



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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McCANTS: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I always like to begin these conversations by learning more about a person's personal background. Can you describe the position that you hold currently in the CODEO (Coalition of Domestic Election Observers), and can you explain the goals of your position?

CRABBE: *I'm the chairman, with Professor Greenstreet. The two of us are chairpersons, if you permit that term, of the internal organization for monitoring elections. We've been doing that since we started elections here. In 1992, I was not in this country. In 1996 I wasn't here, but in 2000 I was here, and in 2004 I was here. We had on each occasion monitored the elections in this country.*

McCANTS: Can you tell me more about the positions that you held before this one and when your work with election administration began?

CRABBE: *I've worn quite a number of hats, but in 1968 I was appointed interim electoral commissioner. I was the first person to hold the post. I actually established the Electoral Commission in this country. I conducted the 1969 elections, which brought the (Prime Minister Kofi Abrefa) Busia government into power after we had a military government for about three years.*

McCANTS: What other elections related jobs have you held over the years?

CRABBE: *Whilst I was in Uganda in the 1960's, there was this referendum to determine whether certain counties, they called them, should be given to Bunyoro or form part of Uganda. It was an agreement that was reached at Lancaster House when Uganda was going to gain independence. I was responsible for the legislation under which the referendum was held. I was sort of in the background, supervising and advising the person who was in fact in charge of the actual elections. Either he had a little difficulty in law or practice, but he always consulted me. I have that background experience.*

McCANTS: Most of this interview will probably revolve around your work in Ghana, but we welcome comparisons to your experience in Uganda or other missions in which you have served. What would you say have been the biggest challenges arising in this election environment?

CRABBE: *The biggest challenge, I think, is the registration of voters. Under the Ghanaian Constitution, if you are 18, you are eligible to vote. That's what the constitution says. The constitution is only conferring a right. The exercise of that right depends upon the electoral goal, which means that you have to register when you are 18 years old. The problem of registration is that—take a situation where I come to you, you are a registration officer. I come to you and I'm saying, "I'm 18 years old." What mechanism do you have to challenge me? You have to accept what I'm saying. If on the face of it, look at my face, obviously I am young, you can say, "Well look, I have my doubts." In which case, you can register me, but make an indication that this registration is liable to challenge.*

When I was one of the commonwealth observers to the Southern Rhodesia elections in Zimbabwe, which brought in Zimbabwe, they did not have to register voters, because in the nature of things, it could not have been done before the elections. That's one of the things we had to watch very, very closely. But in this setting, in Zimbabwe, and I will say this to their credit. You see, the problem is that in the rural areas everybody knows how old the other person is. It's very

easy for people who are not registered to register. If you go to a village, for example, the old man of the village knows the age of everybody. He can assemble the people who are eligible to vote, and you don't have a problem. Whereas in the city areas, it's possible to get a young girl of 15, make her hair, put on eyelashes and that sort of thing, and she would look like somebody who is 18. That's one difficulty regarding registration in this country. It's very, very important, because your whole election depends upon the registration of voters. That's a difficulty that you have in this country.

I would say that by and large the Electoral Commission has been able to overcome that difficulty, except in the recent exercise in which—probably because they didn't have sufficient registration officers. They were moving from one place to another. In other words, even though the Electoral commissioner had said that the registration exercise is for a period of ten days, you didn't have a situation where at one place within the ten days you could go and register. The registration officers were moving from one place to another. So, in registration center A, it's not ten days; it's the period when the electoral officers are there to register. That's one of the problems that we have had in this current reopening of the registers. But apart from that, everything has been okay.

McCANTS: I would like to speak about the legal framework for elections here. Could you talk a little bit about the choice of an electoral system: how it was chosen, the choice about whether to use a first-past-the-post system or a proportional representation, or some other system?

CRABBE: *We were a British colony. Because of that, we have inherited the British system of first-past-the-post. We never, as far I remember, tried proportional representation. It has been argued before, but I don't think it has been seriously contended. I'm not so sure whether the politicians will be willing to have proportional representation. It's something that we have argued before, but it has never been part of the electoral system in this country.*

McCANTS: What about the other laws and rules governing eligibility, registration, voting procedures, candidate clearance, and other matters?

CRABBE: *Apart from the constitution, we have the public elections regulations issued by the Electoral commissioner, and you go by that.*

McCANTS: Are there any distinctive challenges or problems, or positive elements of these legal instruments?

CRABBE: *As far as the legal situation is concerned, I wouldn't say it's perfect, but it has been working very well. Nobody has had problems with the law. The problems have been in the implementation of the law. Take certain areas—for example, you have to go by canoe to cross a river. When I was Electoral commissioner and I was traveling in all those areas, I just said to myself, "Oh God, let not a storm happen so that a boat overturns and then your ballot boxes are under the water." That type of thing. These are some of the challenges that we have in this country.*

Communication. The extent to which we use electronics, for example, is very, very limited. We have had situations where the newspapers, and sometimes the political parties, have a better electronic system of recording the results than the Electoral commissioner. Let me explain. Under our law, when elections are held, a general election for example, at each polling station you declare the results. At

each polling station, the agents of the political parties, or the candidates, will sign a document attesting. If you are able to have people—say a newspaper is able to have people in all the polling stations, electronically the results at eight polling stations will be relayed to their headquarters even before the Electoral Commission gets it. The Electoral Commission depends upon what happens primarily at the constituency level. When the votes are counted at the polling stations and the results are declared there, they are sent to the constituency office where the returning officer is. What the returning officer does is to just collect the results from the various polling stations, add them up, and then declare the results. If there is a challenge, then physically the ballot box will be opened and the votes are counted. Then from there it will be relayed to the offices of the Electoral Commission. Then they will announce, “In this constituency, Mr. A or Mr. B has won.” That’s the system.

McCANTS: Are there any features of the laws that govern the conduct of elections here that you think make Ghana’s electoral process distinctive, or what features of the laws here would you recommend to other countries?

CRABBE: *If I remember rightly, we were the first to institute a system in which you go into a booth, mark your ballot paper, come to the open, and cast your ballot in the ballot box in the open. That’s number one. I believe we were also the first to introduce a ballot box which is transparent, so that you can actually see your ballot paper drop into the ballot box. I think that’s something that should be done everywhere, so that you don’t have problems about people saying that an election has been rigged. Especially if the votes are counted at each polling station, so that in between the ballot boxes being carried from one place to another you cannot say that somebody has changed the boxes, because the results have already been declared.*

McCANTS: Can you describe how the election management body was established?

CRABBE: *We first started by a decree in 19[...] because we had a military government. That’s when I was appointed by the then military government as the interim electoral commissioner, and I conducted the 1969 elections. Now Electoral Commission is established by the constitution. So it’s a constitutional body with complete independence, but I believe one has to use the word complete in inverted commas, because, for example, when it comes to finance, they have to depend upon the government making the necessary finances available. As you will appreciate, it’s a cake and everybody has a slice of the cake. So one institution cannot have too many slices of the cake. That’s part of the problem, but in some cases we have had donor support to help, and I think we are very appreciative of that.*

McCANTS: Can you describe how the electoral management body—how was it designed? How many members did it have? What were the eligibility requirements? Who made the appointments?

CRABBE: *At the moment, at my time, I was the electoral commissioner, and my status was that of a justice of the Court of Appeals. Therefore, the conditions of service of a justice of the Court of Appeal applied to me. Now you have a commission of about three people: a chairman, and then two deputy commissioners, and I believe four part-time officers. Decision-making depends upon primarily the chairman and the two deputies making a decision. If you ask me, I think I would much prefer to have the situation that happened when I was electoral commissioner: that you have one person who is actually responsible. In fact,*

even though you have a commission of three people primarily, almost invariably it is the chairman who takes decisions. The other two deputies: one is in charge of administration; the other, I believe, is in charge of finance.

McCANTS: Who has the power to appoint, discipline, or dismiss?

CRABBE: *The president, constitutional power.*

McCANTS: And he has also the power to dismiss the commissioners?

CRABBE: *Yes. Because the chairman of the Electoral Commission has the status of the justice of the Court of Appeal, the conditions in the constitution for the removal from office from the justice of the Court of Appeal applies to the Electoral commissioner. Once you are appointed chairman of the Electoral Commission—the deputies are high-court status—once you are appointed the chairman of the Public Service Commission, you cannot be dismissed, except by the processes by which a justice of the Court of Appeal can be dismissed. So, it's not easy to kick him.*

McCANTS: Have members of the Commission experienced challenges to their independence?

CRABBE: *I've never seriously heard of any. Occasionally people make the comment that, "The electoral commissioner, government is doing this." But I think it's political talk. Seriously. I know the present chairman personally, and I know his integrity, I don't think anybody can just influence him. I doubt it very much.*

McCANTS: Transparency and the appearance of fairness are very important in elections. I'm especially interested in the ways that the Election Commission tries to maintain its transparency. Can you explain a little about that?

CRABBE: *In most decisions that the electoral chairman takes, or the Commission takes, the Commission involves the political parties. They are partners practically to every important decision that is taken. The responsibility for taking the decision rests solely with the chairman of the Electoral Commission, but the political parties are always consulted. Fairly recently, the Institute of Economic Affairs got the political parties together to agree on a code of conduct in connection with the Electoral Commission, and that has been done. So, in all the important decisions, the political parties are a party to it.*

Fairly recently, the situation arose, where some people were arguing that December 7th falls on a Sunday, and the Electoral Commission has to explain that it's rather constitutional. I'll explain, under the Constitution, you have to hold an election for the president within four months of the expiration period of the president. But as far as the general election is concerned, for the election of members of Parliament, you have thirty days. The argument arose that in our setting, if you held the presidential election earlier, the party that wins the presidential election will most likely win the general election. The decision was arrived at between the politicians and the Electoral Commission: let's have it all in one day. That means that having it within the thirty days before the end of the term of the existing Parliament. That's why you have the fixed date, December 7th.

McCANTS: Have there been any concerns expressed about the timing of the election schedule?

- CRABBE: *No, except in this case, the argument that was made that December 7th is a Sunday, and the Electoral Commission said "Look, this is—we can't change it." I think people understood when it was explained to them that this is purely constitutional and the Electoral Commission can't do anything about it.*
- McCANTS: What other agencies and organizations are also involved in the electoral process?
- CRABBE: *The churches are concerned. They expressed their concerns, and in some cases they are invited to some of the meetings. The Trade Union Congress, sometimes they make a little bit of noise. I think basically these are the two elements that—do make noise, and I think sometimes they have. But mainly it's the political parties.*
- McCANTS: Are there other agencies, government agencies, that are involved in the administration of the election?
- CRABBE: *No, it's purely the responsibility of the Electoral Commission.*
- McCANTS: If you were providing advice to somebody in another country about how to build an independent electoral commission, what challenges would you tell them to be alert to?
- CRABBE: *The person who is appointed as the chairman of the Electoral Commission, that is very, very important.*
- McCANTS: What specifically would you—
- CRABBE: *And because probably I held office when I was a judge, I know some of the implications of the work. I would recommend that a person who has a legal background should be made the electoral commissioner, because it involves a lot of interpretation of the law. It involves quite a number of challenges. I think a person with a legal background will be in a position to deal with some of the problems that arise. You see, a legal training gives you a lot of advantages in a good many things.*
- McCANTS: What kind of financial accountability structures are in place for election officials in order to prevent the misuse of funds?
- CRABBE: *The Electoral Commission has to report to Parliament, and its accounts are subject to scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee in Parliament. I would say that whatever you say about our Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee is very, very much alive to its responsibilities. That's one good thing we have in this country.*
- McCANTS: Has cash flow been available for the Commission to exercise its responsibilities in a timely basis?
- CRABBE: *More or less, yes. Because one hears talk that the Electoral Commission has not been sufficiently financed, and then you hear statements from government: "Oh yes, we will make sure that the Electoral Commission has all the resources that it needs." But as I said, in any country it's one cake. You have to get your proper slice of the cake, and that's the problem.*

McCANTS: Elections are very expensive, but costs vary greatly across different settings. Do you have any ideas on how to make the election process less expensive to conduct?

CRABBE: *It depends upon the machinery that you set up. In the 1969 constitution, the election of the president was by Parliament being an electoral college. Therefore, you avoided the expense, and it's a good savings. Now, it's universal adult suffrage, and if people can agree to a system in which Parliament becomes an electoral college to appoint the president, they will save a lot of money.*

McCANTS: How does the National Election Management Office recruit its staff members and its poll workers?

CRABBE: *I think like any other governmental organization—but behind the scenes, if I remember rightly, they involve the Public Services Commission, so that you have certain standards across the public service.*

McCANTS: How are poll workers trained?

CRABBE: *You get people from outside to come in to train them. When you hold a registration exercise, the names are punched into a card, and it all goes into the computer. So they have computer training. Basically that's where it starts. They have computer training. They get training for conduct at polling stations. The CDD (Center for Democratic Development) has sometimes held workshops for even the Electoral Commission people to let them realize their responsibilities and that type of thing. They also hold workshops, in conjunction with the Electoral Commission, for observers, some of the things they should look for. So there's a training program that I think is very, very good. The electoral commissioner himself gets the opportunity of witnessing other elections in other countries and trying to learn how facilitating of their practices can be used in this country.*

McCANTS: How is the performance of poll workers evaluated?

CRABBE: *You mean the people at the polling stations?*

McCANTS: Yes.

CRABBE: *They aren't given sufficient training. Whether they perform creditably or not will depend upon the approach of the polling agents of the respective political parties. If the polling agents go with a perceived notion that this polling officer won't be doing his work very well, it tends to reflect on their approach. But by and large, it has never been a problem as far as I know.*

McCANTS: What steps are taken to protect poll workers from threats?

CRABBE: *I can't disclose everything, but—in 1969 for example—even though you did not see a policeman at a polling station, we had a security apparatus in the background. If anything happened, within five minutes the security people will be there. I think there are such similar things in place to see that everything goes well at a polling station.*

During the last elections, I covered a few districts and I went around. I found that the police were in the background, absolutely in the background. Because you see, in this country in some places the mere presence of a policeman might

cause some fear. So, the proper thing to do is to have them but keep them in the background. I think people are getting around to the idea and appreciating the idea that in order to maintain law and order on such occasions, the presence of the policeman there is rather reassuring, that look, everything is going to go on very well.

McCANTS: Often there are difficulties in boundary delimitation or districting prior to an election. Can you describe how the delimitation process works in Ghana?

CRABBE: *The delimitation of constituency boundaries?*

McCANTS: Yes.

CRABBE: *Well, again, the constitution gives powers to the electoral commissioner to demarcate constituencies. He has to do that, taking into consideration population growth, geographical features, and then the administrative boundaries of the districts. In other words, you don't want the situation where a constituency falls in one area and in another area. As much as possible, you should have them within certain boundaries, take into account the population and then, of course, geographical areas.*

McCANTS: Has delimitation been contentious or disruptive?

CRABBE: *No, not that I know of.*

McCANTS: Can you describe how registration of voters takes place in terms of verifying eligibility, identification, and allocation to polls in constituencies?

CRABBE: *You register in an area. Therefore, your name will be on the voters' register of that area. At registration—normally there are registration centers, and you go to the registration center. Your name is taken, and your particulars are taken. A photograph is also taken, which is then put in a card, and it's sealed. They have a name for it, I've forgotten the name, but it's sealed. If you try to open it and take the photograph, you destroy—laminated is the word. It's laminated and then it's given to you. That's the first exercise.*

Then you have a display of the provisional register. When the registers are displayed, anybody can make challenges to the inclusion of people's names. There is a process you have to go through. In that we are very fine and go into all these challenges. When all that is settled, then the final voters' register is displayed. Then the political parties are given copies.

So you see, in this country it's very, very difficult to challenge that at any particular polling station, though the register says there are so many people, so many people more than that voted. I had that problem in the 1969 elections, when one of the leaders of the political parties, somebody who I respected very much, actually challenged the voting in a particular area and said in that area this is what happened. When I was electoral commissioner, I made it a policy not to answer politicians, but on that occasion I thought it was very wise and I did so. I gave the figures, the number of people registered in the constituency, the number of people who actually voted, the number of spoiled ballot papers, and those sorts of things. And I added that as a matter of fact, the constituency which this gentleman had complained of, was won by his candidate. So, is he telling me that he rigged the election there? [Laughter.] He put himself in a difficult position and that was the end of it. He never once again challenged anything that

happened after. But you expect politicians to do a little bit of grumbling when these things happen. Personally, I accept it.

McCANTS: What controls have been developed to prevent multiple false or erroneous registrations?

CRABBE: *We have a very interesting situation in this country, in which perhaps four or five people have the same name, in the same house. Again, you see my experience; we had a computer that would complain that a particular name has appeared so many times. We actually conducted a physical investigation to determine that there are four people in this house who have the same name. We actually do that. That's how you sort of try to solve that problem, which is likely to arise.*

McCANTS: How was the integrity of registration lists safeguarded after the list is compiled?

CRABBE: *I think because you use the computer for it and you supply electronic copies to the political parties, it becomes very difficult, when that is settled, for anybody to change anything in the computer at the Electoral Commission. In fact, fairly recently there was this talk about people who—the “bloating” they call it—are set in registers. When the committee was set up and they went to it, it was found that, the allegations were false.*

McCANTS: How is the structure of the ballot decided on?

CRABBE: *That is within the discretion of the Electoral Commission. There again, the electoral commissioner consults with the political parties. For example, I believe they even determine the order in which the candidates will appear on the ballot paper. It does sit with the Electoral Commission.*

McCANTS: Based on your experience with observation, would you have changed anything about the ballot design if you could?

CRABBE: *The problem that you are likely to have is that because they put pictures, if I were electoral commissioner, I would ask the candidate to bring me the best picture, number one. Number two, you should have a situation where the reproduction is very, very clear and it not smudged. Because if I go to the polling station and I can't clearly identify the candidate I want to vote for, there is going to be a problem. I think they must have very good pictures, and the reproduction also must be very, very good.*

McCANTS: Are there particular security features that are employed on the ballot?

CRABBE: *No, I think the emblem or symbol of the political party, and then the picture of the candidate.*

McCANTS: Are there ballots provided for special needs voters? For example, the vision-impaired.

CRABBE: *So far as I know, if a blind voter, for example, wants to vote, he can come with somebody. Then the polling assistant will make sure that ballot is properly mapped. As far as I know, we don't have Braille.*

McCANTS: How does the Election Commission manage the chain of custody in the production of ballots, and in their transportation and storage, as they are transported to the districts?

- CRABBE: *They are all done under security conditions, yes. In 1969 again, in my own experience, the paper that was used in printing the ballot papers was a paper specially made for the elections. Nobody could have reproduced it.*
- McCANTS: Can you describe the system of polling centers and stations, and how well you think this system works?
- CRABBE: *You take first the constituency, then the number of polling stations in the constituency. So you have a register for the constituency. Then you have a register for each polling station. If Mr. A goes to B polling station and his name is not there, then you have the constituency register in which to check. If his name is there, you'll allow him to vote, because he's registered to vote.*
- We can vote in this country by proxy. There are processes that you have to go through. You have to inform the electoral commissioner beforehand, send him certain particulars.*
- Then you have what you call transferred votes: you are registered in Kumasi, you are now in Accra, and you want to vote in Accra. There are steps that you can take so that the Electoral Commission makes it possible for you to vote at your appropriate place.*
- McCANTS: Are there any ballot security measures put in place at polling stations to prevent vote fraud by election officials or political contestants?
- CRABBE: *Each ballot paper has a special mark, and there are certain indications which are put on it. This is a stamp, there's a particular number which has a particular series.*
- McCANTS: Do you think these mechanisms are effective?
- CRABBE: *Oh yes, so far as I know, they are effective. You can only make your own ballot papers with the connivance of somebody from the Electoral Commission, and these numbers and things are released at the very last moment. That's why sometimes people complain that go to a station and the ballot papers haven't arrived and that type of thing, because of security measures. But as much as possible, you take care about these matters. There again, that's the importance of having the polling agents at the various polling stations to help the polling assistants, not to control them or to tell them what they do, but as observers, to see that everything at the polling station is done very well.*
- McCANTS: Has the Election Commission taken steps to introduce automated ballot tabulation?
- CRABBE: *That I don't know, but I'm not so sure whether we in this country have reached the stage where we can effectively use that system.*
- McCANTS: You mentioned this briefly a little before, but what other logistical challenges have been associated with the transport and retrieval of election and registration materials?
- CRABBE: *The law requires that after an election, the papers are sealed, and then kept for a minimum period after which they can be destroyed. In other words, after a period*

when there are no challenges and that type of thing, then they are destroyed to conform to the secrecy of the ballot.

McCANTS: What about the difficulties of transporting materials to different geographical regions? What kinds of challenges have you encountered there?

CRABBE: *If you don't have a proper security, the ballot boxes in a place could be hijacked. Somebody who wants to disrupt elections could just do something like that. But they are transported under stringent security situations that I cannot disclose. Let me give you an example. Between here and Abuakwa, you would wait until, say, 3:00 a.m. in the morning before you release the ballot papers to go to the area, so that by 6:00 a.m. they've opened the polling station, things like that. You don't send it too early so that somebody could tamper with it. You send it within such a time that they can start. That's why sometimes if there is a delay, people complain that the ballot papers did not arrive on time—and that's all part of the security measures.*

McCANTS: Can you describe the responsibilities that the Election Commission has for regulating political parties?

CRABBE: *By and large, that's controlled by law. Political parties, when they are registered, are supposed to have their constitutions. There are certain obligations that they have to fulfill. It has been said that at the moment some of the things which the electoral commissioner ought to do, they haven't done. For example, those small, small parties who haven't sent in their counts, and that type of thing. But, I believe he's being wise in this respect; you have to take the political temperature in the country. If that is not disturbing things much, I don't think he should really harness that for people to accuse the electoral commissioner of trying to favor one political party as against the other, but the machinery is there which he can enforce. If a political party, for example, does not send in the proper returns that the law requires that the political party should send.*

McCANTS: Are political parties required to disclose their sources of revenue and expenses?

CRABBE: *Yes, the law requires that.*

McCANTS: Does the Election Commission play a role in vetting candidates?

CRABBE: *No, that's purely a matter for the political parties. But one of the things you do on nomination day as a candidate is to sign a form which, in effect, you are declaring your eligibility. Because, if you take the parliamentarist elections for example, the constitutionalist who is qualified to stand as a candidate, and you have to comply with that. It's the same with the presidential candidates, so that if you do not do that, it can be challenged. Again, in the 1969 elections—after the 1969 elections, Mr. [Indecipherable] was challenged in [Indecipherable] constituency. He lost because we had to produce the document he had signed that he is qualified, and it turned out that he's not qualified, so he was disqualified and there was a bye-election.*

McCANTS: Can you describe the adjudication process by which electoral disputes can be resolved?

CRABBE: *The High Court has jurisdiction to determine election petitions. You file an election petition at the High Court, and you go through the processes.*

McCANTS: Is the election management body the court of the first hearing, or does it go directly to the courts?

CRABBE: *No, you go to court.*

McCANTS: Is there an investigative task force early in the process to ascertain the facts quickly in an election dispute?

CRABBE: *If you challenge the Electoral Commission on an issue, you have to supply the facts. If there is an election petition before the court, the electoral commissioner could be asked to produce the ballot papers to be counted. That's why they are sealed after elections and kept under security for a certain minimum of time.*

McCANTS: How well do you think the dispute resolution system works here?

CRABBE: *We have a bad record as far as that is concerned. I don't think that has worked very well. I wasn't here in the country then, but I'm told that there was a situation where somebody challenged the election of a member of Parliament. The courts did not hear the case or give a decision until the expiration of the term of office in the Parliament in respect of whom that person was elected—that's bad. That's bad.*

McCANTS: But what has worked well about this system?

CRABBE: *What's worked well about the system is that the courts are ready and willing to take these cases. Perhaps, what I've described was an isolated case within the circumstances at the time. I don't think it's going to happen now, I don't think so.*

McCANTS: Can you describe the use of election monitors and the goals for monitoring established for the election?

CRABBE: *To some extent, they play a vital role. The mere presence of an election observer at a polling station puts people on their toes—that somebody's watching, and therefore, be careful.*

Number two, it has given confidence to polling agents and even to polling assistants that, here is somebody who is looking at what is going on, and therefore I have to do my work properly because I can be reported somewhere. I think by and large, election observers are a good thing. The only difficulty is that election observers at the moment are not able to cover every polling station. If you could have as many as possible to cover polling stations, that would be good.

McCANTS: How do you determine how many monitors are needed and which areas or stations are going to be covered?

CRABBE: *I think to begin with, in an election, monitors should start as we start, with a registration process, so you have an idea as to the areas where there are likely to be problems. Certain areas you know that here everything will go on very well, because of the nature of the people there, how they are, how they do things, their record of voting over the years. You have that information. In the areas where you perceive that there's likely to be trouble, you ought to concentrate in those areas.*

In Accra, for example, there is a constituency called Odododiodoo; you must be very, very vigilant there, because you are likely to have problems there. In other areas, for example, in Brakwa district, everybody there is so sensible that these problems are not likely to arise, and therefore, you may not want to have anything there.

But if observers can be able to send an observer to every polling station, it would be very good. But as I said, I don't think you can do that, as there are 2,700 polling stations.

McCANTS: In identifying where—what areas could be potentially problematic, what trigger points are you looking for during the registration process?

CRABBE: *During the registration process, the possibility of people, number one—multiple registration, and two—minors registering. These are the things you look for in those areas. Number three—sometimes, not always, but sometimes you have to be sure that the registration officers are not biased in favor of one political party or not. You have to look out for that. It's very important in our setting.*

McCANTS: Who is informed in advance of the location of the observers?

CRABBE: *You have to inform the Electoral Commission, we do that. We get accreditation from the Electoral Commission before we operate.*

McCANTS: How do you liaise throughout the process with the Election Commission? Is there a special unit that provides a liaison function?

CRABBE: *Any time there is a problem, we write to the Electoral Commission, or sometimes physically go there and have discussions with them. Then, they arrange—in fact, a few months ago we actually had a session at the offices, the conference room of the Electoral Commission. CDD, the observers who were there; the political parties had their representatives; Christian Council were there; other people were there. We had a tete-a-tete, a talk with the Electoral Commission about our concerns. We discussed the whole thing in a very, very friendly atmosphere. I was very, very pleased with it.*

McCANTS: What monitoring methods do observers use? For example, is there parallel vote tabulation?

CRABBE: *We are trying to establish that for the present election.*

McCANTS: And so now, what methods of observation are currently used?

CRABBE: *We've had a group of people from America who are conducting the exercise with us and training people for that. At the moment, we are doing it, yes. We've entered into an agreement for them to do it, and we are doing it with them.*

McCANTS: What steps are taken to prevent observers from being bought off in advance of the election?

CRABBE: *Bought off?*

McCANTS: Yes, paid to ignore certain transgressions or to be biased.

CRABBE: *I would find it very, very difficult for an observer to be bought, because the people who observe, we choose them very well.*

McCANTS: So, what is your process of—

CRABBE: *I wouldn't—human nature being what it is, and there is the possibility of a bad egg [laughter], but I think it would be one in a million, maybe one in a million. And for CODEO for example, we've had experience of quite a number of elections, and so we know the caliber of the people we use. They are tested people.*

McCANTS: How do you go about recruiting and vetting your observers?

CRABBE: *The various associations which come together to make CODEO, we ask them to make recommendations, then we sift them with the political parties. Because in certain areas, they would know that we don't trust this person, that type of thing here. It's a system of cooperating with various organizations. I know of one case in which we even had to send some information to the police to find out.*

McCANTS: What have been the overall findings of the observers, and do you agree with them?

CRABBE: *I think on the whole, elections in this country have been fairly conducted. They have been absolutely free. Again, one cannot discount the possibility of an old woman in a house being sent to the polling station: "You vote for Mr. A," and that type of thing. But, as I said, there will be one in a million. I think to the surprise of the political parties, they are now realizing that the average Ghanaian is really becoming very wise. They understand certain things. I think they politicians themselves are taking that into account.*

I was talking to a very, very senior person in one of the political parties, and I said, "What are your chances of winning?" He said, "Hmm, it's tough." That's from one political party. So, I tried and got somebody on the other side and I said, "What do you think?" He used, interestingly enough, the same expression; "It's tough." So, I said "But, you are in the field, you are dealing with this thing. How do you think you are going to fare?" Then he said, "Wait after the registration exercise, I'll tell you." And the other person said the same thing. In other words, they are trying to make it possible for as many people as possible who they think are their sympathizers to register, and that's what they are hanging their hopes on. That if a good many of their sympathizers are able to register, then their chances of winning the elections will be great. But there is an awareness now amongst the political parties that it's not going to be easy, and that you can't fool the people all the time.

McCANTS: Is there any advice that you would offer to others about how observers should be used or managed?

CRABBE: *I think one advice I would give is that observers must not try to give the impression that they are policing what's happening. I think their neutrality depends upon how far they keep a certain aloofness, but their eyes and ears should be very, very wide open. That's the advice I would give here.*

McCANTS: Are your observers deployed throughout the election process though each stage? Or are they just limited to registration and polling day?

CRABBE: *No, no, through all the whole process. Throughout the whole process, including counting of votes at the—where possible, at the polling stations. As I said, in places like Odododiodoo, you have to have them there at as many polling stations as possible and let them observe everything right to the stage where—in some cases, accompany the ballot boxes to the returning officer's office. Then the collation of the results, and if possible there's a challenge, the counting of the votes. So, it's all throughout the processes.*

Then, we also have our own system of collecting the results. So that apart from what the Electoral Commission is doing, and what the political parties are doing, we also have a system of trying to know what the results are.

McCANTS: Can you describe what that system is?

CRABBE: *Again, electronically; how people some ways they look here, this is how it's going on, or that's how it's going on. We are now trying to have exit polls in the very, very important areas.*

McCANTS: Are there any other countries whose experiences you have found particularly instructive?

CRABBE: *I think my experience in Southern Rhodesia was very, very instructive, because that was a situation where you know the history, and that type of thing. It was a system in which the majority of the people did not know, haven't experienced this before, and yet, they came in their numbers.*

One advice I will give, especially in our types of countries, is that especially in the rural areas, they must not discount the advice of the elders of the areas. Let me explain what I mean. If you are going to a rural area to register voters for example, if you got in touch with the head man or the most elderly person in the area, he's likely to tell you, "Oh, don't come on Tuesday, because Tuesdays they go to farming, come on Thursday." "Can you help us when we come on Thursday?" "Yes, yes, we will help you." When you go there, you'll find that he has assembled all the people who are eligible to vote. They live in the area, they know the ages of the children there. So, the possibility of people who are not eligible to vote registering, you don't have—you will not have it, if you adopt that system. It's very, very important in our system, because not everywhere you've got registration of births, so that somebody can produce a birth certificate. But the people in the area know that you are a young child however big you've grown, that type of thing. So, I would advise people to take these factors into account, especially in the rural areas. In the urban areas, you have a difficulty because of sophistication.

McCANTS: Is there anything about the context and the history of Ghana that means that others would be limited in their ability to borrow innovations from here?

CRABBE: *All along we've had very, very successful elections. People often forget that as far back as the 1920s, we were having elections in this country without supervisors. We didn't have foreign observers or outsiders, even internal observers. When we were having elections under the 1925 constitution in the municipal areas, they went very well. It was conducted I think through the local government ministry.*

We have a record of managing elections very well. It's when the politicians started influencing things, and then the military people came, that it became

necessary that—“Look, we don’t trust these military boys, let’s see that everything is done properly.”

McCANTS: Well, thank you very much.

CRABBE: *It was a pleasure talking to you.*