomes imperative that one appeals to political and moral obligations to offer legitimate justifications for participating in the vote market.

7.4 The Ethics of Voting as a Science of 'Oughtness'

In prescribing acts that have moral content, one main feature of normative theories is their prescriptiveness. Thus, normative ethics requires that moral agents act in accordance with its principles for the action to be considered moral. The science of 'oughtness', which characterises ethical theories, also applies to the ethics of voting. In this sense, the ethics of voting invites moral agents, in this case, citizens, to conceive of votes as having intrinsic value and not an instrumental value for which they ought to be commodified. To this end, the ethics of voting prescribe the moral conceptualisation of votes to preserve their value

and escape situations such as the vote market. The prescriptions of the ethics of voting and the treatment of voting are such that voting, though a right, entails obligations and duties that require voters to protect its value.

Furthermore, treating votes as ends in themselves means that elected representatives fulfil the obligations imposed on them when they occupy public office. The fulcrum of Afro-communitarianism is that the pursuit of the community's interests is prioritised over individual subjective interests. In this vein, the interest that voters and politicians may have to participate in the vote market ought to be subsumed under the interest of the society at large, which by convention establishes that a citizen ought not to sell or seek to buy votes. The protection of the sanctity of society, the avoidance of injustice, and the promotion of political wealth inequality, among others, have been conceived as part of the resultant effects of promoting the vote market. As a result, the ethics of voting conceives that economic pervasiveness ought not to be allowed to invade voting, and as a result, the vote market ought to be avoided. In doing this, central considerations include moral and political factors that a citizen ought to consider when refraining from acts that could harm society.

7.5 Intrinsic Value and Treatment of Votes

To say that a thing possesses intrinsic value means that it is valuable in and of itself, independent of any external factors or consequences (Sandler, 2012). This implies that what qualifies for an ascription of intrinsic value is that the thing is inherently good or worthwhile, and that its goodness does not depend on any other thing, whether extrinsic, instrumental, or conditional, for its value. In other words, intrinsic value is an innate quality of the object or action itself. Accordingly, scholars such as Lemos (2021), Wang (2022), and Kremer (2024), among others, have argued that when something is considered valuable in itself, it possesses an intrinsic goodness that is a fundamental aspect of its nature. Conversely, if the goodness of an object or action depends on its relationship to or consequences for other things, then that goodness is non-intrinsic or instrumental. This study regards voting as having intrinsic value and inherent worth that should not be commodified or subjected to commercial exchange. The concept of intrinsic value emphasises that votes must be respected and protected by individuals, especially because

we have a moral obligation to uphold their integrity and significance. Further, Roothaan (2025) contends that intrinsic value is the foundation of all other values; if nothing has intrinsic value, then no other form of value can truly exist or be meaningful. Despite recognising the intrinsic value of votes, it is important to understand that this does not imply an unrestricted or absolute right to vote. The intrinsic value of votes indicates that there are certain moral obligations, responsibilities, and permissible actions associated with their use.

Furthermore, to regard something as possessing intrinsic value, its defining characteristics must originate from within the object or action itself, rather than being solely derived from external relationships or contingent circumstances. Intrinsic value has traditionally been associated with the concept of the *summum bonum*, or highest good, within various normative ethical theories. In the context of voting ethics, this study proposes that votes should be considered to have intrinsic value. This means that the inherent worth of votes is an aspect of their nature, and that their use in selecting a representative does not diminish or alter this intrinsic quality.

7.6 Principles of Ethics of Voting

The prescription for treating voting based on the ethics of voting within the Ghanaian context is grounded in some principles developed by the study. As a result, this study has elicited some principles based on discussions of Afro-communitarianism and the ethics of voting, which ought to guide the treatment of voting and voting as an obligatory activity.

1. The principle that whilst voting is a right, the exercise of a vote has attached obligations, and this requires that a voter maintain the value of a vote by not substituting the same for material gains.
2. The principle that a person bears an obligation not to vote to harm society, and that, since the vote is a legitimising weapon that allows citizens to hold elected officials responsible, monetising it diminishes the power to hold elected officials accountable to the office they occupy.
3. The principle that voting rights lead to the performance of public obligations imposed on elected officials to take care of the needs of voters. However, trading

one's vote also affects the recognition and fidelity of elected officials to their obligations to voters in particular and to the state in general.

4. The principle that in the exercise of voting rights, any monetary considerations made by a voter or any provisions made by office seekers for the purpose of acquiring votes are deemed selfish interests that are averse to the progress of the whole society. This is because pursuing selfish interests is unethical and tends to breed corruption, authoritarianism, and unaccountable governance.
5. The principle that the general welfare of the society is primary, whilst any personal interest by citizens is secondary, and as a result, the interest of the individual must be subsumed under the general interest of the society. With respect to the ethics of voting, treating a vote as having intrinsic value, which is diminished when it is commodified, allows voters to hold elected leaders accountable and thereby promote the welfare of society. Again, the general welfare of the society is weightier in consideration than any personal interest a voter may have, including the interest to increase an individual's utility by selling his/her vote.

The study uses these principles developed through its analysis of how votes ought to be treated to prescribe an ethics of voting. As a synthesis that proposes how individuals ought to conceive of voting and refrain from engaging in the vote market, the ethics of voting is anchored in certain prescriptive principles that serve as guidelines and applicable maxims for conceptualising voting.

7.7 Conclusion

The chapter has sought to develop principles and conceptions that underlie the ethics of voting and the treatment of votes. This is based on the analysis of the vote market in Ghana. The central realisation from the data is that the vote market is prominently practised in Ghana, especially during national elections and internal political party leadership elections. The primary considerations for participation have been self-interest promotion and distrust of politicians. The recognition of the negative effects of the vote market on the body politic of Ghana led participants to realise that, although political and moral obligations ought to prevent them from participating in managing and ending the vote market, its impact is not felt in practice. This chapter develops an ethics of voting

grounded in Afro-communitarianism. The ethics of voting prioritise the interests and good of society over any individual consideration. It proceeds from the premise that the vote market is driven by individual interests seeking to maximise profit from the vote, and that these interests align with an egoist position that prioritises the individual's interests. However, such a position is antithetical to the Afro-communitarian principle. In this sense, the individual's interest is subservient to the wider society's, and to the extent that the vote market potentially harms society, the individual's pursuit of aggrandisement ought not to be prioritised over society's interests. Having provided the framework and the principles for the ethics of voting in the Ghanaian context, the next chapter summarises and concludes the study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.0 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the contribution the study makes by prescribing an ethics of voting grounded in Afro-communitarianism. This chapter first provides a summary of the work, outlining the task set from the beginning, the process by which it was achieved, and the outcome. It provides a concise exposition of the study and allows for the recap of what the study is about and the general outcome after the study has been completed. Secondly, the chapter concludes the study by succinctly outlining the study's outcome and the extent to which it serves as a basis for further research and policy-making in Ghana.

8.1 Summary

This study comprises eight main chapters dealing with various sections to respond to the key and subsidiary research questions and objectives. Chapter one provides a general introduction to the study. It contained the background to the study, providing a general summary of the work. Again, chapter one presents the objectives and research questions that have guided the work to this stage, along with a preview of the methodology and the theoretical framework. The general focus of Chapter One was to introduce the study broadly and to set out the task the researcher seeks to undertake. Central to understanding the background and the task of the researcher has been to ascertain the literature and scholarly discourses in the areas of the vote market, representative democracy, and the extent to which ethical and political interrogation can be made. In this vein, the study set Chapter Two to include a literature review of the relevant themes. Chapter two is a detailed engagement with the literature on themes such as democracy, representative democracy, ethical obligation, critiques of representative democracy, the practice of representative democracy in Africa, and in Ghana, among others. Again, chapter two also discusses the literature on voting in Ghana, voting behaviour, the vote market, and the ethics of voting. The chapter finally discusses the research gap in the literature and the extent to which this study contributes to knowledge and helps close the perceived gap. It was realised that although there have been scholarly discussions on the themes outlined in the said chapter,

the focus on determining participation or non-participation in the vote market has not been explored in detail, especially in the Ghanaian context. The study then focuses on the extent to which moral and political obligations may influence participation decisions in Ghana's vote market.

Chapter three of the study further discusses the applicable theories to be used in the work. Here, the theories are necessary to provide a theoretical basis and to reflect on the field data. Chapter three discussed three main theories: deontology, egoism, and Afro-communitarianism. Throughout the discussions, the chapter demonstrates the relevance of each theory to the study's focus and further discusses its shortcomings. Since the study employs grounded theory, it is necessary to outline the relevant theories in detail. The study used egoism and deontology as descriptive theories to show how they are reflected in the gathered data. Further, the study employed Afro-communitarianism as a prescriptive theory, serving as the foundation for developing a framework for voting in the Ghanaian context. The study also used the Chapter four to outline the methodology and the method that was adopted to conduct the study. Here, chapter three states that the study used a qualitative methodology and adopted grounded theory as a method of enquiry. The data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions from selected cities. The justification for the research area has been about its cosmopolitan nature and the observation that votes from these areas change over time in terms of political party affiliations. Chapter four, thus, provided the general method, from data gathering to analysis, and the justification of the method adopted for the study.

Chapter five of the study is the presentation of the findings gathered from the field. Here, the data are presented thematically to address the various research questions and the objectives the study seeks to achieve. In accordance with ethical prescriptions and as outlined in chapter four of the study, the participants have been represented with pseudonyms to protect their identity. This is in accordance with the consent and the ethical clearance given before undertaking the study. The findings have been analysed in the chapter six of the study. Again, the analysis is designed to address the research questions and the study's objective. Further to this, and based on the adopted method, grounded

theory, the data is analysed within the descriptive theories detailed in the chapter three of the study. Here, a reflection on how the data are presented in the theories of deontology and egoism is provided to inform whether the field information aligns with or does not align with the selected theories. The data revealed reflections on the ethics of deontology and egoism, creating an opening for the study to develop a framework for the ethics of voting and how votes ought to be treated, using Afro-communitarianism as a foundation.

Chapter seven of the study marked the framework created based on the exposition and the analysis made from chapters one to six of the study. Since the analysis and discussion in chapter six opened an avenue for the creation of a synthesis, theory, or framework based on the grounded theory method, this chapter outlines a framework for an ethics of voting in the Ghanaian context. The chapter posits that the data and analysis show that the vote market is a reality and reflects the applicable theories, as well as the roles that moral and political obligations play in the participation decision in the vote market. On this basis, the ethics of voting based on Afro-centric communitarianism first conceives of voting as a right with an attached responsibility to treat the vote not as a resource but as something with intrinsic value. In this vein, treating a vote as a resource exposes it to economic interpretations and to the quest to increase its utility by buying or selling it. The chapter elicits principles that ought to underlie the ethics of voting in the Ghanaian context and how votes ought to be treated. Chapter eight is the summary and conclusion of the entire study, summarising the work and indicating how the study has achieved its objectives and answered the research questions set out in chapter one.

8.2 Conclusion

The main contribution of the study the framework of the ethics of voting developed within then Ghanaian context. The study aimed to achieve a set of objectives, which also translate into the various research questions it seeks to answered. Specifically, the key objective was to assess the role that moral and political obligations play in the buying and selling of votes in Ghana. This key objective informs the key research question: whether moral and political obligations play a role in deciding whether to participate in, or abstain from, the vote market in Ghana. At the end of the study, this objective and question were answered,

indicating that moral and political obligations actually play a crucial role in preventing participation in the vote market. However, because of factors such as personal interest, self-aggrandisement, and economic conditions, among others, these obligations have not been applied to any decision on participating in or abstaining from the vote market. These responses to answering the key objective and research question are reflected in chapter six of the study.

To adequately address the key objective and research question, the study also addressed the subsidiary questions and objectives. Firstly, the study set out to ascertain the prevalence of the vote market, whether it is a mere perception or reality. In looking at this, data was specifically gathered from participants to ascertain their knowledge of the vote market and its prevalence. Here, participants shared their lived experiences beyond what they have heard about the buying and selling of votes. Furthermore, the objective was to understand the considerations voters take into account in deciding whether to participate in the vote market. Here, the study specifically elicited responses and analysed the various reasons that voters have in deciding to participate in the buying and selling of votes. The responses and analysis revealed that voters have several reasons for participating in the voter market, such as a lack of trust in politicians and poor economic conditions. Additionally, the reasons for not participating in the vote market centred around civic duties, patriotism, and moral wrongness, among others.

Again, the study sought to investigate how the theories of egoism and deontology inform the vote market in Ghana. In looking at this objective, the study began with an exposition of the theories in chapter three and examined how they are reflected in participants' responses. Chapter six has sections dedicated to assessing the extent to which the theories are reflected in the vote market and the responses participants gave. It was established that indeed these theories find reflection in the data presented in Chapter Five of the study. The final task of the study was to ascertain how Afro-communitarianism can help develop an ethics of voting and to develop a framework for that ethics. This objective was addressed in chapter seven of the study, which includes an introduction, exposition, and the

proposition of a framework for the ethics of voting. In doing so, the study proposed principles to serve as a foundation for the treatment of the vote.

8.3 Conclusion

In general terms, the study interrogates voting as a vital activity in sustaining representative democracy and examines the prevalence of the vote market, as well as the role of moral and political obligations in participation decisions. This study opens up avenues for further research on integrating the framework developed in Chapter Seven into policymaking and extending the research to conduct a comparative analysis.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, K. K. A. (2019a). Humanised Deontology: A Theory for Contemporary Moral Philosophising. *International Journal of Integrative Humanism* Vol. 11, No. 2, October 2019, 1-17.2012
- Abraham, K. K. A. (2019b). On Immanuel Kant's Concept of Duty. *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 20(2), 27-52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v20i2.2>
- Abramowitz, B., & Mattei, N. (2018). Flexible representative democracy: An introduction with binary issues. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1811.02921*.
- Achanso, A., Benson, G., & Zuure, D. (2021). Factors Influencing Voters' Choice in Elections in Ghana: A Case Study of the Kumbungu Constituency of the Northern Region. *American Journal of Leadership and Governance*, 6(2), 1-15.
- Adeate, T. (2023). Limited Communitarianism and the Merit of Afro-communitarian Rejectionism. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 12(1), 49-64.
- Adegboye, A. A. (2013). Consolidating participatory democracy in Africa: The challenges and the way forward. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(2).
- Adetula, V. (2011). Measuring democracy and 'good governance' in Africa: A critique of assumptions and methods. *Africa in Focus: Governance and the 21st century*
- Agomor, K., & Adams, S. (2014). Determinants of voting behaviour in Ghana. In *Global Awareness Society International 23rd Annual Conference* (Vol. 4, pp. 1-12).
- Akuamoah, E. M. (2017). Intra-Party Conflicts and The Prospects of Democratic Consolidation in Ghana's Fourth Republic: A Comparative Study of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). M. Phil. Thesis: University of Ghana.
- Alabi, J., & Alabi, G. (2007). Analysis of the effects of ethnicity on political marketing in Ghana. *International Business and Economics Research Journal*, 6 (4), pp. 39-52.
- Alkan, Y. S. (2021), "Representative Democracy and the Concept of Representation: Do

- They Have a Legitimizing or Checking Function?”, *Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, C.5, S.3, Kasım 2021, s. 441-453. S. (2021), “Representative Democracy and the Concept of Representation: Do They Have a Legitimizing or Checking Function?”, *Stratejik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, C.5, S.3, Kasım 2021, s. 441-453.
- Anebo, F. K. (1997). Voting Pattern and Electoral Alliances in Ghana's 1996 Elections. *African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique*, 38-52.
- Ansah-Koi, K (1993). The Socio-Cultural Context of Multi-Party. In Ninsin & Drah. *Political parties and democracy in Ghana's fourth republic*. The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations.
- Anshevich E, Fitzsimmons Z, Vaish R, Xia L (2021) Representative proxy voting. In: Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, vol. 35, pp 5086–5093
- Ansolabehere, S. and Snyder, J. M., Jr. (2002). Party control of state government and the distribution of party expenditures. Typescript. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Anton N. I. (2014). An overview of qualitative research methodology for public health researchers. *International Journal of Medicine and Public Health*, 4(4), 318–323.
- Antunes, R. (2010). Theoretical models of voting behaviour. *Exedra*, 4(1), 145-70. *approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Archer, A., & Wilson, A. T. (2014). Against vote markets: a reply to Freiman. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 8(2), 1-6.
- Arrow, K., Sen, A., & Suzumura, K. (2011). Kenneth Arrow on social choice theory. In *Handbook of Social Choice and Welfare* (Vol. 2, pp. 3-27). Elsevier.
- Asamoah, K. (2020). Addressing the problem of political vigilantism in Ghana through the conceptual lens of wicked problems. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 55(3), 457-471.
- Asante, K. (2012). Beyond Ghana's Election 2012: The Challenges of Rescuing a Country in Crisis. *A Personal Memoire*.

- Asekere, G. (2021). The 2020 general elections in Ghana: An analysis of the issues, voting pattern and impact. *Social Sciences*, 10(1), 15-27.
- Ayee, J. R. A. (2015). Manifestos and agenda setting in Ghanaian elections. In Ninsin, Kwame A. (ed). *Issues in Ghana's Electoral Politics*, Dakar, CODESRIA. [1]
[SEP]
- Ayers, A. (2021). Voting as Exclusion. *Fordham L. Rev.*, 90, 373.
- Aytimuretal, R. E (2014). Voting as a Signalling Device, 55 *Econ. Theory* 753
- Aziz H, Brill M, Conitzer V, Elkind E, Freeman R, Walsh T (2017) Justified representation in approval-based committee voting. *Social Choice and Welfare* 48(2):461–485
- Babbie, E. (2013). *The practice of social research* (13th ed.). Wadsworth.
- Baier, K. (1973). Ethical egoism and interpersonal compatibility. *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 24(6), 357-368.
- Baliqi, B. (2017). *Public Policy and Governance- Pristina*. Fondacioni Konrad-Adenauer, pp. 85-90.
- Baumane-Vitolina, I., Cals, I., & Sumilo, E. (2015). Is ethics rational? Teleological, deontological and virtue ethics theories reconciled in the context of traditional economic decision making. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39, 108-114.
- Beerbohm, E. (2012). *In Our Name: The Ethics of Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Benlahcene, A., Zainuddin, R. B., Syakiran, N., & Ismail, A. B. (2018). A narrative review of ethics theories: Teleological & deontological Ethics. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 23(1), 31-32.
- Bentham, Jeremy (1781/1991). *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Reprinted in part in Raphael (1991), Vol. II, pp. 313–346.
- Berelson, B. R., Lazarsfeld, P. F. & McPhee, W. N. (1954). *Voting: a study of opinion formation in a presidential campaign*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berisha, Fejzulla (2011). *Introduction to the right*. Prishtinë, pp. 110 -114.
- Bitafir I, F. (2020). Election security and violence in Ghana: The case of Ayawaso West Wougou and Talensi By-elections. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 10(1), 32-46.
- Blum, L. (2007). Race, National Ideals, and Civic Virtue, 33 *Soc. Theory & Prac.* 533, 533–34.

- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. University of California Press.
- Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2014). Party Youth Activists and Low-Intensity Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of Party Foot Soldiers' Activism. *African studies quarterly*, 15(1).
- Bossuroy, T. (2011). Ethnicity and election outcomes in Ghana. *Document de travail UMR Dial DT/2011-05*.
- Boykin, A. W., Jagers, R. J., Ellison, C. M., & Albury, A. (1997). Communalism: Conceptualization and measurement of an Afrocultural social orientation. *Journal of Black Studies*, 27(3), 409-418.
- Brandt, R. B. (1964). The concepts of obligation and duty. *Mind*, 73(291), 374-393.
- Brennan, Geoffrey and Loren Lomasky (1993). *Democracy and Decision*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brennan, J. (2009). Polluting the polls: When citizens should not vote. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 87(4), 535-549.
- Brennan, J. (2012). The Ethics of Voting 3–5 (rev. ed. 2012)
- Brennan, Jason (2011). The Right to a Competent Electorate, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 61/245: 700–24.
- Brusco, V., Nazareno, M., and Stokes, S. (2004). Vote buying in Argentina. *Latin American Research Review*, 39 (2): 66–88.
- Bryant, A. (2009). Grounded theory and pragmatism: The curious case of Anselm Strauss. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(3).
- Buchanan, A. (2002). Political Legitimacy and Democracy. *Ethics*. Vol. 112(4): 689-719.
- Buchanan, James and Gordon Tullock (1962). *The Calculus of Consent*. University of Michigan Press.
- Bukari, Z., Abdul Hamid, A. B., Md. Som, H., Agbemabiese, G. C., & Quansah, F. (2022). Do political issues matter in voting intention in Ghana? A political marketing perspective. *Cogent Business & Management*, 9(1), 2034227.
- Calvo, E. and Murillo, M. V. (2004). Who delivers? Partisan clients in the Argentine electoral market. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48 (4): 742–57.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E. & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American voter*.

- New York: Willey.
- Campbell, A., Gurin, G., and Miller, W. E. (1954). *The voter decides*. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson.
- Campbell, R. (1972). A short refutation of ethical egoism. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 2(2), 249-254.
- Caramani, D. (2017). “Will vs. Reason: The Populist and Technocratic Forms of Political Representation and Their Critique of Party Government.” *American Political Science Review* 111 (1): 54–67.
- Carothers, T. (2006). *Confronting the Weakest Link. Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Cendales, A. (2012). Vote buying, political patronage and selective plunder. *Latin American Journal of Economics*, 49(2), 237-276.
- Chambers, C. P. (2008). Consistent representative democracy. *Games and Economic Behavior*, 62(2), 348-363.
- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509–535). Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2011). *Grounded theory methods in social justice research*. Sage.
- Chimakonam, J. O. (2018). Can individual autonomy and rights be defended in Afro-communitarianism?. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 7(2), 122-141.
- Chimakonam, J. O., & Awugosi, C. I. (2020). Afro-Communitarianism And The Question Of Individual Freedom. *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy*, 21(2).
- Chimakonam, J. O., & Nweke, V. C. (2018). Afro-communitarianism and the question of Rights. *Theoria*, 65(157), 78-99.
- Chimakonam, J. O., & Ogbonnaya, L. U. (2022). Can Afro-communitarianism be useful in combating the challenge of human interaction posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(21), 14255.

- Chivanga, S. Y. (2018). Research design and methodology considerations in social science research.
- Chivanga, S. Y., & Monyai, M. (2021). Research methods and research methodology: Distinctions and applications in social science research.
- Chivanga, S. Y., & Monyayai, M. (2019). Understanding research methodology in social sciences.
- Christiano, T. (1996). *The Rule of the Many: Fundamental Issues in Democratic Theory*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Christiano, T. (2003) “An argument for democratic equality,” *Philosophy & Democracy*, ed. Thomas Christiano. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 39–68.
- Collins, H. (2010). *Creative research: The theory and practice of research for the creative industries*. AVA Publishing.
- Cooney, A. (2010). Choosing between Glaser and Strauss: An example. *Nurse Researcher*, 17(4), 18–28.
- Cooper, T. L. (2012). *The responsible administrator: An approach to ethics for the administrative role*, 6th Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3–21.
- Cornelius, W. (2004). “Mobilized Voting in the 2000 Elections: The Changing Efficacy of Vote Buying and Coercion in Mexican Electoral Politics”. In Domínguez, Jorge and Lawson, Chapell, eds. *Mexico’s Pivotal Democratic Election*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five*
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Cruz, C., Keefer, P., & Labonne, J. (2016). *Incumbent advantage, voter information and vote buying* (No. IDB-WP-711). IDB Working Paper Series.

- Cunningham, W.J. (2015). Deontology. In *An Introduction to Philosophy and Theology within Catholic Liberal Education*, edited by Angus Brook, 144-152. North Ryde, NSW: McGraw-Hill Education (Australia) Pty Ltd
- Dagger, R and Lefkowitz, D. (2014). "Political Obligation." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Stanford: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
- Dahl, R. A. (2020). *On democracy*. Yale University Press.
- Dalton, R. J., Burklin, W. P. and Drummond, A. (2001). Public Opinion and Direct Democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 12(4), 141-153.
- Daly, M. (1994). *Communitarianism: A New Public Ethics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Darwall, Stephen (2006). *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Debrah, E. (2014). Intra-Party Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic: The Case of the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress. *Journal of Power, Politics & Governance*, 2 (3), pp. 57–75.
- Debrah, E. (2016). The Ghanaian Voter and the 2008 General Election. *Politikon*, 43 (3), pp. 371–387.
- Debrah, E., & Gyampo, R. E. (2013). The Youth and Party Manifestos in Ghanaian Politics: The Case of the 2012 General Elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 12 (2), pp. 96–114.
- Denters, B., Vollaard, H., & van de Bovenkamp, H. (2020). Innovating local representative democracy: How citizens evaluate new roles of elected and non-elected representatives. *The Innovation Journal*, 25(3), 1-21.
- Denters, Bas & Lawrence E. Rose. (2013). "Willing to stand...if asked: Candidacy for Local Council Elections in the Netherlands and Norway." Pp. 185–208 in Silke I. Keil & Isabell Thaidigsmann (eds.), *Zivile Bürgergesellschaft und Demokratie. Aktuelle Ergebnisse der Empirischen Politikforschung*. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Springer.
- Desposato, S. W. (2006). How does vote buying shape the legislative arena? Pp. 144–79 in *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, ed. F. C.

- Schaffer. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.
- Diamond, L., & Morlino, L. (2005). *Assessing the quality of democracy*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Donaldson, T.M. (2003). Ethical resources for the clinician: Principles, values and other theories. In *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics*; Beauchamp, T.L., Walters, L., Kahn, J.P., Mastroianni, A.C., Eds.; Borden Institute: Washington, DC, USA; pp. 15–38.
- Douglas, J. A. (2013). Procedural fairness in election contests. *Ind. LJ*, 88, 1.
- Downs, A. (1956). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Drah, F. K., Ninsin, K. A., & Drab, F. K. (1993). Political Parties and Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic. *Accra: Woeli Publishers*.
- Dunn, J. (2005). *Democracy: A history*. Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Dwyer, W. (1975). Criticisms of Egoism. *The Personalist*, 56(2), 214-227.
- Egwutuorah, I. C. (2013). Igbo communalism: An appraisal of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 2(1), 403-416.
- Engelen, B. (2007). Why compulsory voting can enhance democracy. *Acta politica*, 42, 23-39.
- Engward, H. (2013). Understanding grounded theory. *Nursing Standard*, 28(7), 37–41.
- Enke, B. (2018). Moral values and voting. *Journal of Political Economy*, 128(10), 3679-3729.
- Erdmann, G. (2007). Ethnicity, Voter Alignment and Political Party Affiliation - an African Case: Zambia. GIGA Working Paper Series.
- Esaiasson, Peter & Narud, Hanne Marthe (2013), Between-Election Democracy: An Introductory Note. In Esaiasson, Peter & Narud, Hanne Marthe (eds.), *Between-Election Democracy. The Representative Relationship after Election Day*, pp. 1–14. ECPR Press, Colchester.
- Eshleman, A (2014). "Moral Responsibility" Philosophy Faculty Publications and

- Presentations. Paper 1.
- Estlund, D. (2007). *Democratic Authority*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Etzioni, A. (2015) "Communitarianism." In: Gibbons, M. T. (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, First Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., doi: 10.1002/9781118474396.wbept0184, pp.1-5.
- Famakinwa, J. O. (2010). 'The Moderate Communitarian Individual and the Primacy of Duties', *Theoria* 76(2): 152–166. doi: 10.1111/j.1755- 2567.2010.01064.
- Fang, J., & Slavin, N. (2018). Ethics—Comparing Ethical Egoism with Confucius's Golden Rule. *Journal of Business and Economic Studies*, 22(1), 17-31.
- Farragher, L., & Coogan, D. (2018). Uncovering richness in data: Grounded theory in practice.
- Fayemi, A. K. (2009). Towards an African theory of democracy. *Institute of African Studies Research Review*, 25(1), 1-21.
- Feinberg, J (2004). Psychological Egoism. Pp. 476-488 from Russ Shafer-Landau and Joel Feinberg (eds). *Reason and Responsibility*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Ferree, K. E., Gibson, C. C., & Long, J. D. (2014). Voting behavior and electoral irregularities in Kenya's 2013 Election. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8(1), 15
- Fishkin, J. (2011). Equal Citizenship and the Individual Right to Vote, 86 *IND.L.J.*1289, 12.
- Flage, D. (2008). Was Berkeley an Ethical Egoist?. *Berkeley Studies*, 19, 3-18.
- Flinders, M., & Hinterleitner, M. (2022). Party Politics vs. Grievance Politics: Competing Modes of Representative Democracy. *Society*, 1-10.
- Folson, G.K (1993). Political Parties and the Machinery of Democracy. In Ninsin & Drah. *Political parties and democracy in Ghana's fourth republic*. The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations.
- Freiman, C. (2014). Vote markets. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 92(4), 759-774.
- Frempong, A. K. (2008). Innovations in electoral politics in Ghana's Fourth Republic: An analysis. *Dakar: CODESRIA*.
- Frezza, E. E., & Frezza, G. E. (2017). Ethics and Deontology in Business. *Austin J Bus Adm Manage*, 1(2), 1007.
- Fridy, Kevin, S. (2007): The elephant, umbrella, and quarrelling cocks: Disaggregating

- partisanship in Ghana's fourth republic. *African Affairs*, 106 (423): 281-305.
- Gagnon, J. P. (2009). The Element of Democracy: A Theory and Definition of Democracy Implications for the MDGs. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals: Old Problems, New Challenges Conference, Melbourne, 30 November – 1 December 2009
- Garsten, B. (2009). Representative government and popular sovereignty. *Political representation*, 90, 91.
- Gastil, J., & Richards, R. (2013). Making direct democracy deliberative through random assemblies. *Politics & Society*, 41(2), 253-281.
- Gersbach, H. and F. Muhe (2011), "Vote-buying and Growth". *Macroeconomics Dynamics*, Vol. 15, Issue 5: 656-680.
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). Theoretical sensitivity. Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (2004). Remodeling grounded theory. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 5(2).
- Glaser, B. G. (2005). The grounded theory perspective III: Theoretical coding. Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. C. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.
- Golder, Matt and Jacek Stramski (2010). "Ideological Congruence and Electoral Institutions." In: *American Journal of Political Science* 54.1, pp. 90–106.
- Goldman, A. I. (1999). Why citizens should vote: A causal responsibility approach. *Social philosophy and policy*, 16(2), 201-217.
- Green-Armytage J (2015) Direct voting and proxy voting. *Constitutional Political Economy* 26(2):190–220
- Green, D., Palmquist, B. & Schickler, E. (2002). *Partisan hearts & minds: political parties and the social identities of voters*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Green, T. H. (1986). *Lectures on the principles of political obligation and other writings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grimberg, Maurits & Hans Vollaard. (2016). De Rekrutering en Selectie van Kandidaat-gemeenteraadsleden. *Bestuurswetenschappen*, 70(2): 20-42.

- Guerrero, A. A. (2010). The paradox of voting and the ethics of political representation. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 38(3), 272-306.
- Gupta, C., & Sachdev, K. N. (2020). An Account of Ethics, Deontological Theory and its Applications in Understanding Ethical Impermissibility of Euthanasia.
- Gyekye, K. (1987). *An essay on African philosophical thought: The Akan conceptual scheme*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gyekye, K. (1992). Person and community in African thought. In K. Wiredu & K. Gyekye (Eds.), *Person and community: Ghanaian philosophical studies* (pp. 101–122). Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Gyekye, K. (1997). Person and community: In defense of moderate communitarianism. *Tradition and modernity: Philosophical reflections on the African experience*, 35-76.
- Gyekye, K. (1997). *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. New York: Oxford University.
- Gyekye, K. (2003). *Person and community in African thought*. In P. H Coetzee and A.P. J Roux, (eds.), *Philosophy from Africa*: Johannesburg.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E & R Asante. (2006). 'Ethnic structure, inequality and public sector governance'. In Y Bangura (ed). *Ethnic Inequalities and Public Sector Governance*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2002). *Confronting corruption in Ghana and Africa* (Vol. 4, No. 2). Ghana Center for Democratic Development.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2004). Democratic reform in Africa: The quality of progress. Lynne Rienner.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E., & Debrah, E. (2008). Political parties and party politics. *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic*, 126-155.
- Haidt, Jonathan. (2006). The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom. New York City: Basic Books.
- Hallgarth, M. W. (1998). Consequentialism and deontology. 998 Elsevier Inc., volume 1, pp. 609–621, 1998, Academic Press.
- Hamilton, L. (2017). Freedom is power: Reinventing representative democracy. *The Good Society*, 26(1), 4-18.

- Hans Thulesius. (2019). Grounded theory: A practical guide.
- Hanusch, M., Keefer, P. and Vlaicu, R. (2016): "Vote Buying or Campaign Promises? Electoral Strategies When Party Credibility is Limited," *Inter-American Development Bank Working Paper*.
- Harding, R. (2015). Attribution and accountability: Voting for roads in Ghana. *World Politics*, 67(4), 656-689.
- Hart, H. L.A., (1958). "Legal and Moral Obligation," in *Essays in Moral Philosophy*, A. I. Melden (ed.), Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Hasen, R. (2000). Vote Buying, *California Law Review* 88/5: 1323–71.
- Haxhiu, S. and Alidemaj, A.H., (2021). Representative Democracy: Its Meaning and Basic Principles. *Acta U. Danubius Jur.*, p.76.
- Haxhiu, Sadik. Meha, A. (2029). Representative Democracy Elections. *Journal of International Trade, Logistics and Law Istanbul* Vol. 5, Iss. 1. pp. 12-20.
- Hay, W. A. (2006). What is Democracy? Liberal Institutions and Stability in Changing Societies. *Orbis*, 50(1), 133-151.
- Haynes, J (1993) "Sustainable democracy in Ghana? Problems and prospects" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1993.
- Hellsten, S. K. (2010) "Empowering the Invisible: Women, Local Culture and Global Human Rights Protection." *Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya (PAK) New Series*, 2(1): 37-57.
- Hicken, A. (2007). How do rules and institutions encourage vote buying? Pp. 68–89 in *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, ed. F. C. Schaffer. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.
- Hicken, A. (2011): "Clientelism," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 14, 289–310.
- Hobbes, T. (1991) [1651]. *Leviathan*, R. Tuck (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoffman, B. D., & Long, J. D. (2013). Parties, Ethnicity, and Voting in African Elections. *Comparative Politics*, 45 (2), 127-146.
- Holton, J. A. (2007). The coding process and its challenges. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory*. Sage.

- Holton, J. A., & Walsh, I. (2017). *Classic grounded theory: Applications with qualitative and quantitative data*. Sage.
- Hurka, T. (2014). Sidgwick on Consequentialism and Deontology: A Critique. *Utilitas*, 26(2), 129-152.
- Ibrahim, A. A., & Cheri, L. (2013). Democracy, political instability and the African crisis of underdevelopment. *Ibrahim, AA and Cheri, Lawan (2013). Journal of Power, Politics & Governance*, 1(1).
- Ichino, N., & Nathan, N. L. (2013). Do Primaries Improve Electoral Performance? Clientelism and Intra-Party Conflict in Ghana. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57 (2), pp. 428- 441.
- Ikuenobe, P. (2006) *Philosophical Perspectives on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions*. Oxford: Lexington Books.
- Impraim, K. (2020). Thuggery, sophisticated impunity: Threats to representative democracy in Ghana. APSA Annual Conference Paper
- Ingham, S. (2022). Representative democracy and social equality. *American Political Science Review*, 116(2), 689-701.
- Iroegbu, P. (1995). *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*; International Universities Press: Owerri, Nigeria.
- Ivlampie, V. (2017). Ethical Egoism, a Failure of Moral Theories. In C. Ignatescu, A. Sandu, & T. Ciulei (eds.), *Rethinking Social Action. Core Values in Practice* (pp. 375-384). Suceava, Romania: LUMEN Proceedings.
- Jonah, K. (2008). Election 2004 and the Policy Challenge of the NPP Government.
- Kalin, J. (1970) "In Defense of Egoism." *Morality and Rational Self-Interest*, edited by David P. Gauthier, Prentice-Hall, pp. 64-87
- Kant, I. (1959). *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals*. (T. K. Abbott, Trans.). London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd.
- Kant, I. (1965). *Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, trans. by John Ladd, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Kant, I. (1991) [1797]. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Mary Gregor (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Kant, I. (1994). Grounding for the metaphysics of morals (J. W. Ellington, Trans.). In *Ethical Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing. (Original work published, 1785).
- Kant, I. (2017). *Kant: The metaphysics of morals*. Cambridge University Press.
- Karlan, P. S. (1999). Politics by other means. *Va. L. Rev.*, 85, 1697.
- Katz, E. & Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1955). *Personal influence: the part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Keefer, P. and Vlaicu, R (2008): “Democracy, Credibility, and Clientelism,” *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 24, 371–406.
- Keefer, P. and Vlaicu, R (2008): “Democracy, Credibility, and Clientelism,” *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 24, 371–406.
- Kim, H. (2011). Grounded theory: A method for developing theory from data.
- Kitschelt, H and Wilkinson, S. (2007). *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitschelt, H. (2000). Linkages between citizens and politicians in democratic politics. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33 (6–7): 845–79.
- Kodirjonovna, K. M. (2024). Deontological Foundations of Spiritual Outlook in Teachers. *Progress Annals: Journal of Progressive Research*, 2(3), 21-24.
- Kolodny, N. (2014). Rule over none II: Social equality and the justification of democracy. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 42(4), 287-336.
- Kramon E (2013) Vote buying and electoral turnout in Kenya. In: Bratton M (ed.) *Voting and Democratic Citizenship in Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 101–119.
- Kremer, A. (2024). The Motivation of Nations: Intrinsic Values Make Whole Countries Happy. *International Journal of Community Well-Being*, 7(1), 139-153.
- Krummel, D., & Siegfried, P. (2021). Child Labour Ethics through the Prism of Utilitarianism and Deontology.
- Kumado, K. (1993). The Constitutional Framework of Democracy. In Ninsin & Drah. *Political parties and democracy in Ghana's fourth republic*. The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations.

- Ladner, A. & Fiechter J. (2012). The Influence of Direct Democracy on Political Interest, Electoral Turnout and Other Forms of Citizens' Participation in Swiss Municipalities. *Local Government Studies*, 38(4): 437-459.
- Larrauri P and Xavier, I. (2019). Professional Responsibility: A Deontological Case-Study Approach. *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics*, 8(2), 6.
- Lasswell, H. D. (2009). *Power and personality*. Transaction Publishers.
- Latifi, V. (2009). *Concepts of democracy*, Institute for Democracy and Development. Tetovë, pp. 27-44.
- Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The people's choice: how the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leach, S. (2023). The Best Criticism of Ethical Egoism. *Philosophy Now*, 157, 26-27.
- Lee, S., Moretti E, and Butler, M. J. (2004). Do Voters Affect or Elect Policies? Evidence from the U.S. House. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3):807-59
- Lemos, N. (2021). What is basic intrinsic value?. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 24(1), 33-43.
- Leonard, D. K. (2009). Elections and conflict in Africa: An introduction. *Journal of African Elections*, 8(1), 1-13.
- Levit, L. Z. (2014). Egoism and Altruism: the "Antagonists" or the "Brothers"? *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 7(2).
- Levmore, S. (2000). Voting with intensity. *Stanford Law Review*, 111-161.
- Lindberg, S. I., & Morrison, M. K. (2008). Are African voters really ethnic or clientelistic?
- Lippert-Rasmussen, K. (2011). Vote buying and election promises: should democrats care about the difference? *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 19(2), 125-144.
- Lipset, S. & Rokkan, S. (1967). Cleavagen structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction. In S. Lipset & S. Rokkan, *Party systems and voter alignments: cross national perspectives* (pp. 1-64). New York: Free Press.
- Lipset, S. M. (1960). *Political man: the social bases of politics*. New York: Doubleday & Company.
- Lipset, S. M. (1963). *Political Man*. New York: Anchor Books.

- Loia, L. (2022). Assessing Representative Democracy: The Need for New Mechanisms of Political Representation. *Perspective Politic*. XV (1-2), pp. 5-19.
- Machan, T. R. (2018). Why Libertarianism does not Lead to Welfare and Equality. In *Morality* (pp. 163-180). Routledge.
- Mafeje A (2002) Democratic governance and new democracy in Africa: Agenda for the future. Presented at the African Forum for Envisioning Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 26–29 April
- Manin, B, Przeworski, A, Stokes, S. C. (1999), Introduction. In Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski & Susan Stokes (eds.), *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, pp. 1–26. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Mansbridge J. (2003). Rethinking representation. *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 97:515–28
- Manza, J. & Brooks, C. (1999). *Social cleavages and political change: voter alignments and U.S. party coalitions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mapuva, J. (2013). Elections and electoral processes in Africa: A gimmick or a curse. *African Journal of History and Culture*, 5(5), 87-95.
- Marques, J. (2015). Universalism and Utilitarianism: An Evaluation of Two Popular Moral Theories in Business Decision Making. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 8, p.Art. 3, 1-11.
- Masolo, D. A. (2004) Western and African Communitarianism: A Comparison. In: Wiredu, K. (ed.) *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, pp.483-498.
- Masolo, D. A. (2010). *Self and Community in a Changing World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Masukume, G. (2018). Foundations of research and knowledge production.
- Matolino, B. (2009). ‘Radicals versus Moderates: A Critique of Gyekye’s Moderate Communitarianism’, *South African Journal of Philosophy* 28(2): 160–170.
- Matolino, B. (2014) *Personhood in African Philosophy*. Dorpspruit, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
- Matviychuk, A. (2014). Ecological Deontology in the Context of Solving the Task of Ecologization of Modern Man Thinking. *Problems of Sustainable Development*, 9(1), 151–156.

- Mbiti, J.S. (1970.) *African Religions and Philosophies*. New York: Anchor Books.
- McConnell, T. C. (1979). John M. Brennan, *The Open-Texture of Moral Concepts* (Book Review). *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 13(3), 237.
- Mengisteab, K., & Daddieh, C. K. (Eds.). (1999). *State Building and Democratization in Africa: Faith, hope, and realities*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Menkiti, I.A.(1984). "Person and Community in African Thought". In R. A. Wright (ed.), *African Philosophy: An Introduction*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Mensah, J. H. (2007). Observing African excellence as prelude to African renaissance. Woeli Pub. Services. Actual Online, (9), 7-16.
- Michels, A & Laurens de Graaf. (2010). Examining Citizen Participation: Local Participatory Policy Making and Democracy. *Local Government Studies*, 36(4): 477-491.
- Miller, W. (2015). *Data analysis in qualitative research*.
- Mohajohan, B., & Mohajohan, R. (2023). *Classical grounded theory: Principles and procedures*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Molefe, M. (2017). 'Critical comments on Afro-communitarianism: the community versus individual', *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 6(1): 1–22.
- Moshi, L and Abdulahi A. Osman. eds. (2008). *Democracy and Culture: An African Perspective*. Lagos: Adonis& Abbey Publishers
- Mosley, A. (2005). *Egoism Ethics, Mind and Cognitive Science*. Originally published: August 7. Pp. 1–7.
- Msekwa P (2012) *The Story of the Tanzania Parliament*. Dar es Salaam: Pius Msekwa.
- Mueller, D (2002). The Political Economy of Ageing Societies, in *Economic Policy for Ageing Societies*, ed. Horst Siebert, Berlin: Springer: 269–84.
- Mwimnobi, O. S. (2003). *A Critical Exposition of Kwame Gyekye's Communitarianism* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).
- Myers, M. D. (2008). *Qualitative research in business and management*. Sage.
- Narud, H & Aalberg, T. (1999). *Challenges to Representative Democracy: Parties, voters, and Public Opinion*. Bergen: Vigmostad & Bjorke

- Näsström, S. (2006). Representative democracy as tautology: Ankersmit and Lefort on representation. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 5(3), 321-342.
- Näsström, S., (2015). Democratic representation beyond election. *Constellations*, 22(1), pp.1-12.
- Nazerian, L. (2019). Rethinking representative democracy: Representation beyond contestation & partisan politics. Södertörn University | Institutionen för samhällsvetenskap
- Neal, P. (1999) Liberalism and Its Discontents. New York: NYU Press.
- Neblo, M. A., Esterling, K. M., & Lazer, D. M. (2018). *Politics with the people: Building a directly representative democracy* (Vol. 555). Cambridge University Press.
- Nichter, S. (2008). "Vote Buying or Turnout Buying? Machine Politics and the Secret Ballot," *American Political Science Review*, 102, 19–31.
- Niemi, R. G. & Weisberg, H. F. (2001). *Controversies in voting behaviour* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Ninsin, K. A. (1993). The Electoral System, Elections and Democracy. In Ninsin & Drah. *Political parties and democracy in Ghana's fourth republic*. The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations.
- Ninsin, K. A. (2016). Elections and representation in Ghana's democracy. *Issues in Ghana's electoral politics, Dakar: CODESRIA*, 115-134.
- Ninsin, K. A., & Drah, F. K. (1993). *Political parties and democracy in Ghana's fourth republic*. The Institute of Development Studies and Partner Organisations.
- Ninsin, K. A., Adejumobi, S., & Olukoshi, A. O. (2008). West Africa's integration: The logic of history and culture. *The African Union and New Strategies for Development in Africa*, 123.
- Obioha, U. P. (2014) "Radical Communitarian Idea of the Human Person in African Philosophical Thought: A Critique." *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 38(1): 13-23.
- Oduro, F., Mohammed, A. & Ashon, M. (2014). A dynamic mapping of the political settlement in Ghana.
- Offor, F. (2006). "Democracy as an Issue in African Philosophy" Oladipo, Olusegun ed.

- Core Issues in African Philosophy. Ibadan: Hope Publications
- Ogunsanwo, A. (1994) "Democratisation in Africa" in Democratisation in Africa: African Perspective Vol. 2 Omo Omoruyi et al (ed), (Benin: Hima and Hima Ltd.).
- Olasunkanmi, A. (2016). The Critique of the Communitarians Arguments from an African Perspective. *Global Journal of Human Social Sciences*. Vol. 16 pp 29-36.
- Oliveira, L. R. (2016). Deontological evidentialism, wide-scope, and privileged values. *Philosophical Studies*, 174, 485-506.
- Onora, O. (1975). *Acting on principle*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Osei, A. (2013). Political parties in Ghana: Agents of democracy? *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 31(4), 543-563.
- Ott, D. J. (2009) "Process Communitarianism." *Concrescence – The Australasian Journal of Process Thought*, 10: 67-75.
- Owolabi, K.A. (2004). "Can the past salvage the future? Indigenous democracy and the quest for sustainable democratic governance in Africa". In Oguejiofor, J.O. ed. 2003.
- Oyekan, A. O. (2009). Democracy and Africa's Search for Development. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1).
- Paley, J. (2016). Qualitative interviewing: A practical guide.
- Pamela S. Karlan, (1994). "Not by money but by virtue won? Vote trafficking and the voting rights system," *Virginia Law Review*, 80, 1455–75 at p. 1462.
- Parekh, B. (1993). "A Misconceived Discourse on Political Obligation," *Political Studies*, 41: 23 6-51.
- Parry, K. W. (1998). Grounded theory and social process. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9(1), 85–105.
- Paton, H.J. (1964): The moral law. London: Hutchinson University Library.
- Pitkin, H. F. (2004). Representation and Democracy: Uneasy Alliance. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 27(3), 335-342.
- Płachciak, A., & Mukarutesi, D. (2020). The deontological perspective of sustainable development. *Annales. Etyka w życiu gospodarczym*, 23(1).
- Prah, K. K. (2014). Multiparty Democracy and Its Relevance in Africa. *Centre for Advanced Study for African Society, Cape Town* <https://www.>

- scribd.com/document/258835210/Prof-KK-Prah-Multi-Party-Democracy-and-Its-Relevance-in-Africa (accessed 23 June 2017).*
- Prichard, H. A. (2002). *Moral writings* (Vol. 3). Clarendon Press.
- Przeworski, A. (2019) *Crises of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rachels, J. (1974). Two arguments against ethical egoism. *Philosophia*, 4, 297-314.
- Rachels, J. (2003). "Ethical Egoism." *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Russ Shafer-Landau, 2nd ed., Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 193-199.
- Rand, A. (1964). *The Virtue of Selfishness*. New York City: Signet.
- Rawling, P. (2023). *Deontology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1972). *The Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
- Raymond, T. (2020). "Applying Deontology to Determine What Ought to be Done," *Aristos* 5(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.32613/aristos/2020.5.1.10>
- Raz, J. (2006). "The Problem of Authority: Revisiting the Service Conception," *Minnesota Law Review*, 90: 1003-1044.
- Rhodes, I. (2022). "Egoism: A Case Study of the Relationship Between Self-Interest and Ethics". Senior Theses, Trinity College, Hartford, CT Trinity College Digital Repository, <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/956>
- Rich, P. (1976). African socialism. *The Black Sash*, 11.
- Robinson, J. and Verdier, T. (2003). *The political economy of clientelism*. Typescript. University of California, Berkeley.
- Roothaan, A. (2025). From Intrinsic Value to Ontological Reality—the Philosophy of ‘Life Energy’ or ‘Vital Force’ in Bantu Philosophy. *African Philosophy and Deep Ecology*, 11.
- Roskin, M. G., Cord, R. L., Medeiros, J. A., and Jones, W. S. (2003). *Political Science: An Introduction*. Essex: Prentice-Hall.
- Ross, W.D. (1930). *The Right and the Good*; Clarendon Press: Oxford, UK.
- Rousseau, J. J. (2014) [1762]. *The Social Contract*, tr. G. D. H. Cole. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Rutoro, E. & Tendai, L. (2014). Communitarianism and Gender Equity in Education Management in the Zimbabwean Context. *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 2 No. 5, pp.433-446.

- Sandel, M. J. (2005). *Public philosophy: Essays on morality in politics*. Harvard University Press.
- Sandel, Michael (2000). What Money Can't Buy, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, ed. Grethe Peterson, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Sandel, Michael (2012). What Money Can't Buy, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Sandler, R. (2012). Intrinsic value. *Ecology, and conservation. Nature educational knowledge*, 3(4).
- Satz, D. (2010). Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). Research methods for business students (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Savara, J. (2015). *The ethics primer for public administrators in government and nonprofit organizations*, Second Edition. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Saward, M. (2010). The Representative Claim. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Schaffer, F. (2006), "What is Vote Buying?" In Schaffer, F., ed., Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying. Boulder, Colo, and London: Lynne Rienner Publ
- Schaffer, F. and Schedler, A. (2007): "What is Vote Buying," in *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, ed. by F. Schaffer, Boulder, Colorado: Lynn Rienner.
- Schaffer, F. C. (2005). Clean elections and the great unwashed: Vote buying and voter education in the Philippines. *Occasional Paper*, 21.
- Schlick, M., & Rynin, D. (1962). *Problems of ethics* (Vol. 947). New York: Dover Publications.
- Shank, G. (2006). Qualitative research: A personal skills approach (2nd ed.). Pearson.
- Shepherd, J. (2002). Documentary research methods. New York: NYU Press
- Silverman, D. (2015). Interpreting qualitative data (5th ed.). Sage.
- Singer, P (2011). Practical Ethics. 2nd (Ed), USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, T. (2006). Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics: The Virtuous Egoist. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sophine, J. (2000). Liberal Democracy and the Requisites of Development and Political

- Legitimacy in Africa. Port Harcourt: Bakis Publishers.
- Stark, A. (2000). *Conflict of Interest in American Public Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press
- Stokes, S C., Dunning, T, Nazareno, M and Brusco, V. (2013). *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Stokes, S. C. (2007). Is vote buying undemocratic? Pp. 117–43 in *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, ed. F. C. Schaffer. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.
- Stokes, S. C. (2011). Political clientelism. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science* Edited by Robert E. Goodin
- Stokes, S. C. (2017). Is vote buying undemocratic? Pp. 117–43 in *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, ed. F. C. Schaffer. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Strydom, H. (2005). *Sampling and sampling methods*.
- Sunstein, C (1994), “Incommensurability and valuation in law,” *Michigan Law Review*, 92 779–861 at p. 849.
- Survey Evidence from Ghana. *Political Science Quarterly*, 123(1), 95-122.
- Táíwò, O. (2016). Against African Communalism. *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 24(1), 81-100.
- Táíwò, O. (2016). Against African Communalism. *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 24(1), 81-100.
- Tam, W. (2005). *Political insecurity and clientelist politics: the case of Singapore*. Typescript. University of Chicago.
- Tar, U. A. (2010). The challenges of democracy and democratisation in Africa and Middle East. *Information, society and justice journal*, 3(2), 81-94.
- Tar, Usman & Shettima, Abba Gana (2010) “Hegemony and subordination: governing

- class, power politics and contested electoral democracy in Nigeria” *Information, Society & Justice* Vol. 3 No 2: 135-149.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Tepper, B. J. (2000). Consequences of Abusive Supervision. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(2), 178–190.
- Thomas, A. J. (2015). Deontology, Consequentialism and Moral Realism. *Minerva: An Internet Journal of Philosophy*, 19.
- Thomassen, Jacques and Carolien van Ham (2014). “Failing Political Representation or a Change in Kind? Models of Representation and Empirical Trends in Europe.” In: *West European Politics* 37.2, pp. 400–419.
- Tilley, J. J. (2022). Does Psychological Egoism Entail Ethical Egoism?. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 76(1), 115-133.
- Timmons, Mark. (2012). *Moral Theory: An Introduction*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Tommasoli, M. (2005). Representative democracy and capacity development for responsible politics. In *Sixth Global Forum of Reinventing Government*. Seoul. *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan020457.pdf>.
- Tonah, S. (2009). Democratization and the resurgence of ethnic politics in Ghana, 1992-2006. *Ethnicity, belonging and biography: ethnographical and biographical perspectives*, 16, 63.
- Tormey, S. (2015). *The End of Representative Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Tossy, T. (2015). Grounded theory methodology in social research.
- Toulmin, S. E. (1950). *An examination of the place of reason in ethics*. CUP Archive.
- Tseng, P. E., & Wang, Y. H. (2021). Deontological or utilitarian? An eternal ethical dilemma in outbreak. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(16), 8565.
- Urbinati, N. (2011). Representative democracy and its critics. *The future of representative democracy*, 23-49.

- Urbinati, N., & Warren, M. E. (2008). The concept of representation in contemporary democratic theory. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 11, 387-412.
- Urmson, J. O. (1953). The interpretation of the moral philosophy of JS Mill. *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1950-), 3(10), 33-39.
- Urquiza, E. Y. (2006). Las eternas internas: política y faccionalismo en un municipio radical, 1983–1999. Pp. 57–80 in *Democracia local: clientelismo, capital social, e innovación política en Argentina*, ed. S. Amaral and S. Stokes. Buenos Aires: Eduntref.
- van de Walle, N. (2003). “Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa’s Emerging Party Systems.” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41 (2): 297–321.
- Van Gyampo, R. E. (2013). Student activism and democratic quality in Ghana’s Fourth Republic. *Journal of student affairs in Africa*, 1(1-2), 49-66.
- van Voggel, S. (2022). *Grounded theory and theory generation*. Cambridge University Press.
- van Wessel, M. G. J. (2009) "Citizens and problems of representative democracy: about knowing what democracy you want and not getting it. 1-18.
- Varma, V. P. (1977). *Self-Interest and Moral Obligation*. Macmillan.
- Vieira M. and D. Runciman, D. (2008). *Representation*. Cambridge: Polity 126.
- Voerman, Gerrit & Marcel Boogers. (2014). *Rekrutering van Kandidaten voor de Gemeenteraadsverkiezingen in 2006, 2010 en 2014: Kandidaatste lingsproblemen vergeleken en verklaard*. Groningen/ Tilburg, the Netherlands: DNPP/ TSPB.
- Wang, B. (2022). Public Value: Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic, Private vs. Public. In *Public Value and Social Development* (pp. 37-75). Singapore: Springer Singapore.
- Wantchekon, L. (2003). Clientelism and voting behavior: evidence from a field experiment in Benin. *World Politics*, 55: 399–422.
- Warren ME. (2006). Democracy and deceit: regulating appearances of corruption. *Am. J. Polit. Sci.* 50:160–74
- Watadza, M. (2016). *A critical assessment of African communitarianism for environmental well-being* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).
- Weale, A. (2007). *Democracy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weiss, J. (2014). *Business Ethics*, 6th ed. [online]. Available at: <https://www.safari->

- booksonline.com/library/view//9781626561427/?ar.
- White T. I. (1988). Right and wrong: A brief guide to understanding ethics.
- Wilson, C. (2016). Interview techniques for UX practitioners. Morgan Kaufmann.
- Wiredu, K., (2008). Social philosophy in postcolonial Africa: Some preliminaries concerning communalism and communitarianism. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 27(4), pp.332-339.
- Yarahuan, P. G. (2006). Policy making and electoral politics: three essays on the political determinants of social welfare spending in Mexico, 1988–2003. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Chicago.
- Yoon, M. Y. (2020). Voters Perceptions of Gender Differences in Vote Buying: The Case of Tanzania. *Africa Spectrum*, 55(2), 125-147.
- Yu C.H, Werfel J, Nagpal R (2010) Collective decision-making in multi-agent systems by implicit leadership. In: Proc. 9th AAMAS, pp 1189–1196
- Zimmerman, M. J. (2006). Is moral obligation objective or subjective? *Utilitas*, 18(4), 329-361.
- Zolo D. (1992). *Democracy and Complexity: A Realist Approach*. University Park: Penn. State Press

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. How old are you?
2. Are you a registered voter?
3. When did you register to vote?
4. How many general elections have you voted in?
5. What do you know about buying and selling of votes?
6. What do you think is involved with the buying and selling of votes?
7. What personal experience do you have in the buying and selling of votes?
8. Do you personally know of anyone who has a personal experience as well?
9. Given the chance, will you sell your vote?
10. If you were vying for a political position, would you seek to buy votes?
11. What reason can you give for either participating or not participating in the buying and selling of votes?
12. Will you encourage others to buy or sell votes? Why?
13. Do you think moral obligation plays a role in the decision to buy or sell votes?
14. Do you think political obligations as a citizen should play a role in a person's decision to buy or sell votes?
15. Will you refuse to sell your vote because of moral considerations?
16. If you were seeking political power, could morality prevent you from buying votes?
17. Why do you think people should sell or buy votes?
18. Why do you think that people should not engage in the vote market?
19. Will you recommend that the buying and selling of votes should be encouraged? Why?

**APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE**

1. What do you know about the buying and selling of votes?
2. Is there any personal experience or story where you have sought to cast all your votes, or someone has attempted to buy your votes?
3. Will you offer your votes for sale or buy votes from others if you were seeking political office?
4. Will you advice anyone to sell or buy votes?
5. What will be your reasons for such advice?
6. How do you think moral obligations and morality play a role in the decision to either sell/buy votes or not to?
7. As a citizen, how does political responsibilities play a role in your decision to participate or not participate in the buying or selling of votes?
8. What should be considered when dealing with the vote market?

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Mr Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham (222037438)
School Of Rel Phil & Classics
Pietermaritzburg

26 MARCH 2024

Dear Mr Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham,

Original application number: 00024795

Project title: REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND VOTING: AN ETHICO - POLITICAL INTERROGATION OF THE VOTE MARKET IN GHANA

Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on _____, your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

In case you have further queries, please Quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE:

Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,


Prof Herbert Moyo
e. March
School Of Rel Phil & Classics

UKZN Research Ethics Office
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Founding Campuses: m 5Ggewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX 4: LETTER REQUESTING INFORMED CONSENT

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg Campus.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham a PhD candidate from the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of Kwazulu-Natal South Africa, Pietermaritzburg campus.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on Representative Democracy and Voting: An Ethico - Political Interrogation of the Vote Market in Ghana. The purpose of the research is to find out what voters think about before deciding whether or not to sell or buy votes and to find out if moral obligation and political responsibilities as a citizen play a part. The study is expected to enrol a total of fifty-eight participants selected from Cape Coast, Takoradi, Koforidua and Accra.

Your participation will involve asking you questions and recording the answers you provide to me. The duration of your participation if you choose to enrol and remain in the study is expected to be a maximum of one hour but may be less on occasions. We hope that the study will be beneficial to you and everyone by providing guidelines and moral bases for which votes should not be sold or bought, as well as give citizens the moral rights to hold authorities accountable because such citizens kept the sanctity of their votes.

The participation in this research is voluntary and you may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of a refusal or withdrawal of participation, the participant will not incur any penalty whatsoever.

The confidentiality and identity of participants are protected. Again, your opinions will not be presented in such a way that same could be directly traced to you.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approve number.)

In the event of any problems or concerns you may contact the researcher at;

Email: kow.abraham@ucc.edu.gh or kowkabraham@gmail.com

Telephone: 00233 555 611 993

or the UKZN Humanities & social sciences research ethics committee...

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS
ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... have been informed about the study entitled Representative Democracy and Voting: An Ethico - Political Interrogation of the Vote Market in Ghana by Kow Kwegya Amissah Abraham.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT IN TWI

MPAEMUKA

Me.....si so dua se ya ka nhwehwe mu a ya to ne din se
Representative Democracy and Voting: An Ethico - Political Interrogation of the Vote
Market in Ghana, ho asem akyerɛ me.

Me te botae ne akwankyerɛ a efa saa nhwehwe mu yi ase.

M'anya akwanya abisa nsem de fa saa nhwehwe mu yi ho, na m'anya ho mbuayɛ a mere
hwehwe no nso.

Me si so pi se me dwuma die wo saa nhwehwe mu yi mu no firi me pe mu. Na afei nso, me
tumi gyae mbere biara me pe; wo mere a ensi mfasoɔ biara ese se menya ho kwan.

Ya kyere mu ama mahunu sum adeɛ biara a ese se menya, anaa ayarehwe biara mehia esane
opira bi a ebeba wo me dwuma die a efa saa nhwehwe mu yi ho.

Se me wo nsembisa anaa ohaw bi fa adea edi wo me se dwuma di foɔ wo saa nhwehwe mu
yi ho; anaa se me wo ohaw be fa osuani no ho a, metumi ma mpanyinfoɔ aso te wo;

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

NHYEASEE

EMBERE