The Media Liberalization and Democracy: Experiences from Accra, Ghana

By

George Asare

Centre for Peace Studies

**A Dissertation Presented to the Centre for Peace Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø, Norway as
Part of Requirements for the Award of Master of Philosophy Degree in
Peace and Conflict Transformation**

Autumn 2009

The Media Liberalization and Democracy: Experiences from Accra, Ghana

**A Dissertation Presented to the Centre for Peace Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø, Norway as
Part of Requirements for the Award of
Master of Philosophy Degree in
Peace and Conflict Transformation**

Autumn 2009

GEORGE ASARE

DEDICATION

For her explicit compassion and love, I dedicate this intellectual piece to my wife, Diana Kwarfo-Asare and to my sweet daughter Nana Yaa Kezia Addobea Asare-Mperry, she is indeed the seal to the bliss I find in my family life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This research reports the outcome of investigation into the current sustained democratic dispensation in Ghana and the role the media have played in that regard. Ghana has a checked political history of a mixture of coup d'états and some practice of democracy. The country has had about six coups intermixed with some form of democracy since independence in 1957. All that has changed in recent years and currently Ghana as a state is practicing constitutional democracy which has been named the fourth republic, basically because it is the fourth attempt by the country to go democratic. For the first time in Ghana, this form of democracy has been sustained for the last 17 years. It is believed that some institutions have been well placed to ensure the sustenance of this democratic dispensation in Ghana. However, the transition to democracy in Ghana also paved way for the media to flourish into vibrancy, hence numerous news media (both print and electronic) have sprang up in Ghana and have found their position as the fourth estate after the executive, legislature and the judiciary. The significance of this study is embedded in the fact that Ghana's democracy has made way for freedom, peace and development for her people which can serve as an example for the West African sub-region and even Africa which have been in the news for civil wars.

Using interview and focus group discussion, factors that fed into media contribution to democratic sustenance in Ghana were explored. Data gathered and analyzed revealed the media have been able to play their democratic role by giving the people information to help them understand unfolding political issues as well as helping them become active participants in the political and democratic forward movement in Ghana. The sample size was 50.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

FIGURE

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
A-M	Amplitude Modulation
CPP	Convention People's Party
FM	Frequency Modulation
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GCBS	Gold Coast Broadcasting Service
GFRCB	Ghana Frequency Registration Control Board
IMCG	Independent Media Corporation of Ghana
NCA	National Communication Authority
NLC	National Liberation Council
NMC	National Media Commission
NRC	National Redemption Council
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	People's National Party
PP	Progress Party
SMC	Supreme Military Council
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention

CHAPTER ONE
Background and Methodology

1.0 Introduction

This study inquires into the political and media development of Ghana since independence and the role liberalised media is playing in the sustenance of Ghana's democracy since the launch of the fourth republican constitution in 1992. Ghana as a state started well on the foundation of democracy but was soon to be plagued with a number of military interventions that marred the beauty of the once vibrant democratic state. The periods of coup d'état and military rule in Ghana saw the rights of many a Ghanaian trampled upon. Many were imprisoned, beaten, maimed or killed by soldiers. People had to unwillingly retire to their beds at 6:00 pm and resume daily activities and businesses at 6:00 am due to the imposition of curfews. The totality of this and a lot more inhuman treatment during the period culminated in people living in fear and a culture of silence built up in the society. People could no longer talk on issues relating to politics of the day. If one had to talk about politics, one had to look over one's shoulders before doing so. The position of the media had been relegated to the background and its operations stifled due to promulgated laws that would not let them see the light of day. Only the state media remained and even that was well regulated to do propaganda for the government then.

Presently, Ghana is again practicing democratic system of governance having a hybrid of the British and United States systems of democratic practice. It is often called the fourth republican constitutional democracy because since Ghana became a republic in 1960, this is the fourth time the state has tried to re-establish democratic rule, a situation that has caused many a social commentator to describe it as a democratic experiment. Ninsin makes it clear that "the history of incomplete transitions naturally poses a serious question about the current transition to democracy [and] if previous transitions had several things in common with the present but failed, what elements in the current process are so unique as to strengthen the chances for success?" (Ninsin 1989: 2)

With all the statements of doubt not withstanding, the fourth republic compared to the three previous republics is the longest to be re-established. For seventeen years it has been sustained

and has again gone through five successful presidential and parliamentary elections and a peaceful change of government from one political party to another namely the National Democratic Congress to the New Patriotic Party and again to the National Democratic Party under the supervision of a constitutionally established independent body called the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

1.1 Background

 The state of Ghana has had a chequered political history and has undergone a number of democratic dispensations. This is because previous democratic governments have not been allowed to serve their full term and have therefore been ousted through sometimes very bloody coup d'états and in their place military dictatorial governments took up the administration of the state.

The state of Ghana was the first Black African country south of the Sahara to have attained independence on 6th March 1957 after being a colony of the British for decades. The Convention People's Party led by Kwame Nkrumah who became the first president in 1960 formed the first democratic government. The constitution of Ghana then was embedded in the rule of law, which enshrined a number of fundamental rights including freedom of the media, association, and speech among many others. Public debates and multi party politics characterized the county's politics but all that were to change when the country had to adopt one party socialist regime in the early 1960s which altered the once vibrant pluralistic democratic life and paved the way for the first coup d'état of 24 February 1966 leading the country into a long series of military interventions in its politics. There had been a number of abortive military interventions apart from the direct and successive ones and this has not been helpful to the development of a democratic political culture (Ninsin 1998: 2).

In the words of Kumi Ansah-Koi, "so involved have security personnel been in violent regime-change and rule in Ghana that many analysts and observers, until very recently, saw in the country a depiction of modern-day variant of 'praetorian polity', with the security personnel serving as the praetorian guard (Ansah-Koi in Boafo-Arthur 2007:188).

An attempt to turn Ghana into a modern socialist industrial nation after the declaration of independence in 1957 resulted in economic problems and political tension in the society which brought the nation to it knees by the overthrow of Nkrumah's CPP through a coup made of combined force of military and police led by Brigadier Akwasi Afrifa in 1966 (Dzorgbo 2001:38).

The 1966 coup resulted in the formation of the National Liberation Council (NLC) with Lieutenant General Joseph A. Ankrah as the head of the NLC. The basic objective of the coup makers was to oust Nkrumah and rid the Ghanaian society of socialist ideology.

In August 1969 the NLC organised elections of which the Progress Party (PP) led by Dr. K.A. Busia won. This was the birth of the second republic which worked within the framework of Westminster type parliamentary democracy. The second republic lasted from 1966 to 1972. After barely three years rule by the PP, lieutenant Colonel I.K. Acheampong, a leader of the First Infantry Brigade seized power in January 13, 1972 through a coup citing economic mismanagement (Ibid: 188, 213, 217, 223).

The coup of 1972 resulted in the formation of a new military regime known as the National Redemption Council (NRC) which was later changed into Supreme Military Council (SMC) through a decree passed in October 29, 1975. The intention was to consolidate personal power. Acheampong was the chairman of this council (Ibid 227, 238). July 5, 1978 saw Aceampong out of government in what was known as a palace coup by General Fred Akuffo, a member of the SMC. The former was made to sign a letter of resignation by the latter under duress with the reason that the principle of collective decision making which guided the SMC had been thrown to the dogs. This led to the formation of the Supreme Military Council II (SMC II) headed by General Akuffo.

May 15, 1979 saw Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings in an abortive coup against the SMC II regime. He resurfaced in another coup in June 4, 1979 and succeeded in overthrowing that regime under the name Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). He handed over power to the People's National Party (PNP) led by Dr. Hilla Limann in an election in September 24, 1979. This was the

era of the third republic. On December 31, 1981, J.J. Rawlings and his supporters who are Marxist from the university took over the state in another coup to end the third republic. This was another military regime by name Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). This regime took charge of the state until 1992 when the country returned to constitutional rule (Ibid: 266-268).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current democratic dispensation no doubt has been sustained probably because certain institutions were carefully put in place. However the media in Ghana has been very vibrant ever since the go-ahead was given to private individuals and groups to establish newspapers and radio stations and even television. There is a high degree of media liberty being enjoyed in Ghana and there is no significant limit on the activities of the press and broadcasters. Many private FM stations abound and can be tuned in with ease and that radio is the favourite medium of Ghana. (BBC News).

Media liberalisation has led to the proliferation of private newspapers and private radio stations. Private FM stations are available in almost every region of Ghana, giving the general population and local communities the opportunity to make political and other social inputs. In Ghana, most newspapers publish political stories which cover issues of the ruling government and that of the opposition. The radio stations also have a good majority of them broadcasting in the vernacular and therefore reaching a significant majority of the Ghanaian populace who are illiterate. During prime time, there is a review of the news papers with a panel of social commentators, journalist, and even politicians who discuss the issues at stake. The issues discussed usually duel on politics and government. In-between the programme, the phone lines are opened and people call in to express their views on the issues which are being discussed. This usually takes the form of criticisms or contributions. Very often, government officials are called on phone into the programme or brought into the studio to explain issues the people are not so clear about. Television stations also review the newspapers just like the radio stations. The exchange of views helps to create an atmosphere of tolerance which goes a long way to enhance democracy. Even though other institutions serve as pillars to the current democratic dispensation in Ghana, this research focuses on what the media especially radio is doing to help sustain democracy in Ghana.

1.3 Hypothesis

In this study it is hypothesized that a free and vocal media is the backbone of Ghana's democracy.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the issues presented in the research problem, this study focused on the following questions:

1. What issues are discussed in the media?
2. Do patrons of the media patronise issues of politics and democracy?
3. How often do patrons make use of the media?
4. Are those who patronise the media able to make their contributions in support of democracy and politics by their understanding of the issues in the media?

1.5 Limitation

One limitation to this study is that it focussed on just one city, and that findings cannot be generalised to cover the whole nation of Ghana. An attempt to do so would ignore other significant variations in other regions and the many cities therein.

1.6 Significance of the Research

Democracy and for that matter democratic constitutional governance is considered one of the sure ways to maintain peace. Galtung puts it that "democracies are not belligerent, engaging in war; and not even bellicist, inclined to resort to war. They are peace-loving, stressing the peaceful pursuit of their goals including peace" (Galtung 1996: 49). What democracy does is that it ensures representation, transparency and respect for the minority. Many people cherish democracy and for that matter see it as a form of government that respects the right of all to participate in matters that concerns all, hence democracy is seen as a respecter of individuals as citizens who can discern between right and wrong. (Baker 2002: 126)

One of the means by which democratic constitutional rule could be sustained is through the media in general. According to Baker, "democracy requires a free [media] – a [media] to which it

gives relatively specific assignment. A free and independent [media] can make important structural contributions that are as great as or greater than many of the constitutional and administrative devices" (Baker 2002: 132-3). Therefore this research will provide additional insight into how to nurture and entrench a democracy in a landscape of political instability with the media serving as a centripetal force that propels the concept.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Survey Area

The study was conducted in Ghana, specifically in the Greater Accra Region. The region has been divided into districts, municipal and metropolis namely: Dangme East didtrict, Dangme West district, Ga East ditrict, Ga West district, Tema Municipal and Accra Metropolis (Accra Metropolitan Assembly Medium Term Plan 1998-2002). The Accra Metropolis constitutes the capital city of Ghana and therefore the political and administrative nerve centre of the country and this was where the activities of the researcher were concentrated.

The Accra Metropolitan area was chosen because apart from its metropolitan nature, it is also cosmopolitan in outlook, depicting a wide array of people and experience. Also, it serves as an industrial and commercial centre and attracts people from all walks of life all over Ghana. Again, people in the metropolis are made of office and industrial unionised workforce which often requires a certain level of education whose knowledge of their rights is not in doubt and can forcefully articulate them. Indeed this is a labour force whose income is linked with policies of government. This makes them very focussed on government programmes with the expectation that those programmes will mitigate the kind of hardship they face.

1.7.1.1 Boundary and Administrative Area

Accra as a metropolis (city) has further been divided into sub-metropolis for the effectiveness and ease of administration. It is made sub metropolis numbering six, namely; Okaikoi, Ashiedu Keteke, Ayawaso, Kpeshie, Osu Klotey and Ablekuma. Its land size is made up of 200 square kilometers. In the South, the Metropolis of Accra has its boundary being the Gulf of Guinea. It is also bounded in the North East and North West by the Tema municipality and the Ga district respectively. (Ibid)

1.7.2 Sampling Technique

The target subjects for the research were people of 18 years and above. This was because the constitution of the republic of Ghana gives them the right to vote in all national elections, a situation which empowers them to exercise a certain democratic right of participation, ensuring they are not left out of the decision making process.

Through simple random sampling technique, five sub-metropolises out of six in the Accra metropolis were chosen; these are Kpeshie, Okaikoi, Osuklotey, Ayawaso and Ashiedu Keteke. The same technique was used to select a neighbourhood each in the selected sub-metropolises respectively as follows; La, Kaneshie, Osu, New Town and Achimota. After this, a constant number of 10 people were selected from those neighbourhoods at random. In all 50 people were selected with whom interviews were conducted. The selection of these neighbourhoods was intended to reflect a broader view of the Ghanaian society. A house situated in Kanehie in the Okaikoi sub-metropolis was chosen for one focus group discussion, this was to solicit opinion through discussion of the issues and to allow for in-depth responses.

1.7.3 Data Collection

Data collected for use in this research were collected through interviews, focus group discussion and other documentary sources.

1.7.3.1 Qualitative Data

Qualitative method of research is explained as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consist f a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations; including field notes interviews, conversations, photographs, recording, and memos to the self …….. [Q]ualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative research study things in their natural setting, attempting to make to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 4-6)

1.7.3.2 Interview

This involved the careful asking of relevant questions of selected individuals. The purpose was to find out what was on the minds of interviewees or what they thought or felt about the research topic. Random approach to the selection of interviewees was adopted. I was turned down a number of times by the people I approached with reasons such as 'I am on my way to work' or 'I am in a hurry to meet a friend' amongst others. Those who agreed to speak with me had me identify myself clearly to them before the interview commenced. It was a bit difficult talking to married women and young females probably because of suspicion by other onlookers who may know them. The men had no difficulty at all granting an interview. Indeed some asked for us to relax in nearby pubs so that we could chat over some drinks. In all cases I had to guarantee the confidentiality of the interview and assure them that it was solely going to be used for academic purpose only. The interviews provided me with the chance to learn not only about the situation but also about the opinions and the perspectives of interviewees. This helped to direct and shape my research and my understanding of media and democracy and also helped to develop further lines of questioning. The interviews became more flowing conversations than question and answer sessions.

1.7.3.3 Focus Group Discussion

This was done with a selected household with the focus of interest on them. According to Kumekpor, "the focus of interest is on group interviewees responding at the same time at the same place, instead of individual interviewees approached individually in their privacy. Focus group discussion takes the form of an exchange of views and opinion through discussions with a group or different sets of groups, which are known to be concerned with, and knowledgeable about the issues discussed" (Kumekpor Tom 2002: 190) the purpose for which this method of data collection was adopted was to achieve an in-depth interview with a difference.

Four compound houses in Kaneshie were selected at random and this was narrowed down to just one. An appointment was made with the inmates of the house and the issues were explained to them of which some declined to participate. In spite of my explanation to them that I was a researcher looking for data, they would not open up fully until I had shown them my Student ID and the introductory letter given me by my faculty. Participants in the focus group included two married men, a married woman, a female student, a male student and a self-employed youngman.

Contributions from the married ones were seen to be a bit passionate where as the rest of them sounded more dispassionate. Generally the contributions of all the participants were insightful. The discussion had to be done on Saturday since all of them were busy during the week. The responses from the discussions were recorded by the researcher for transcription.

1.7.3.4 Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from already existing literature on media and democracy. These included articles from journals, books and magazines. The significance was to review literature on the media's contribution on politics and democracy. The literature reviewed served as both theoretical and empirical base for the analysis of the data collected. It also supplemented the information gathered during fieldwork. In that regard the School of Communication library of the University of Ghana and the University of Tromsø libraries as well as other sources were visited for information.

1.7.4 Fieldwork Challenges

I went to the field with much expectation; however I encountered a few challenges. First of all, to ensure that I satisfactorily covered the areas I had mapped out for the research I had to do a lot of movement each day I went to the field with most of the movement being done on foot which was very challenging considering the fact that the sun was very scorching each day. The other challenge had to do with the uncooperative attitude of some respondents. I had been perceived by some of them as one who was wasting their time and would not want to have anything to do with me. In one instance I was confronted by a youngman who looked so furious and asked me to leave the neighbourhood because my long presence made him have suspicions about me. Sometimes I met people who could neither speak English nor any of the local languages I comprehend, I had to hire two people to help with interpretation on my subsequent assignments. Women, especially married ones had difficulty granting me interviews; the cultural belief that a married woman must stay away from other men probably explains this. They felt it was ethically wrong to stand alone with a man they considered strange, more so when it had to take a little longer to complete the interview.

I had planned also to seek views from a senior and renowned journalist of which early provision was made on arrival. I sought early appointment with the editor-in-chief as he is so called so that

I could have him to talk to. However while I had made earlier arrangement to have this interview done, a case cropped up and my key journalist interviewee who is an investigative journalist had to travel to investigate some bribery allegations that connected some key public figures. With this happening, I had no chance to do an interview with him because he arrived when I had left the field.

My quest to interview some political figures within government also could not work out. They had been very busy with official duty and that meant going out to the field to inspect projects. It was also getting close to primaries for the election of candidates for the various constituencies. In Ghana, it is a constitutional requirement for the majority of ministers to be selected from parliament so most of them had gone back into their constituencies trying to campaign in order for them to be retained as candidates for the next national elections.

1.7.5 Data Handling

After the collection of data was done, the next phase was to subject the data to analyses. This involved proper examination and reading of all the responses obtained from the interviewees. The data obtained was organized based on the research questions. I also listened and transcribed taped or recorded interviews. I then grouped quotes from each interview obtained through observation into the different themes.

1.8 Summary

This chapter looked at Ghana's chequered political history from 1957 to 1992, giving an account of the periods of dictatorial rule interwoven with some democratic dispensations that the nation has gone through and the fact that it has moved on into a more stable form of democracy. It also gives a feel of the methodological approaches adopted in the research which was essentially qualitative in outlook.

CHAPTER TWO

Media Development in Ghana

2.0 Introduction

Over the past decades Ghana's media has passed through various stages from state monopoly of print and audio media to liberalised format, involving state and private sector. According to Wei "the media serves a variety of needs such as communication, cohesion, social control, and cultural continuity in a society. At the individual level, the media fulfil audience needs for surveillance, personal guidance, personal relationships, identity formation, and diversion, among others. Rooted in the functional view of media, the uses and gratifications approach to media use assumes that audiences are aware of their social and psychological needs and actively seek the media to fulfil them. That is, needs fulfilment motivates audience media use" (Wei 2008: 37).

2.1 Governance and media

Of all the media, the press is considered as the oldest and most widespread. However radio and television have in recent times attained importance basically because, they have that additional advantage of the ability to hear and see which obviously is not the case for the press. The press depends largely on the ability to read. Unlike the press, radio and television are both within the easy reach of both the literate and the illiterate.

Modern governments, especially democratic ones rely so much on the availability and accessibility of information to both the government and the governed. This situation renders the media very important such that one cannot do without it if governance must be effective. The media provides the platform by which government communicates with the people. If the media is a free one, government can get to know what the different sections of the population really think and structure public policies accordingly. Not only that, the media serves as a forum for people to also learn about the actions and intentions of government thereby giving them the opportunity to make what they think as well as their reactions known to government (Boateng 1996: 182).

2.2 Evolution of the Media in Ghana

The media in Ghana goes as far back as 1822 when Ghana was called the Gold Coast. The then British governor Sir Charles McCarthy who was overseeing the country, then a colony to the

British established the Royal Gold Coast Gazette as an official paper for government, but in a matter of two years, this paper ceased publication. Then after, the Africa-run newspaper owned and edited by two brothers; Charles and Edmund Bannerman also started publication in 1857. Due to a system of free press that developed along the line, people were encouraged to establish a number of newspapers by which time there was none for government. The kind of press freedom in existence at the time was made possible due to the social background of those who owned the media and the editors in charge of those newspapers together with the political ideological orientation of the press. Those in charge of the editing of the newspapers constituted the commercial and professional classes who also made up the nationalist elite. The content of their publication centred on criticisms of the government of the day which was colonial with regards to the policies of the colonial officials, corruption and abuse of power. It should however be noted that literacy rate was very low at that time and therefore the press at the time was urban based. With time, there was the introduction of a law that was to change the atmosphere of media freedom. The 'Criminal Code (Amendment) ordinance' was passed specifying entirely new offences which constituted sedition. This was vehemently protested by Ghanaians, mainly by professionals to show their clear disgust for the extent to which press freedom was being curtailed. Even though this law found two people; Azikiwe and Wallace-Johnson prosecuted under it, laws regarding the press were administered in a liberal atmosphere without any further restrictions placed on the mass media over the rest of the period of the colonial years in Ghana (Twumasi 1981: 14-16).

The 1950s saw the production of some newspapers such as the Daily Graphic, a daily, and the Sunday Mirror, a weekly. These news papers had a wide circulation and again were conscious of the rivalry between the two main elite nationalist parties namely the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) ad the Convention People's Party (CPP) and therefore played a neutral role in terms of the papers' writings. This was because both parties were seeking the independence of Ghana and therefore perceived those newspapers as imperialist which hid under freedom of the press existing at the time to undermine the independent movement because they were owned by expatriates.

In the course of time, the leader of the CPP, Kwame Nkrumah went into journalism and established the Accra Evening News, the Sekondi Morning Telegraph and the Daily Mail. This was in an attempt to push the political ideology of the CPP. In the same vane, the UGCC also established the National Times, Talking Drums and the Ashanti Pioneer (this paper was established in 1939). Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP formed the government after independence and bought the Daily Graphic for Government in1962. Further more, the Newspaper Licensing act was passed. This law required publishers and editors of newspaper to renew their license every year form government. This translated into a weapon used by government to have absolute control over the development of private news media. By 1964 Ghana had a media system that could best be described as monolithic (Twumasi 1981: 16-17).

2.3 The Development of Ghanaian Electronic Media

Regarding the electronic media, broadcasting in Ghana is said to have begun also in the colonial era dating as far back as 1935 when the then Governor of the Gold Coast (as Ghana was then called), Sir Arnold Hodson established the first and the only wired radio distribution system in Accra. It was as an extension of London's Empire Service. The network was established in Accra and it was later given the name Station ZOY and started service on 31 July 1935. The period between 1946 and 1953, saw station ZOY being administered by the Public Relations Department of the Colonial Government (Alhassan 2005: 211 & 212). According to Ansah, "radio was to cater for the information, cultural and entertainment needs of the political educated elite consisted of European settlers, colonial administrators and the small group of educated Africans" (Ansah P.A.V. quoted in Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998: 4).

From serving just a small minority in Accra in the colonial period with a relay of BBC news and programmes, the station expanded to most parts of the country through relay rediffusion stations dotted in the district centres in the colonial and post-colonial administrations. At its peak in the 1970's, there were 52 such relay stations to which several rural subscribers were linked by rediffusion boxes. However, the technology was such that its spread and wider reach to the majority of the population were severely limited. By the 1960's, though, the innovations in transistorised technology popularised radio and increased receiver ownership tremendously

because people could now tune in to radio stations without direct cable links to sources of transmission (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998: 4).

Based on recommendations made by a commission set up in 1953, the station's name was changed to Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS) and transformed into a separate department of government. Another commission set up in 1958, by the self-rule government of Kwame Nkrumah upon examining the growth and development made recommendations for GCBS to be relocated. This was done and GCBS was moved to new premises with improved infrastructure and state-of-the-art broadcasting equipment. The GCBS was later renamed the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). Ever since it was introduced until 1967, the GBC was wholly funded by government. But in the course of time, GBC had to supplement government support by making some operations commercial. This was gradual, with the state retaining the monopoly over broadcasting (Alhassan 2005: 211, 213).

The CPP government made tremendous expansion in broadcasting facilities in the country. To take advantage of the transistor technology and make access to radio wider as well as to create a basis for development technological capacity, the state owned industrial establishment Ghana Sanyo Limited, entered into partnership with the Japanese company SANYO, to assemble radio sets and related technologies in Tema. The small portable *Akasanoma* radio was made available on the Ghanaian market at reasonably affordable price (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998: 4).

Television was introduced in Ghana in 1965 as part of the services and operations of GBC. At the time, it could not cover the whole nation, the farthest it could cover was the middle belt namely, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana (Ibid: 5). Today it has expanded to cover the entire nation. Additionally there are other Private television stations currently doing free-on-air broadcast, they include TV 3, Metro TV, TV Africa, and very recently Net 2 TV, Viasat 1 and Crystal TV.

2.4 The Quest for FM Radio Broadcast

The year 1995 was a land mark year for independent private broadcasting. For the first time in the history of the country the long standing monopoly held by the state owned GBC was broken

in conformity with the 1992 constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of ownership of the means of speech expression, be it print or electronic. This however did not come without a struggle since the then government was reluctant to grant licenses for people start private radio due to fear over loss of monopoly and control of the media.

It all started in a daring move on November 19, 1994, when Radio EYE, operated by Independent Media Corporation of Ghana (IMCG) threw caution to the winds and begun the country's first private broadcast station. Broadcasting on frequency band 96. 2 megahertz (MHz), Radio EYE's test transmissions were unprecedented in the history of the country. Hitherto, the state-owned GBC had enjoyed monopoly of the airwaves. Radio EYE broadcast comprised music interspersed with a bit of talk. Starved of alternative station to tune in to, many people switched dials from GBC to Radio EYE. In the course of time, the euphoria was short-lived. On December 4, 1994, the premises of Radio EYE were raided by the police, its equipment seized and it owners and disk jockeys arrested. They were arraigned before an Accra circuit court on December 8, 1994 and charged with operating radio station without licence and written consent (Ayitevie 1996: 9).

Following this incident there was a period of litigation in court between IMCG and the government of which the court ruled that the search and seizure of the equipment was not legal and that the security personnel were to return the equipment of IMCG to them. Additionally, there were a number of demonstrations by the public against the seizure of equipment and closure of Radio EYE following evidence that Ghana Frequency Registration Control Board (GFRCB) had failed to react to an application made by IMCG and several others for assignment of frequencies for radio and television broadcasting services.

Radio EYE was not allocated any frequency to operate because according to the chairman of GFRCB, the station would only be given one after a Supreme Court judgement. However, a committee was soon set up chaired by one Bonsu-Bruce and February 1995 was fixed as the period for the operation of properly authorised FM radio stations, but it was not until May that the GFRCB invited 41 companies out of 60 applicants for frequency allocation interviews (Ibid: 9, 10).

A number of frequencies were allocated for FM radio broadcast and a few for television following the screening of applicants, based on a certain criteria. Among them were the applicants project studies namely engineering design systems of technical implementation plan; marketing plan namely market analysis; roll-out plan and coverage criteria; business plan, and programming philosophy (Sakyi-Addo 1996: 6). It could now be said that radio broadcasting in Ghana has been transformed since the middle of 1995 into an ocean of aural delight. After many years of having little or no choice in terms of radio programming and a variety of radio stations, the Ghanaian radio listener has now encountered a new phenomenon of choice. The radio listener can now be selective and feel so good as far as local radio is concerned due to the birth of a host new FM radio stations (Dotse 1996: 14).

2.5 Processes of Radio Broadcasting

Broadcasting involves two basic processes; these are studio processes and transmitting processes.

The studio process makes use of equipment such as microphone, recorders and player, gram-turnables. Processing amplifiers deployed include Pre-amplifiers, distribution amplifiers, limiting amplifiers and power amplifiers. Other pieces of equipment include mixing console sync-pulse-generators Monitoring loud speakers. All these are meant to produce sound.

The transmitting process deploys basically the transmitter and the antenna. The transmitter receives the output of the studio and feeds it into the antenna which then diffuses it into the air for reception through receiving sets. The transmitter can be any of the following:

Longwave and Mediumwave transmitters generally referred as Amplitude Modulation (A-M) transmitters and primarily meant for national or short range coverage.

Shortwave transmitters also use the principle of A-M and it is primarily meant for international and long-range coverage.

Frequency-Modulated (FM) Transmitter has output that is less prone to man-made noises and therefore give clearer output. This kind of transmitter has limited coverage.

All the transmitters use frequencies without which operations are impossible, therefore there are frequencies for all forms of transmitters (Bonsu-Bruce in Koomson 1995: 27-28). It should be noted that FM stations are so called because they transmit using the Frequency-Modulation transmitter.

2.6 FM Stations Programming

Almost all the FM stations are commercial entities. Growth in the field has led to a widely competitive environment where many stations are competing for a small amount of advertising just to make some profit; there is therefore a large concentration of these FM stations in the urban communities. This has resulted in a largely fluid environment for commercial radio with new stations opening almost annually.

Their daily programmes are almost similar including the broadcast of hourly news, talk shows, intermittent playing of music and commercials amongst others. The difference among these stations is the style of broadcast which sets them apart from each other, otherwise there seem to be a situation where they copy each other in terms of programming with just a change of name to it. A good number of the stations broadcast in the vernacular with the rest of them doing their broadcast in English.

2.6.1 Syndication

This involves a group of FM stations working together in order to complement each other's programmes. Since FM transmission coverage is limited, a popular and bigger FM station links up with a number of other smaller FM stations via satellite so that while it broadcasts programmes that many people may like, it will be done simultaneously on the other networks. This collaboration is usually the case when it has to do with news broadcast and political talk shows amongst others.

2.7 Media and Democracy in Ghana

According to Alhassan, "[the old] thinking about media and nation has been drastically revised in current policy practice, with the national constitution categorically insulating the state media from state control and guaranteeing freedom and diversity of thought" (Alhassan 2005: 217). Today, Ghana's media is a very big industry with a lot of privately owned electronic and print media functioning side by side with the state owned media. This is because the liberal and democratic reforms that characterized the nation midway inside the 1990s culminated in the

establishment of multi-party democracy without exception to the privatization of the airwaves which in turn gave way for the multiplicity of independent mass media, whose operations are regional or community based. Over two hundred radio and television stations owned by private individuals and organizations are believed to be broadcasting along side the state media, resulting in a transformed media environment. GBC which used to be an avenue for government propaganda was transformed when the private media was introduced onto the scene in 1995. Once the independent media started operating, radio positioned itself in the centre stage and started playing a pivotal role in the democratic and civil society building process. Freedom of expression and public participation in civil discourse became the norm, paving the way for people to engage in open discussion of issues on civic and political matters without being afraid of any governmental consequence. Radio has also become a forum where issues of public concerns are given the needed response (Blankson 2002).

> In the process of exercising their newly found freedom, the .... media operations, especially radio stations, are performing two important civil society functions: disclosing the society's shortcomings and abuses (not just that of the state), and strengthening the democratic process and civil society. They are serving as advocates for the new democratic dispensation by scrutinizing public servants, the state, private organizations, and other civil institutions. They are also gaining the ability to reach various segments of the populace with information and to create links between like-minded civil society groups. These functions have made the Ghanaian independent media a committed media and a viable civil society institution, one that is positioned in the center of the democracy and civil society building process (Blankson 2002).

With this, it clear that the media in Ghana is on the path to bridging the gap that had long existed between the Ghanaian populace and the government, a thing that is needed to consolidate democracy and to help it mature. "Independent broadcasting is given political raality; it is here to stay (Karkari in Koomson 1995: 9)

2.8 Regulatory Bodies of the Media in Ghana

The National Communications Authority (NCA) and the National Media Commission (NMC) constitutes the two main media regulatory bodies in Ghana.

2.8.1 Role of the National Communications Authority

The mandate of the NCA is "to regulate communications by wire, cable, radio, television, satellite and similar means of technology to ensure that communications in Ghana contribute fairly and equitably to the nation's economic, social and cultural prosperity in the information age" (National Communication Authority Guidelines 2007). Their objectives are to:

- Ensure that there are provided throughout Ghana as far as practicable such communication services as are reasonably necessary to satisfy demand for the services.

- Ensure that communication systems operators achieve the highest level of efficiency in the provision of communication services and responsive to customers and community needs

- Promote fair competition among persons engaged in the provision of communication services; to protect operators and consumers from unfair conduct to other operators with regard to quality of communications services and payment of tariffs in respect of the services

- Protect the interest of the consumers

- Facilitate the availability of quality equipment to consumers and operators.

- Research into and the development of technologies and use of new technologies by provision of communications services and to develop adequate resources in collaboration with such other government departments and agencies as the Authority considers appropriate (Ibid,).

2.8.2 The Role of the National Media Commission of Ghana

The National Media Commission (NMC) was set up on July 7, 1993 by an act of Parliament (Act 449) in pursuant to Chapter 12 of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The NMC was established to promote free independent and responsible media so as to sustain democracy and national development. Towards this goal, the NMC is committed to the following;

- Maintaining its independence from political influence.

- Ensuring that the state-owned media are independent from governmental control.

- Raising professional standards among media practitioners and ensuring fairness to the public.

- Protecting journalists from harassment and penalties arising out of their editorial opinions and content.

- Encouraging the media to play their role of holding people in authority accountable to the people and protecting their individual rights (Profile of the National Media Commission 1993).

In view of the above the NMC has put together a number of documents as guidelines for media houses and their operatives. These documents include Broadcasting Standards, Print Media Guidelines, and Guidelines for Political Reporting. From time to time, the NMC calls media practitioners to book for irresponsible publications or broadcasts.

2.9 Summary

This chapter outlines the relationship between the media and governance in order to understand better how the media have evolved from colonial to postcolonial where the media used to be the monopoly of the state to the present proliferation of it to cover most of the state. The media and democracy has also been captured, explaining the media as a civil society institution in a democracy. Finally, media regulatory bodies such as the National Communications Authority and National Media Commission and it moderating role between the media and society has been captured in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Media and Democracy in Theory

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a theoretical backdrop for the media's role in creating and sustaining democratic political systems. It is about conceptual discussions of democracy, with emphasis on the deliberative and liberal perspectives. The two perspectives are first discussed separately and then their interconnections explored to show their perception of democratic socio-political order, as well as the media's roles as the guardian of the public.

3.1 Deliberative Theory

The concept of deliberative democracy is defined as "a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future" (Gutmann and Thompson 2004: 7). It facilitates collective decision making which is acceptable by all sides and further encourage a situation where all the parties involved in taking decisions are willing and always ready to help one another on public issues to promote mutually respectful way of churning out decisions and in the process make amends to the mistakes which may occur.

According to Benhabib, the concept of democracy can be seen as "a model for organizing the collective and public exercise of power in the major institutions of society on the basis of the principle that decisions affecting the well-being of a collectivity can be viewed as the outcome of a procedure of free and reasoned deliberation among individuals considered as moral and political equals" (Benhabib 1996: 68). Similarly for Bohman, deliberative democracy "is thus any one of a family of views according to which the public deliberation of free and equal citizens is the core of legitimate political decision making and self-government" (Bohman 2004: 23). It offers that advantage of enabling communication at different levels of institutions where decisions are thought out and made thereby encouraging very strong as well as healthy accountability which flows not only from the top to the bottom, but also from the bottom to the top. By this it promises to uphold legitimacy in democracy to the extent that established formal

institutions are so linked to other public sphere within which all citizens are partakers (Bohman 2004: 36).

The campaigns that are carried out during elections or the kind of decisions reached out of elections should not be seen as having the responsibility of 'reason-giving' communication within the process of politics. Again if what is shared by all has to do with rules of the game it is possible to find people as opponents than partners. The democratic process here should be seen as something that includes communicative action even the more, and that it is better to find solutions to the disputes that show up from time to time through the use of dialogue and discussions instead of competition or contestation. This is because deliberative democracy relies on a certain level of citizens and officials maintaining consistency in speech as well as action (Gutmann and Thompson 1996: 58, 81, and 130).

Deliberative democracy should take upon itself a certain dimensions of authority of which are necessary. It should have authority of function; that is, authority should be seen to be functional. This is because it is not possible for all to be part of the decisions made on behalf of citizens by institutions except to rely on the fact that those decisions have been made well. In that, respect and trust should be seen as existing in all parts in order to make decisions taken about collective matters closely and practically linked to trust as well as the benefits that emanates from it. Again it should have authority of distinctive goods, meaning functional distinctions possess authority when they serve different purposes. In other words, there ought to be some difference in the way authority is shared to ensure its effectiveness. For example Medical Doctors should take charge of issues regarding medicine so long as it will serve the purpose of healing. That way, the force of such an authority is visible. Also it should have authority of talk. That is to say that it is important for individuals to recognize that it is better to engage one another in talk when issues arise rather than to engage in fighting or coercive imposition. It should have authority of voice whereby individuals must have the feeling of having been authorized to speak based on their experiences and interests during deliberations. Finally it should have authority of shared future such that structures will be put in place to serve as a guarantee to all in the sense that every body will be subject to the risks and burdens that results from decisions made including the those authorities who make the decisions (Warren 1996: 48-51).

3.2 Liberal Theory

A political system that may be considered liberal usually has as part of its features, a government that is representative of the people that takes its organization from a set of rules called the constitution, of which all consider as the supreme law of the land, In most cases, it involves two parts. One part has to do with how to establish the organization of government out of which is embedded a system which ensure checks and balances, namely the executive, legislature and the judiciary which is charged with the responsibility of preserving the supremacy of the constitution, and the other part has to do with the establishment of certain rights that must be respected. These include a number of civil and political rights made up of freedom of speech, freedom of association and the right to vote amongst other (Gargarrella in Maravall & Przeworski 2003: 148). This is significant because "the need for social bases of self-respect is met by the recognition that each individual receives by virtue of her acceptance by her fellow citizens as an equal citizen entitled to equal fundamental rights and liberties within a scheme of just institutions, together with the support individuals receive through their participation in voluntary association" (Johnston 1994: 154). Liberalism as a political system therefore gives room for the protection of group and individual liberties and puts in place a civil society that is independent and a private life that is shielded or protected from the manipulations of the state (Diamond in Dahl el al 2003: 29)

Within the concept of liberal theory, the constitution is not considered as simply another piece of instrument meant to do a selection within a state of balance in opposing forces, but it is the very foundation on which the rule of law as well a justice rests. Considering the social contract traditions, it is believed that constitutions as well as laws when given the nod by people considered as rational and coming from a position of equal political backgrounds and having the same rights, can be considered as being just and that what is important among people who are of moral equality is reasonable agreement and not strategic rationality (Cameron 2007: 10).

Even though democracy has something to do with the rule of the majority (Sartori 1987: 31), it is also true to say that "[t]he most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities" (Lord Acton cited in Sartori 1987: 32) and that "[i]n democracies the opposition is an organ of popular sovereignty just as vital as government.

To suppress the opposition is to suppress the sovereignty of the people" (Guglielmo Ferrero cited in Sartori 1987: 32). This goes to show that opposition or minority groups cannot be discounted from the liberal democratic process and that they constitute a very significant aspect of it.

Individual right is important in liberal democratic theory and must be upheld otherwise it will amount to nothing if it does not mean the right to go after a course of conduct and to support an idea publicly of which the majority may not agree with. Again there can be no democracy if there is proof to the effect that the majority has overused it rights. (Sartori 1987: 32). In other words "[t]here is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; every citizen is not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government, by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general" (Terchek & Conte 2001: 44).

3.3 Deliberative and Liberal Theory

Deliberative and liberal ideals as concepts of democracy all help to build the society by the way each functions. In the liberal conception, the objective of democracy is to put together all the preferences of individuals into a collective choice in a way that should be seen as fair to all and effective too. It envisages the fact that different views exist in democracy regarding what should be done politically. This shows the many and varied interests and beliefs in a society which are unique and are specific to the individual members of the political community. However, they must be given equal attention. Liberal democrats may disagree whether majority decision is to be preferred as against a pluralistic system which hands out to groups in society varied amounts of power that are proportionate to their interest with respect to those decisions, but this is an internal dispute of which compromise must be reached (Miller in Held 1993: 75).

The deliberative ideal also starts on the premise that preference in politics will definitely conflict, in that case the aim of institutions of politics must be to resolve them. The resolution is expected to be done in a friendly atmosphere where the issues will be discussed in order to get to a point where all agree, and the need to reach an agreement compels each participating member to

forward a proposal under a general rule of policy consideration acceptable to all. In this regard, reason must be given for each claim or proposal (Ibid: 75-76).

The deliberative concept puts aside particular interests and opinions and goes for the common interest of the collectivity whereas the liberal emphasizes the importance of issues according equal weight to the different needs of individual specific preference (Ibid: 76).

3.4 Media's Roles in Democratic Regimes

Taylor notes that the media functions as a self instituted watchdog of government and that the role of the media which is independent of government is to keep an eye on the ruling government and make known to the people what the media owned by government will not (Taylor 2000: 9). In other words, a free media serves as the public eye in watching over the bureaucracy and makes sure nepotism is reduced to the barest minimum if not removed entirely. This makes officials of government as well as administrators careful in taking decisions and when decisions are taken, they are made available to the public (Keane 1991: 16).

Granting the media the necessary freedom to operate is very significant to serve as a check on governments that could be dictatorial. Given the fact that, those who govern only form a small fraction of the population of a state, it will serve as a good opportunity for public officials to conduct themselves in a manner that will be accepted by many. This goes a long way to make a media that has the freedom to operate naturally becomes a catalyst for happiness and also contribute to the control of that habit where those in government seek their own interest to the disadvantage of the majority who are being ruled and brings to light all what is hidden from public knowledge and also create a situation where those who govern behave politely towards those who are being governed. Also Freedom of the press [or media] significantly helps to cultivate free public discourse among citizens (Ibid: 16-17).

One major means by which communication flow is ensured between citizens and those who represent them is the mass communication media which operates to sustain democracy (Gunther and Mugban 2000: 1). Again "the media through the information they convey to the mass public, serve as a key guarantor of elite accountability and popular control of government in

democracies, since a broadly and equitably informed citizenry helps assure a democracy that is both responsive and responsible" (Gunther and Mugban 2000: 4 quoting Delli et al)

Two features of a democratic media come together to make sure that information made available to the public goes a long way to restrict the authority of government instead of enlarging it. The foremost thing is the constitutional assurance of the citizen's liberty to access public information. That is a free media, the liberty to express oneself freely and the right to assembly paves way for a range of communication that brings about variety in the way views are expressed. By this, citizens are able to criticize government policies and to change governments through contested elections if they are not satisfied with their actions and inactions. Secondly, democracy is made stronger and the principle of honesty is made sure by the free flow of information when the media enjoys protection from unfair exercise of government power through institutionalized legalities to create a long standing variety of media forms and outlets (Gunther and Mugban 2000: 4-5)

3.4.1 The Fourth Estate

The media has been perceived and called the fourth estate of government because it has assumed a position where it is endowed with so much power such that it plays an oversight function on government. This has made its role in democratic governance accepted since the seventeenth century and therefore remains important to democratic theory of today. It is suggested that being open about the issues goes a long way to ensure that dictatorship is brought to the minimum. Even though the media can engage in sensationalism, they are still considered an important tool in a democracy with the mandate of holding governments accountable for their actions and inactions. In that regard, the media in both old and new democracies are seen as watchdogs and not as passive institutions meant only for the recording of events. The role of the media keeps the people informed and serves as a guardian of the public interest exposing citizens to know the realities on the ground in order for them to identify those who are doing harm to them. In very young democracies in which institutions are found to be weak and not functioning as expected, a fearless media is imperative. When the other arms of government such as the judiciaries and legislatures and other institutions set up to play oversight roles in government become weak or corrupted, the media remains the only checker of abuse of power. The media also serves as a

channel or link between government and the citizens where the issues are debated for an effective policy formulation and decision making (Coronel 2004: 2-5).

The media may be considered as that institution that makes up the backbone of democracy. This consideration is so because, they have the ability to convey to voters political information needed to formulate their decision. They are able to figure out those problems confronting society in order to serve as a way of communicating within a society to foster deliberation. The media performs very important democratic functions including surveillance of socio-political developments, identifying issues that are important to the development of the state, creating the platform conducive for fruitful debate that covers a wide range of views, holding officials to account with regards to how they exercise power, and also create an atmosphere that encourages citizens to learn, make choices and be active participants in the political process thereby having the ability to resist the efforts of forces outside the media to undermine their independence (Fog 2004: 1 & 2).

It is suggested that, it is incumbent on the media to sustain a certain tempo in the democratic discussion in order to help put in place the agenda for the gradual development of the democratic project. They have the responsibility to protect democracy from backsliding with respect to corruption of individuals in office or gradual destruction of institutions. In situations where other political parties do not live up to expectation by way of providing effective opposition to the ruling party due probably to division within the opposition parties or that they do not have enough experience to provide that effective opposition, such opposition would have to emanate from the media. The expansion of the media, especially the electronic media has improved their role in the process of democratization. Both national an international media have made significant contributions to the democratization movement at every phase of it. The cultural and direct political effects of the international media created the initial conditions with the national media playing their part to preserve critical traditions. The national and international media have both played a crucial role in the initial stages of democratization. In general the media has succeeded in reacting keenly to openings of democracy and the opportunities they offer and have been able to play roles that have brought down old regimes (Randall 1993: 642 & 644).

3.5 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to explore the conceptual understanding of liberal and deliberative theories as well as the media as fundamental to the framework of the democratic and socio-political forward movement. This elementary framework may provide the political environment nurtured by the state to ensure all encompassing accountable governance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the field data and an attempt at their interpretation. The focus of this chapter then dwells on the social characteristics (sex, age, marital status, education etc) of the respondents and continues with several other responses that were elicited in relation to the media and democracy such as the public view of the Ghanaian democracy, access to information by the public, how the media helps public understanding of the issues as well as opinion shaping and the media amongst others.

4.1 Social Characteristics

Table 1 below shows that there were 29 (58%) male and 21 (42%) female informants.

Table 1: Sex of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	29	58.0
Female	21	42.0
Total	50	100.0

From the table above it could be realized that the gender composition of respondents is dominated by males, constituting 29 of the 50 subjects making up to 58 percent with the females constituting 42 percent which comes to 21 people. During field work, men were more willing to give information probably due to the cultural setting of the Ghanaian where suspicion surrounds a male and a female standing aloof and talking. It has however been proven that men's participation in politics is rather likely than women. Women's involvement in politics is less and level of interest declared is also low as compared to men. Women have been seen as conservative politically and are less politically interested than men. This may be attributed to the role training of boys and girls at home and at school. Indeed the culture typing of the two sexes assigns ascendant, power-possessing role to the men and the dependent receptive to the women. Another possibility is that women's involvement in extra-political roles such as home and child management hinder them from nurturing links that are strong and made up of a wider social contact that aid the maintenance and involvement in politics. This means that the environment

within which women find themselves builds up a barrier that stifles political stimuli (Dowse & Hughes, 1972: 192-194).

Table 2 below indicates that there were 14 (28%), 20 (40%), 14 (28%), 2 (4%) informants in age brackets 18-28, 29-38, 39-50, 50 or above respectively.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age in years	Frequency	Percent
18-28	14	28.0
29-38	20	40.0
39-50	14	28.0
51 or more	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Looking at the data in table 2, it shows that 4 percent of the respondents fall within the age of 51 or more with 28 percent each falling between the age ranges of 18 – 28 and 39 – 50 respectively. The age range 29 – 38 scores a majority 40 percent. This is indicative of the fact that, a good majority of the respondents are youthful. The future of every nation is largely dependent on the youth, the number of youthful people interested in the political affairs of the nation is therefore seen as very significant. Realising that the policies of government affects them either in the long or short term, the youth are more likely to be interested in politics. It therefore comes as no surprise to see more youthful people gathered at political rallies and other political functions. Dowse and Hughes notes that political participation has been seen to grow as one advanced with age but declines as one gets older form year 50 upwards (Dowse & Hughes, 1972: 298).

Table 3 below shows 19 (38%) singles and 31(62%) married as respondents.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	19	38.0
Married	31	62.0
Total	50	100.0

Regarding the marital status of respondents, 38 percent indicated to be single with a greater portion of 62 percent also indicating that they were married. Marriage is an institution put in place to ensure the maintenance of family life. Even though married people participate in politics,

the highest rate of participation occurs among those who are without children (Dowse & Hughes, 1972: 298). Perhaps the high percentage of married people reflects their expectation of politicians' management of the economy and other issues that affect them. Their increased responsibilities as a result of their attained status as married people probably compel them to be keenly interested in politics and democracy and their related issues.

Table 4 shows that 20 (40%) informants have no children, 13(26%) have one child, 9(18%) have two children and 8 (16%) have three or more children.

Table 4: Number of Children of Respondents

Number	Frequency	Percent
None	20	40.0
One	13	26.0
Two	9	18.0
Three or more	8	16.0
Total	50	100.0

With respect to the number of children respondents have, 40 percent indicated that they do not have any children, this could mean that they are not married to engage in procreation. In Ghana, it is unacceptable by society to start procreating when you are not properly married, it could also be because they may be preoccupied with their education and would want to see the end of it before getting married and having children. 26 percent said they have just one child. Another 18 percent of respondents also said they have two children with 16 percent indicating to have 3 or more children. The above statistics goes to support the fact that those without dependants or children are more likely to be active participants in political discussions, this may probably be because they may not have too much to manage in terms of the home and children which otherwise may prevent them from making time for the discussion of politics.

Table 5 below shows there was 1 (2%) in junior high, 29 (50%) in senior high and 20 (40%) in the university as informants.

Table 5: Level of education of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Junior high school	1	2.0
Senior high school	29	58.0
University	20	40.0
Total	50	100.0

The education levels of respondents as shown in table 5 reveals that 2 percent are Junior High School leavers, 58 percent are Senior High school certificate holders with a total of 40 percent being graduates from the university. The higher one acquires education the more one lends himself to the easy reception of information and for that matter political information acquisition becomes a by-product of education. This situation allows for the examination of new information and participation comes with little cost to the educated hence the general participation of the educated in politics is likely to be higher. In that regard it has been explained that those who have attained some level of education are more likely to participate in politics and are even better able to transmit their interest and knowledge in politics to their children. Further more the more informed and educated will make moves towards affiliating with political parties that they find appropriate due to educationally acquired attitudes (Dowse and Hughes 1972: 261, 293, 305).

4.2 Views on Politics and Democracy in Ghana

When a country has a majority of people who rule with enormous power that is considered supreme such that they make decrees superior to laws of the state, it creates a situation where you have demagogues showing up in the sphere of state rulership thereby sending democracy down the road of degeneration where despotism becomes the order of the day. However, only a government that derives its authority from the provisions of the constitution of the state can retrain and divide the power of the majority who rule and also ensure that individual freedom is

protected (Diamond in Dahl el al 2003: 29). It is therefore worth noting that, those who go into politics should be descent people and also have a clear vision of the demands of the state and for that matter the citizens of the state in order to satisfy a good chunk of the broad masses of the people if not all of them. One of the participants in the focus group discussion maintained that "our democracy must be sustained by every means necessary because coup d'états of the past have proven to be retrogressive to our nation, it brought in people who ruled by their whims and caprices, in the end they could not bring us the kind of development they promised. The exhibition of the people's power at the end of each term keeps the politicians on their toes because they are fully aware they could be thrown out and replaced by others".

4.2.1 Interest in Politics

In Ghana, it is possible to find people gathered and discussing politics with deep passion that makes it look like argument sometimes. This is how people express different views on the way the state is run by the politicians and bureaucrats. Many of the people sampled expressed enormous interest in politics and attributed that interest to the media. In explaining why she has so much interest in politics, a respondent reiterated the fact that "every patriotic and concerned citizen should have as part of his or her preoccupation, interest in the state of affairs of the nation within which he comes from. I am a Ghanaian and the way our leaders run the nation should be of great concern to me knowing that what ever happens in this country affect me and even generations after me. In fact I have become interested in politics largely because of the profuse media presence and that has been of immense help to me" Another respondent said "politics is life, everything we do in this society has some politics to it and therefore I cannot separate myself from it. It s about structures and how things are regulated and administered in the society and since I am part of the society I cannot but have interest in it" In recent years the media in Ghana have done so well to highlight a lot of political issues which in my opinion has brought a lot of enlightenment and again deepened my understanding and interest and indeed many other people. A few others hold contrary views about politics, "it breeds so much conflict in the society so I am not interested" this is how a respondent expressed how he feels about politics.

4.2.1.1 Perception of Ghana's Democracy

When asked what impression they have about the kind of democracy pertaining in Ghana, a great deal of respondents agreed that democracy in Ghana is phenomenal "I am very proud to be called a Ghanaian, in fact what makes me exited about our democracy is the fact that it gives room for the full function of rule of law and allows freedoms of all kinds to be at play. This has translated into free flow of information form the government to the people and vice versa. In addition to that I am able to associate with any group whether it is political or otherwise, unlike in the past where the military placed many restrictions on us". This was how a respondent expressed how he perceived democracy in Ghana. A few of the respondents also indicated that Ghana's democracy is unexciting citing various reasons such as division in society to lawlessness among others. In a passionate mood, a female respondent put it thus: "My brother, what is happening to us as a people? I hope you are aware that the privilege we have should rather turn us into responsible people. I am surprised people understand democracy as 'democrazy' and are engaged in all manner of activities that amount to lawlessness. There are people fighting one another just because they belong to opposing political views, forgetting the fact that these political parties are there with the aim of developing the nation except that each of them have different methods of reaching the same goal of national development". This view was supported by a 45 year old male respondent. According to him, "the politicians are those responsible for the petty quarrels in our society today. When they are on the political campaign platform they make the other opposing party look like an enemy by the way they address them, but behind the scenes they are indeed friends". Others also were of the view that politicians ware scared to enforce the law to the letter, fearing the fact that the strict enforcement of the law may result in them being thrown out of power. On the other hand, if democracy is about development, then politician should see to that and forget about perpetuating their parties to the detriment of national development.

4.2.1.2 Access to Political Information

"Every now and then, there are all manner of information trickling in, what I love is the politics. These days many of the newspapers and the radio stations provide me with lots of information with regards to what goes on within the political sphere", a participant in the focus group discussion intimated. In a political context where democracy is the method of governance, information flow becomes a necessary ingredient which cannot be over emphasized. Those who

govern need to get information to the governed and vice versa, therefore access to information should be readily available. This may help to whip up the interest of the people to want to know all what is happening in the realm of politics. To this end, many and wide viewpoints must have access to the media whether electronic or print so that it could serve as one of the conditions to bring into reality the democratic governance expected in a society considered to be modern. "I believe we are so privileged in Ghana, to have information at any time of the day considering the many print and electronic media available to us. Both media provide information that border on all sides of the political divide and for me, this is healthy for our young democracy" Open public debates that cover a broad range of issues significant to democratic governance needs to have available a public forum that allows for all those who want to be active participants to have access (Rosenfeld in Sajó and Price 1996: 51, 53). This is why access to the channels of the media and all other opportunities to communicate cannot be discounted so that for instance, it should be possible for those who listen to radio, watch television and those who read the newspapers to also have a way of talking back to the issues that have come into the public domain (Jakubowicz in Sajó and Price 1996: 141). The democratic process in Ghana is a young one and for it to be established, the interest of the people must be groomed through the flow of information.

4.2.1.3 Monitoring of Politics and Democracy via the Media

Following events unfolding with respect to politics and democracy in Ghana becomes imperative if there is the interest. More than half of the people sampled were of the view that they are able to monitor a lot of what happens on the political front, an indication that they have vested interest in the political and democratic situation in the country and would want to know what may be happening at any particular point in time. "Before I leave my house in the morning, I pick the morning news on radio even before I think of breakfast. On my way to work I buy a number of news papers to be read during break at work and while I am working, I tune in my radio to various stations for interesting discussions on politics". This view was corroborated by another respondent by saying that "it has become almost a ritual for me to be watching TV, reading the newspapers as well as listening to radio at any opportune time provided it has to do with politics. Sometimes, my friends have a propensity to finding out from me when they are in doubt about a political occurrence and that urges me on to do what I love to be doing". However, a few of the

people sampled do not always monitor what goes on in the political and democratic sphere of the state. This may be the   group who probably may be busy going about other businesses or concentrate rather on the survival hustles of daily life that takes much of their time and therefore do not make much time to monitor the situation on the political front. As one of them put it, "I get too preoccupied with other issues such that I hardly can make time to monitor, but I do if I have space for it".

4.2.1.4 Type of Medium Used in Monitoring Politics and Democracy

If people must follow or monitor events that are unfolding from the ongoing democratic governance, then there should be some particular way by which this could be done. In that regard the trend indicated some of the respondents having a preference mainly for the newspapers or the tabloids. "I am prone to mostly using the news papers because I can keep them in my library and refer to them anytime". Others also have a preference for television. Meanwhile, a good majority of respondents have showed that radio is their favourite. Radio as a source of information is considered a major channel of political information flow which is able to cover many different segment of the population and has for a long time become a very significant way of getting political information to people everywhere (Semetko in LeDuc et al 1996: 255). The choice of a particular radio station, television channel or newspaper may possibly be as a result of the fact that the particular communication trend and information is in line with what a particular audience or reader likes.

4.2.1.5 Reason for the Choice of Media

Reasons why respondents will choose a particular medium in monitoring politics and democracy are varied. Some of subjects of this research see their choice of media as less expensive, Radio for instance come in various sizes and may be powered both by electricity or battery. There are some radios which come very handy and powered only by batteries. These kinds of radios are sold in almost every small market in various neighbourhoods and on the streets by street hawkers. Its size, availability and price make it very affordable such that people with the lowest income can also buy and readily access information where ever they find themselves. Others also think their choice is interesting. A few of the people I spoke to revealed that their interest in a particular media is largely dependent on what package that media brings with it. For instance one woman pointed out that she prefers television to other forms of media because she gets the opportunity to

see images of the people and be able to read from their gestures as well as know their faces so that she could identify them anytime she physically meets them. An overwhelming number of respondents said their choice of media is because it is easily accessible. Many of the media are within the easy reach of the population; almost every household has Radio and or Television. "As for my radio, I always carry it with me. It is portable, all I need is a small headset and I am on the move. No information escapes my ears". This is what a participant said in a focus group discussion. Newspapers are however slightly expensive and therefore not many people buy it all the time, but there is the phenomenon of what is known as second-hand circulation of Newspapers among the populace which makes people who have difficulty of daily purchase to have access to it (CDD-Ghana Research Papers 2001: 5).

Figure 1: A Woman Monitoring Information on Radio While Selling.

Source: Field Survey.

4.2.1.6 Frequency of Use of Media Chosen

Even though respondents had shown their preference of media, it was also important to find out how often they used that particular preference. The data collected revealed that the preferred choice of some of the respondents is what they use at all times to follow political and democratic events. "My work requires me to do a lot of writing and that means reading or watching TV will not be too convenient. I therefore would want to have my radio by my side, that way, I can always listen while I work" Others do not use their choice all the time. Meaning that, they may have other choices, namely television, radio newspapers or any other means by which they could get information. There may be that possibly to switch to some other form of media if it provides some form of information they may want to know about. One respondent said "Even though I love the use of TV I will not hesitate to fall on any form of media for the information I want with regard to politics and democracy".

4.2.1.7 Media Usage and Time

When asked at what times respondents use their chosen media to monitor and educate themselves on political and democratic issues, they indicated that they use their preferred media at periods when political discussions are in progress with others saying they use it mainly during prime time. Other also said they use it sometimes for political and democratic discussions, In other words, other social issues also comes to play. There were some others who indicated that they do not have an accurate idea as to what period they would commit themselves to the use of a particular medium to inform themselves on democratic and political happenings. "My friend, I don't pay attention. I just read, listen or watch as they come to me", a respondent intimated.

It should be noted that in Ghana the airwaves are most of the time occupied with one form of discussion or the other including politics and other social issues namely health, culture and education amongst others with political talk shows taking the lead in that respect. Early morning radio, and in some cases late afternoon, greets anybody who tunes in with the ever-popular newspaper review. This usually empanels resource persons with various experiences and expertise, including professionals such as teacher, politicians and journalist. Here, a moderator who is usually a journalist, reads very hot topics reported by the newspapers and then gives the panellists he has assembled some time each to do a commentary on the issues read, having the

liberty to express their opinion as to what they think on the issues. This goes on for a while then phone numbers are announced to the public to also make some input. It is overwhelming what number of audience will call in to contribute. The listenership is so great such that commercial entities, big and small take advantage of the period to advertise their products because they see that time as the proper time to reach the public with their products. Television stations do not differ so much in their programming in the morning from the radio stations. The morning newspaper review is a common phenomenon on both state and privately owned media.

4.2.1.8 Preferred Language

During fieldwork, many of the people sampled brought to bear the language they would most likely prefer to get political information. There were some who made it clear that English Language was their preferred choice because things are clearer to them and that they felt more comfortable with it. One contributor in a focus group discussion put it that "I would prefer English Language for the simple reason that it is the official language of the state which has been used over time and therefore I have become very used to it, it is a common language used to address many of the issues and that my understanding is more enlightened when I receive information in that language".

Others also pointed out that they are better served or informed in the vernacular with most of them citing *Twi[1]*, one of the languages spoken in Ghana. This is a language belonging to the *Akan* ethnic group. Interestingly, they form the largest ethnic group in Ghana who geographically can be found in the southern part of the state. According to Dzorgbo, they constitute 44.1 percent of the population (Dzorgbo 2001: 173), and they have a big influence on the people of Ghana due to their trading activities and are therefore found in almost every region, due to this many people by default get to speak *Twi* in addition to any other language considered as mother tongue. "I would like to learn about politics and democracy in the Ghanaian Language, *Twi* to be specific because I am more at home with it", a respondent explained.

Knowing the needs of the majority of the populace, many of the FM stations I monitored during fieldwork actually did their broadcast in *Twi* apart from a few of them which broadcast in the

---

[1] Other local languages are used for broadcasting in Ghana, but *Twi* is dominant.

English Language. This is duly because *Twi* resonates with a lot of people and therefore is better related to. This makes the contribution of the audience to those programmes very rapid and are able to say it as it is, an evidence of the liberal nature of the Ghanaian political environment and also typical of deliberative political system where ideas and preferences differ and yet discussions help to bring all to a point of agreement, in the end, democracy is supported. Within the Accra metropolis Peace FM stands out in the *Twi* broadcast with Joy FM also outstanding when it comes to the English broadcast. Apparently, all the stations broadcast in a particular language having a particular audience in focus as their target. Television stations do their programmes mainly in English but have other programmes tailored to fit the vernacular audience and some of these include political programmes. All newspapers however come in the English Language. With the exception of the Free Press newspaper which has another edition called the Bilingual Free Press, publishing both in the vernacular or *Twi* to be specific as well as English. It should be noted however that, a few others in answering the question regarding what language they would learn about democracy did not have any problem with what ever language information reaches them, whether the language is in English or in the vernacular, it does not matter to them. The most important thing to them is getting the information they want, "whether it is English or *Twi,* the understanding is good and because I can communicate in either of them I think I am well informed", one respondent intimated.

4.2.1.9 Information Dissemination

The core objectives of the media are mainly to entertain, educate and to inform its patrons. The data generated from the survey showed that a good number of the people sampled do get information from the media on democracy and politics which they consider as being enough to make them know about what is going on. "Information flow from the media has made me very enlightened on the issue that confront our country. Now, not too many things are hidden from public attention and I think that's a good sign of our growing democracy". Others responded by saying that the information they get from the media could best be described as little. "For all you know, there is a lot more information we are not getting with regards to what happens in our society with respect to politics. In my view, many are the issues they are hiding from us"

4.3 Helping the Public to Understand Issues

The media in its quest to deepen democracy has variously played roles that have been able to contribute to the building of democracy. For instance, a lot of laws have been enshrined in the constitution of Ghana which generally covers responsibilities as well as rights of individual citizens, but it is regrettable to say that the very constitution that defines these same rights and responsibilities is not readily available to the people in hardcopies. In spite of this situation, people have been privileged to know at least some of the rights and responsibilities of a citizen by virtue of the fact that the media at some point in their programming put across educative programmes that project the concept of democracy and politics to the people on issues such as the right to vote, freedom of association and assembly and freedom of speech among others. This is in consonance with the liberal ideal of establishment of a number of rights which must be respected by all based on the constitution. Again the liberal conception also makes room for fundamental rights and liberties of individual citizens.

Almost all of the people sampled agreed in principle as to the fact that without the media it would have been a bit difficult to understand many of the issues that border on democracy and politics and that the media is a necessary instrument in the era of Ghana's constitutional governance to help in the consolidation of the concept. In his view a respondent said "I think I have had good education from the media such that the radio and television especially have done a lot in this respect, apart from education on the constitution, they also often empanel representatives of the various political parties who give their views on democratic and political issues. This helps me to judge things for myself". Another also puts it that "the media helps in bringing out information from the government on happenings we would otherwise not know, keeping us updated on how the state is being run so that we can know if the party in government is doing things according to the spirit and letter of the constitution". In spite of the views expressed above, a few of the respondents think the media has not helped to make them understand democracy that much. "Those empanelled to give their views resort to quarrels and the newspapers always have articles which malign individuals or groups for their political ideas. Is this what they call education regarding democracy? I think the media is doing us more harm than good if that is the way they want to educate us on democracy", a respondent explained.

4.4 Keeping an Eye on Public Officers

Article 42 of the constitution of the Republic of Ghana states that "[e]very citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda" this provision makes it categorically clear that any elections that involves the choosing of national leaders shall be subject to voting by the people in the making of the choice with respect to who actually serves in government. This is an evidence of the fact that the people have been empowered to exercise that right of making public officials live up to expectation. In the liberal theory postulation, the best form of government is the kind which has vested power in the people or the entire aggregate of society where citizens exercise that power at least occasionally and not only have a voice. Apart from the people choosing those who lead them, their leaders as well as those who represent them as members of parliament have the duty to return to the people each time parliament goes on recess in order to brief them on what transpired when parliament was in session and to seek the views of the people as well as hear their grievances so that those grievances can be channelled to government on the floor of parliament. Any member of parliament who does not do this may face the consequence of not getting re-elected by the people to represent them. One respondent put it that "I happen to meet with the Member of Parliament for my constituency as well as other political figures at different forums where we interact. This is very important for me as a person who has interest in the democratic development of my country". In addition to the above, the people have the privilege of making their grievances known on radio, television and in the newspapers in the form of articles and letters to the editor. Sometimes they question some actions of government of which may not be clear to them and officials of government are called upon to respond to those questions and to clarify the issues. "I call into the radio programmes anytime I have the opportunity to do so, it is easy and I am able to speak my mind freely as I wish, I felt good each time I did so because I got the attention of the appropriate people who immediately responded to my concerns. By this, I get the feeling that somebody in authority is ready to hear me and that makes me feel that I am an active participant in the democratic development of my country", this is what a respondent had to say. As discussed in chapter three, this process helps to promote and encourage public spirited perspective on public issues which in turn ramifies into the making of decisions of the state, taking into consideration the fact of mutual respect and to make amends with regards to mistakes occurring during moments of collective decision making.

This takes into consideration the fact that all are equal as far as the society and public deliberations are concerned, a situation considered as the core of self-government and political decision making which is considered fair and acceptable reason or legitimate.

4.5 Opinion Shaping and the Media

With many who find they are living in environments considered to have the character of a democracy, political messages get to them through the media. Apart from party organization, politicians direct their messages to coincide with the deadline of the news. This is because they are fully aware of the fact that more of the people resort to print or broadcast sources for information than converge at political rallies to hear politicians speak and shout out party slogans. The media has become something of centrality to politics. However, the presentation of the message in the media and the availability of it to the electorates as well as the effect of the media on both the elite and the generality of the public may differ considerably from one individual to the other (Semetko in LeDuc et al 1996: 254).

"In a modern society, the public forms its opinions largely on the basis of what the mass media ……. presents to it" (Cummings and Wise 1977: 193). In many of the situations, people do with information made available to them and structured by the report of journalists about happening events, where the news put people on the alert on current events which have the capacity to alter the larger environment beyond their immediate experience. The media in their effort to provide information go beyond just giving a signal to the public about major events and issues. In their daily discussions, the media focuses people's attention and again have an influence on the perception of many with respect to what constitute the salient issues of the day. The public then considers the significance of the news emanating from the media to organize their ideas and decide on the issues. The opinions of people are many, among these many opinions only a few matter to them, this is where the media influence on what is important comes to the fore, because only a few of the issue are really successful in gaining the attention of people in the midst of abundance of many others also competing for attention. The media's role in this respect inadvertently commands a great deal of influence on the perception of the public as to what are the most significant issues of the day through the highlighting of what is portrayed in the news as most important news of the moment (McCombs 2004: 1-2)

4.5.1 Deciding Based on Media Information

When asked whether the kind of information received from the media is able to help respondents make informed choices during elections, there was every indication that the media has been a major influencing agent in the formation of opinion and thereby helping people to make decision and subsequently make choices based on the kind of information they receive from the media. A female respondent explained that if there was no media it would have been difficult to know what issues there are and therefore narrow in terms knowledge in social happenings which would have hampered the choices we make today. She concludes by saying "the choices we would have made could only be described as uninformed choices". According to Graber, "In many instances the media [impacts] the political scene by creating a climate for political action, this makes them major contributors to agenda building, the process whereby news stories influence how people perceive and evaluate issues and politics" (Graber, cited in Semetko in LeDuc et al 1996: 274). Others also indicated that the choices they make during elections are not totally based on media information to the extent that a few others pointed out that they do not know whether media information helps in the making of choice. "I patronise the media and I think the media gives very useful information, however I do not think the kind of political choices I make are wholly dependent on information from the media. I do a close examination of my life to see if there has been any improvement or otherwise, then when the season of political choice comes I decide and choose accordingly". This is an indication that no matter how influential the media may be, it is also possible that all the people cannot be influenced all of the time

4.6 Democratic Sustenance and Peace

Democracy by its character helps society by putting institutions together with the objective of giving it an acceptable and legal outlook in order to demonstrate authority and power through the provision of logical and well organized easy to understand and clear response to the need to succeed in reaching the goal of attaining a change in the society without recourse to any form of violence as well as control those who occupy positions of power in such a way that will reassure everybody that they will not resort to abusing the power that has been entrusted into their hands through established systems of checks and balances, and in so doing, making it possible for all the citizens to have a voice that will go a long way in strengthening the established institutions (Dahrendorf 2003: 101). These are all aimed at regulating society to make all feel inclusive in the

management of affairs thereby ensuring that there is tranquillity. Even though differences may occur, this may translate into progress in the form of fine-tuning rules and systems just to make society work better. This is in consonance with that goal of the liberal ideal for handling of disputes as well as ensuring that accountability flows from government to the citizenry and vice versa through established institutions of which all are partakers.

4.6.1 Perception on Media Contribution to Democratic Sustenance

In an effort to find out whether the media has made any contributions to the sustenance of democracy in Ghana, the response was that, indeed the media has contributed enormously to make democracy a sustainable part of Ghana's politics. Apart from their commercial interest, the media has tried as much as it could to educate the public as to why Ghanaians must fully embrace democracy because apart from making each and every individual have a voice, it facilitates development. Before Ghana's presidential and parliamentary elections, the media was able to encourage many to register and go to the polls on election day of which many responded positively. On the day of election itself the media was on the ground with many of its reporters who were giving first hand account of what was happening. The electronic media did a live report throughout the period and made sure anomalies in various polling stations were made public and in response, security and electoral officers acted proactively to forestall any outbreak of conflict. In contrast with the above, others had a contrary view. To them, the contribution of the media has not done so much to sustain democracy. However, credit could be given to it for some contribution.

4.6.2 Description of Media Presentation of Political Issues

For the sake of national cohesion, the media are encouraged to be fair in their coverage of the issues. An enquiry into equal coverage by the media revealed that media reportage or presentation on political issues reflect an equal representation of the views of all the political parties including opposition parties and the party in government, some respondents noted. Others also hold that the issues as they are presented could be described as satisfactory. Again, some others points out that there was no equality in the way the issues are presented. In a study conducted to find out how the media covered events before and after the 2000 elections, it was found out that the state owned print media had its coverage going in favour of the then ruling

party in terms of quantity and length of story, in that, the ruling party had the biggest share when it comes to the space coverage of political stories based on standard column inches as well as front page stories with pictures. In much the same way the state owned electronic media gave a lot more coverage to the ruling party. The private media was also revealed to have given a slightly higher coverage to the ruling party. It is suggested that this was so because the ruling party was more organized and active as compared to the other contesting minority parties which were nine in number (CDD-Ghana Research Papers 2001: 38).

4.6.3 Perception on the Media's Contribution to Democratic Peace

Peace constitutes an imperative component of every democratic state. In that regard the media cannot be left out in contributing to the peace of the state at least for its own survival. The survey revealed that, the people sampled overwhelmingly believe the media has made tremendous strides in contributing to the peace of the nation. "In many instances I have read articles in the newspapers, watched documentaries on TV as well as heard on radio programmes that significantly educates and admonish all of us to coexist peacefully", a respondent indicated. Others did not subscribe to the idea that the media contributed much to the peace democracy brings. A description by respondent was to the effect that people tend to use derogatory and insulting language against their opponents sometimes on live radio and television as well as in the newspapers. This behaviour could be a possible recipe for chaos and therefore must be eschewed. A round table discussion on the recent presidential and parliamentary elections held in Ghana on December 7, 2008 accused some journalist as unprofessional and some media houses as bias, partisan and influenced by politicians. Indeed they were blamed for putting news items out there which were based on rumours to incite the public (Daily Graphic 2009: 16).

4.6.4 Perceptions on the Media Landscape in Ghana

In post-independent Ghana especially since the restoration of constitutional rule in 1292, the media have had their operations in an environment that features a glaring liberalized media within the context of democracy and free market economy. This has in turn provided an avenue and a channel for democratic expression with some beneficial effects on governance. Perceptions on the strength of the Ghanaian media generated respondents saying the media landscape is a very strong one. Indeed a glance through many of the cities in Ghana reveals many news stands

doted at various locations, displaying a variety of newspapers. There are also a many radio stations all over the country numbering over hundred, majority of which are privately owned. The state-owned media can be found in all regions of the nation with FM stations in every regional capital. The daily graphic which is a state owned newspaper is by far the largest circulating newspaper in Ghana, printing 95,000 copies each day, six days in every week (CDD-Ghana Research Papers 2001:5). The private newspapers which used to publish once in every week with black and white futures now have some of them publishing daily with colour features, an indication that people like what they are doing and therefore patronize them. Additionally television has seen some expansion with some private ones coming into the scene. Others also thought the media is quite spread out but then it is only the electronic media that seem to reach a very wide area due to the kind of collaboration they have among themselves and the syndication they do with other stations. "I have travelled many times to the northern part of the country but it is very difficult to find private news papers in the quantities found in the south. However radio broadcast from Accra can be heard there"

4.7 Media as a Watchdog

In chapter three the idea of the media being a watchdog has been captured. In this respect reference is being made to the role the media is playing to keep government on its toes in doing the right things as per the constitution defined. As an information disseminator, the media is always ready to put everything they think the public must know into the public domain. They are always on the look out for what government may do wrong thereby serving as a sort of control and a check on the government, this helps to some extent to prevent those who govern from becoming democratic dictators so that in taking decisions for the state they will be careful to decide on what is in the best interest of the state and also make them behave in manner that shows that they derive their authority from the people. Without the surveillance role of the media what will characterize government will be corruption in the form of bribery nepotism and the likes. The media in this role will contribute immensely to public accountability, probity and transparency. "Even though part of the media will not speak of the ills in government, the media freedom enjoyed in Ghana has made it possible for other media to make known to the public what pro-government media would not". This is how a respondent had to say regarding what the

media is doing to ensure proper democracy. It is clear that the surveillance role of the media will deepen democracy and help in making the people have a choice.

CHAPTER FIVE
Summary and Conclusions

5.0 Introduction

This study has it spotlight on the contribution of the Ghanaian media towards the sustenance of the current democratic process in Ghana. In accordance with the research questions of the study it sought to find out what issues the media discuss, how often their patrons make use of the media, which issues in the media are patronised and why and finally find out if those who patronise the media able to make their contributions to democracy and politics by their understanding of the issues in the media. The outline in this final chapter shall be made up of a summarization of the major findings and conclusions with some recommendations for consideration for future policy planning.

5.1 Summary of Principal Findings

The outcome of this study revealed a good number of the subjects sampled to be very interested in the political and democratic development of Ghana. However their conception of politics vary, while some have the believe that politics is something that involves all and sundry, and that once an individual finds himself as a citizen of a state, matters that have to do with governance of that country must be of concern to that individual since it has the ability to affect all aspects of human life. On that score, it was shown that democracy as it pertains to the country is very illuminating. This has simply led to many people dedicating some of their time to follow or monitor unfolding events that politics and democracy brings. However, others also think it is a business that concerns only those in authority and that it even serves as a platform for conflict.

Adopted means people use in the monitoring of political happenings in Ghana are mainly radio, television, and newspapers, among these three, the most widely used medium is radio basically because it is considered cheap, accessible, and portable. It should be noted that the various media chosen as favourites and are often used by those who choose them, which is to say that they use them all the time[2]. The period at which the chosen media are used as indicted by the respondents

---

[2] In as much as people have their favourites in terms of their political information source, there is the possibility that people switch from one medium to the other, even internet which was not covered in this research.

include the moments when political discussions are rife and during primetime with others using it as and when they feel like it.

The language by which political information get to people differ, these are English language and the vernacular, particularly *Twi* in the case of radio. The preference for a particular language in essence is to enable particular audience get a comprehensive grasp of the issues simply because they understand better in those languages as a result of where they are coming from. There are some however, who do not consider language as an issue per se, in as much as the language by which they are getting political information is well within their understanding, they are comfortable with it. It should be noted that a good number of the radio stations broadcast in *Twi*, with the television stations doing their broadcast mainly in English with some programmes being aired in *Twi* and this include political programmes. The Free Press newspaper was the only newspaper that was identified to have another edition that is published in *Twi* and English, and is called the Bilingual Free Press.

Subjects of the research overwhelmingly indicated that, the information they are getting from the media can be considered as good enough and this has translated into education in the area of politics and democracy, giving insight into some of the rights and responsibilities of citizens, including freedom of speech, of association, and the right to vote among others. In this regard the media has been identified as a key instrument in the drive towards consolidating democracy in Ghana.

Media information and education on politics and democracy has in turn empowered the people to the extent that they have been emboldened to question the actions and inactions of their political and bureaucratic authorities without fear or favour. This they do by calling into radio and television discussions or contribute articles in the newspapers and say their minds. The political enlightenment of the people has made it difficult for their elected leaders such as members of parliament to ignore them. It has become almost a ritual for the representatives of the people in government to return to them in their various constituencies to explain issues to them and to hear their grievances as well. For this and other reasons, any politician who ignores the people does so

at his peril, this is because the same people form the electorate and may use the power of the ballot against them.

Media influence on the people has been enormous such that it cannot be over emphasized. Indications are that the political choices made by the people are shaped by what they hear and read from the media. This has made the media important in setting the agenda. That is not to say that media influence affects all, there are some who made it clear in this research that the media does not entirely influence their political choices and that other factors also come into play in shaping their opinions and choices.

In the area of democratic sustenance, the media has been seen as an advocate for the concept. From time to time they call on the citizenry to wholeheartedly embrace democracy, they encourage people to take interest in the democratic process since it is what gives them a voice and a say in the affairs of the state.

Throughout the world today, some of the most peaceful countries are those with democratic characteristics. Ghana is no exception, and in all this, the media has contributed its bit to make this possible. This they have done by consistently educating people to the effect that, in a democracy, people need to be tolerant of one another's views. This the media has demonstrated by bringing on board all shades of opinion from every political divide even though some may enjoy slightly higher coverage than others.

Media presence in Ghana is very visible. In almost every community, one is likely to find news stands dotted in various places and displaying all forms of news papers for sale. State owned media is available in all the regions of the country. Mention can also be made of a great deal of private radio stations in at least every regional capital. This makes the media landscape a strong one as majority of the subjects of this research indicated.

The inevitable presence of the media in Ghana and the watchdog role it is playing has won it the accolade 'fourth estate' after the executive, legislature, and the judicial arms of government. The prints as well as the electronic media have become exceptional among those that have become

enthusiastic and vocal in defence of democracy and human rights. The multiplication of the media has led to a greater opening up of Ghana politically. The writings of various newspapers are critical, polemic, and combative, raising issues with particular reference to morality and accountability in public life and have been consistent advocates in the area of democracy by providing a platform for Ghanaians from all walks of life and political spectrum to engage public officials freely and openly on the affairs of public concern, trying to make sure good governance prevail in order to avert the abuse of power and office (Ninsin in Boafo- Arthur 2007: 88-89).

5.2 Conclusions

Ghana's political and media development has gone through a lot of ups and downs from the colonial period through the days of coup d'états until recently when the country has become stable with democracy. As noted earlier, Ghana has experienced four democratic dispensations with the last one being the most stable. Freedom of expression has been a prominent feature of the current fourth republic and this has been able to serve as part of the foundations of the progress of the democratic process.

The media has duly played its role as an information provider, and in the process, conscientizing and sensitizing the citizens. This means the media is needed by the citizens to inform them about current developments in order to form their views on those developments as well as debating the issues. This clearly gives the media that responsibility of being the mediators of the democratic process and gatekeepers of the same (Jakubowicz in Council of Europe 1998:17).

The study showed that, the media would want to get the massage of democracy across to all people from all walks of life and therefore finds it necessary to communicate not only in the English language, but also in the vernacular. In other words the media has enabled large sections of the citizens Ghana to ventilate their feelings especially through letters to editors and interactive radio programmes in local languages. These allow Ghana's citizens to contribute to discussions on issues that affect the society and also open up channels of communication to enable public access to government and its structures, and to engender public involvement and discussion of government activities. This in effect has enabled a lot more people to be abreast with the times and having the issues of democracy in their grasp. This has culminated in the ability of the

citizenry to make very informed political choices. Furthermore, it has resulted in the people getting actively involved in the democratic process. This is evidenced in the patronage of the media both electronic and prints, something which in my view is an endorsement by the people of what the media is doing to help deepen democracy in Ghana.

As identified earlier, the media in Ghana, both electronic and print have been contributing their quota to ensure an enlightened citizenry who are open to issues regarding democracy and to be active participants in the democratic process. With the channels of communication open as the media informs and citizens also react to the information received, it may be possible for a chaos situation to arise which may be inimical to the democratic advancement of the state. In that regard I offer here some recommendations based on the findings of this research which may be considered for future policy planning.

Since interactive phone-ins have become an integral feature of radio broadcast in Ghana, it will be useful to make it mandatory for all broadcasting houses to have as part of their equipment, broadcast audio delay facilities so that in the event that telephone callers into talk shows make unacceptable or inflammatory statement which are inappropriate for broadcast and can endanger the peace of society, hosts of programmes could apply it to prevent any unwanted audio from getting into the airwaves and again take off any offensive caller and continue with their programmes. In addition, editors of the print media should also examine letters to the editor and articles very carefully to ascertain their inappropriateness or otherwise of the letters and articles before they are published. These measures will go a long way to sanitize the system to ensure the maintenance of the democratic culture so that all will enjoy the peace that comes with it.

Again, both print and electronic media practitioners should be fair as much as possible in their presentation of the issues and to allow equal excess by both incumbent and opposition parties, irrespective of the policy direction of the media house. This way the citizenry will be fully aware of the issues on both side of the divide in order to make a good judgment for the formation of fair opinion.

It is obvious by the outcome of this research that the media in Ghana are in a position that could be described as strategic to the political and democratic agenda of the state. It is therefore significant in my view to give the media all the necessary encouragement to play their role as the fourth estate of the realm even more effectively through policies that will strengthen them and straighten any rough edges that may be found among them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Accra Metropolitan Assembly Medium Term Plan 1998-2002.

Alhassan, A. (2005) **"**Market Valorization in Broadcasting Policy in Ghana: Abandoning the Quest for Media Democratization". *Media Culture and Society*; Vol. 27(2): 211–228.

Ansah-Koi, K. *The Security Agencies and National Security in a decade of Liberalism*. In Boafo-Arthur, K. (2007) (ed.) *Ghana: One decade of Liberal State*. Dakar: CODESRIA Books.

Ansu-Kyeremeh, K. & Karikari, K. (1998) *Media Ghana*: *Ghanaian Media Overview, Practitioners and Institutions*. Legon: School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana.

Ayiteyvie, A.O., (1996) "Revisiting Radio EYE: Breaking Into Controlled Territories". In *Media Monitor* No. 3, Issue 1 April-June 1996.

Baker C. D. (2002) *Media Markets and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BBC News "Country Profile: Ghana: Media". (2008 March, 19) [Online]- URL: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1023355.stm#media

Benhabib, S. *Towards a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy*. In Benhabib, S., (1996) (ed.) *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Blankson, I.A. (2002) "Re-examining Civil Society in Emerging Sub Sahara African Democracies: The State, the Media, and the Public in Ghana". *Global Media Journal*; Vol. 1 (1).

Boateng, E.A. (1996) *Government and the People: Outlook for Democracy in Ghana*. Institute of Economic Affair. Accra: Buck Press.

Bohman, J. (2004) "Realizing Deliberative Democracy as a Mode of Inquiry: Pragmatism, Social Facts, and Normative Theory". *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 18, No. 1.

Bonsu-Bruce, T.N.L. (1995) *Broadcasting and the Challenges of Technology in a Developing Context*. In Komson, B.A., (ed.) (1995) *Prospects for Private Broadcasting in Ghana*. Accra: Gold-Type Limited.

Cameron, M.A. (2007) "Three Theories of Constitutional Democracy". *Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions Working Paper*. Department of Political Science, University of British Colombia.

CDD-Ghana Research Papers. (2001) *"Media Coverage of the 2000 Elections: A Report on media Coverage of Election 2000 (May 2000 - January 2001)"*. A CDD-Ghana Publication.

Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992.

Coronel, S.S. (2004) "The Role of the Media in Deepening Democracy". United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance. (2007, December 28) [Online].-URL:http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan010194.pdf

Cummings, M.C. & Wise, D. (1977) *Democracy Under Pressure: An Introduction to the American Political System*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Dahrendorf, R. (2003) "Making Sense of the EU: The Challenge for Democracy". *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 14 No. 4. pp 101-114.

Daily Graphic, March 2, 2009 No 17855

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2003) (eds.) *The landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage Publications.

Diamond, L. *Defining and developing Democracy*. In Dahl, R.A. et al (2003). (eds.) *The Democracy Source Book*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Dotse, D. (1996) "Surfing the Airwaves: A Look at Ghana's New Radio Stations". In *Media Monitor* No. 3, Issue 1 April-June 1996.

Dowse, R.E. & Hughes, J.A. (1972) *Political Sociology*. London: John Wiley & Sons.

Dzorgbo, D.S. (2001) *Ghana in Search of Development: The Challenge of Governance, Economic Management and Institution Building*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Fog, A. (2004) "The Supposed and the Real Role of Mass Media in Modern democracy". Working Paper. (2007, November 13) [Online] – URL: http://www.agner.org/cultsel/mediacrisis.pdf

Galtung, J. (1996) *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and civilization*. London: Sages Productions.

Gargarella, R. *The Majoritarian Reading of the rule of Law*. In Maravall María, J. & Przeworski, A. (2003) (eds.) *Democracy and the Rule of Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gunther R. & Mugban A. (2000) *Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

Gutmann, A. & Thompson, D. (1996) *Democracy and Disagreement: Why Moral Conflict Cannot be Avoided in Politics and What Should be Done About it*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Gutmann, A. & Thompson, D. (2004) *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jakubowicz, K. *Access to the Media and Democratic Communication: Theory and Practice in Central Eastern European Broadcasting*. In Sajó, A. & Price, M. (eds.) (1996) *The Right of Access to the Media*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

Jakubowicz, K. *Media and Democracy*. In Council of Europe (1998) *Media and Democracy*. Council of Europe Publishing.

Johnston, D. (1994) *The Idea of Liberal Democracy: A critique and Reconstruction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Karikari, K. (1995) *Political and Technological Constraints on the Development of Independent broadcasting in Ghana*. In Komson, B.A. (ed.) (1995) *Prospects for Private Broadcasting in Ghana*. Accra: Gold-Type Limited.

Keane, J. (1991) *The Media and Democracy*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Kumar, K. (2006) *Promoting Independent Media: Strategies for Democracy Assistance*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Kumekpor Tom K.B. (2002) *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research.* Accra Ghana: Son Life Press and Services.

McCombs, M. (2004) *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mill, J.S. (1861) *Considerations on Representative Governments*. In Terchek, R.J. & Conte T.C. (2001) (eds.) *Theories of Democracy: A Reader*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Miller, D. *Deliberative Democracy and Social Choice* in Held, D., (1993) (ed.) Prospects for Democracy: North South East West. Cambridge, Polity Press.

National Communication Authority Guidelines 2007

Ninsin, K. A. (1998) *Ghana Transition to Democracy*. Accra: Freedom Publications.

Ninsin, K. A. *Markets and Liberal Democracy*. In Boafo- Arthur, K. (2007) (ed.) *Ghana: One decade of Liberal State*. Dakar: CODESRIA Books
.
Page, B.I. (1996) "The Mass Media as Political Actors." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 1. pp. 20-24.

Profile of the National Media Commission 1993.

Randall, V. (1993) "The Media and Democratisation in the Third World". *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14 No. 3 625-646.

Rosenfeld, M. *Free Speech, Equality and Minority Access to the Media in the United States*. In Sajó, A. and Price, M., (eds.) (1996) *The Right of Access to the Media*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

Sakyi-Addo, K. (1996) "Broadcasting Pluralism in Perspective". In *Media Monitor* No. 3, Issue 1 April-June 1996.

Sartori, G. (1987) *The Theory of Democracy Revisited: Part One: The Contemporary Debate*. Chathman: Chathman House Publishers, Inc.

Semetko, H.L. *The Media: Media Systems and Election Campaigns*. In Leduc, L et al., (eds.) (1996) *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. London: SAGE Publications.

Taylor, M. (2000) "Media Relations in Bosnia: A Role for Public Relations in Building Civil Society". *Public Relation Review*, Vol. 26 No.1: 1-14.

Twumasi, Y. (1981) "Media of Mass Communication and the Third Republican Constitution of Ghana". *African Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 318.

Warren, M.E. (1996) "Deliberative Democracy and Authority". *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90 No. 1: 46-60.

Wei, R. (2008) "Motivations for Using the Mobile Phone for Mass Communications and Entertainment". *Telematics and Informatics*, Volume 25, Issue 1, pp 36-46.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Sex

2. What is your age?

3. What is your marital status?

4. What Number of children do you have?

5. What is your level of education?

6. Where do you live in?

7. What type of house do you live in?

8. Do you have a job?

9. What kind of job do you do?

10. Are you interested in politics?

    If yes, state why

    If no, state why

11. How do you find the kind of democracy pertaining in Ghana?

12. Do you have any interest in the political and democratic process going on in Ghana?

    If yes, state why

    If no, state why

13. Do you follow events unfolding from the political and democratic process in Ghana?

14. Which medium do you use in following events of politics and democracy in Ghana?

15. What is your reason for choosing that medium or media?

16. How often do you use the medium or media you have chosen?

17. When do you use the medium or media you have chosen to monitor events of politics and democracy?

18. In what language would you prefer to learn about democracy through the media?

19. Why do you prefer the language you have chosen?

20. Are you getting enough information regarding democracy as it pertains in Ghana through the media?

21. Has the media helped in any way to make you understand the issues of democracy better?

    If yes, state how

22. Do you feel part of the democratic process in Ghana?

If yes, state how

23. Are you able to contribute to the present democratic process?

    If yes in what way do you contribute to the democratic process?

24. With the kind of information you get from the media, are you able to make informed choices during elections?

25. In your opinion, do you think the media is able to contribute to the sustenance of democracy in Ghana?

26. How would you describe how the media presents issues of government and that of opposition?

27. Has the contribution of the media towards democracy in Ghana in turn contributed to the Peace?

28. How would you describe the media landscape in Ghana with regards to democracy?

29. In your opinion, do you think the media is playing its watchdog role effectively?

    If yes, state why

    If no, state why