DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Philosophy in Political Science and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The notion that open and free communication is essential to the functioning of a democracy has existed for several centuries (Kumar, 1999 p 140). But for some time now, the media (particularly in Ghana) has come to face a number of challenges. Key among these challenges is the excessive politicization of media houses coupled with commercialization. This eventually raises the question as to whether the media is able to perform its expected responsibilities amidst these challenges. The study consequently attempts to answer the question “to what extent has the seemingly politicization of the mass media in Ghana affected the role it plays in helping to deepen democracy in the country?” Or “What has the Ghanaian mass media done within the Fourth Republic to ensure the country’s young and flourishing democracy is deepened, amidst the perceived politicization of the media?

The primary objective of this study was to find out how the activities of media houses in Ghana have contributed to deepening her democracy amidst the perceived politicization of the media. To gain a clearer insight into the issues at hand, the study adopted a descriptive-exploratory approach; thus, it combines description of political phenomena with the desire to exploring to find the reasons behind some media organizations either active, partial and or non-involvement partisan politics in Ghana and its overall implication for democratic deepening or otherwise in the country.

Among the key findings of the study is the fact that the Ghanaian media has not become an anti-democracy force that works against democracy. Instead, it, especially the radio, has become the main tool for reaching out to larger audience and based on this the people decide on who to vote for during elections and also take other politically related decisions. Moreover, the media amidst the excessive politicization does not pose any significant challenge to the citizens in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities.
DEDICATION

To my parents whose love beautifies my world and inspires me to greater heights, John K. Amoah and Rubby Amoah; and the world’s greatest brothers, Enos Kofi Amoah and Seth Agyemang Amoah.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I express my sincere thanks to the Almighty God for His grace, energy given me and the care shown towards me through the odds of life, to enable this project become a success.

This work would not have been successful without the enormous assistance from my supervisors Prof. A. Essuman-Johnson and Dr. Seidu M. Alidu who through their intellectual guidance, instructions, suggestions and supervisory roles sailed me through this research work.

I am indebted to my family and relatives for the moral support they offered me.

My warm appreciation goes to my entire colleagues; Asiamah, Methapoly, Siaw, Donald, Lionnel, Sadat, Lawrence and Ofori for the various role they played in my academic life and not forgetting Dennis Mpere Larbi for his motivation and inspiration throughout my study.

I would also like to thank all the respondents, politicians, journalist, political party administrators and other specialists who participated in the interviews and responded to the questionnaires.

Special appreciation and thanks go to Mr. Otoo Frank for being a true and a loving friend.
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<td>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Convention People’s Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBC</td>
<td>Ghana Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIJ</td>
<td>Ghana Institute of Journalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress</td>
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<td>NLC</td>
<td>National Liberation Council</td>
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<td>NMC</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Politics, according to Heywood (2002), is exciting because people disagree. For Heywood, people disagree about how they should live, who should get what, how should power and other resources be distributed, etc. Politics also deal with issues of conflict and cooperation. Thus, in politics, people disagree about how such matters should be resolved and how collective decisions be made; who should have a say and how much influence should each person have. For Aristotle, this made politics the 'master science'. In other words, politics is “nothing less than the activity through which human beings attempt to improve their lives and create a Good Society” (Heywood, 2002, p.3). Thus, politics is, above all, a social activity and as such “it is always a dialogue, and never a monologue” (Ibid).

The relationship between media and politics has existed over a long period and, the two continue to shape one another (Wasicka, 2014). The media provide a link of survival for the modern day political systems, which is democracy. According to the 2015 Freedom House Index on democracy, 64 per cent representing 125 out of 196 countries in the world are electoral democracies. This shows, to a greater extent, the widespread nature of democracy in modern day governance.

In fact, the nature of politics, especially, democratic governance has changed course over the years. Thus, the organisation of politics from the Athenian democracy to the modern democratic governance has changed in degree and in nature (Dahl, 1989). It has journeyed from a direct engagement of the citizens as pertained in direct democracies in Athens to an indirect engagement under current representative political systems around the world. This shift marks a change in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled in the governance system. And,
especially under the contemporary representative democratic system, information becomes very central to linking the governed masses to the ruling elite.

One prominent element in modern day politics that one cannot avoid is the existence of a free and vibrant media. Due to its significance, the media has been identified as the ‘fourth estate of the realm’ (Das, 2011). Thus, the media in holding other arms of the state accountable to the people has earned it the title ‘the fourth arm of government’. In the same vein, the media is also expected to bridge the communication gap between the government and the governed and, at the same time, give voice to the voiceless in the political arena.

The media, in every society plays a crucial role in serving as an outlet for information, education, ideas; be it democratic or non-democratic. The news media can also be used to enhance or undermine a democratic order. They are therefore considered as instruments that can be used to attain different aims or outcomes (Bogart, 1998, p.11). In non-democratic regimes, their role can be restrictive and highly controlled to legitimate and as well inculcate anti-democratic beliefs (Gunther et al., 2000). In a democratic society, also, the media can be very useful platforms to promote and sustain democratic principles and culture (Sukosd, 2000).

‘The… media are the connective tissue of democracy… which serves as the principal means through which citizens and their elected representatives communicate in their reciprocal efforts to inform and influence’ (Gunther & Mughan, 2000, p.1). Therefore, according to Jotia (2012), within its fundamental principles, democracy works when the citizens are at the centre of its operation (p.623). The relevance of the media in contemporary democratic political system lends much to the quintessential role of sharing politically relevant information in the state.
The relevance of such information, in fact, within the context of a representative democratic political systems find common expression in the fact that the ‘media are the principal carriers of the life blood of democracy (Gunther & Mughan, 2000, p.422). This comes with an added responsibility to deliver their function in an impartial, objective and diligent manner.

The political information and the platform provided by the media provide a constant interplay between the rulers and the ruled to the sustenance of the political system. In addition, in as much as a properly functioning democracy depends on how informed and active the citizens are, the quality of democratic (politics) progress owes much to ‘informed participation’ by the citizenry (Sotirovic & MacLeod, 2000, p.363). Consequently, the media’s role transcends beyond just public education to the masses on public affairs to the shaping of understanding and interpretation of issues to the public (ibid, p.386). The media, therefore, has the potency of transmitting values that can enhance the democratic process or supress its progress.

Like other African countries, the history of the media in Ghana has not always been positive (Smith & Temin, 2001). Prior to Ghana’s democratic transition, the country passed through a repressive media regime which saw the passage of ‘Newspaper Licensing Law’ in 1985 that came to be associated with the ‘culture of silence’ in the 1980s. In addition, the governmental control over the media extended to the operations of radio and televisions under the Frequency Registration and Control Board (Danso-Boafo, 2014, p.274).

During the 1990s, the increase of media freedom in Ghana…played a major role in the country’s consolidation of multi-party democracy. The repeal of the ‘Newspaper Licensing Law’ in 1992 also saw the operations of over three dozens of newspapers and magazines under the umbrella of Private Newspapers Publishers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG) (ibid,
p.269). Nonetheless, the early days of democratic governance in Ghana’s Fourth Republic were characterised by government hostility mostly demonstrated through the resort to the Criminal Libel Law to tame anti-government sentiments.

However, the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law in 2001 provided a great safeguard and a freer atmosphere for the media to discharge its democratic functions. More importantly, the newspaper pages provided a platform for the opposition as a way of engaging the government when they boycotted the 1992 general elections (Danso-Boafo, 2014). The media in Ghana has played a very meaningful role to the advancement of the country’s electoral democracy through election coverage of political parties’ activities, stimulation of public debate and critical analysis of political issues (Smith & Temin, 2001). Moreover, the quintessential role of the media in creating democratic participation is epitomised in radio and television ‘phone-ins’ where citizens discuss social and political matters and, as well, engage with public officials and politicians (Gadzekpo, 2008; Prempeh, 2008). The contribution of the media to the democratic politics in Ghana, therefore, cannot be underestimated.

Notwithstanding, the media in any given society can help consolidate a country’s democracy only when it is allowed to perform its functions and tasks effectively in a free environment and being made independent. However, building an independent media in developing countries such as Ghana is not just about freedom of speech, skilled journalists, or strong business management skills. Allowing the media to be independent to perform its crucial roles of being a watchdog over government and educating people about the issues that affect their lives requires support from organizations (Das, 2011).
The argument is that if the media is honest and committed to its job, democracy is bound to function more efficiently and the loopholes present in any democratic system could be addressed to the satisfaction of the people. On the contrary, if the media is biased, corrupt and favours only a particular party or few individuals, it can prove to be very dangerous for the smooth functioning of democracy (Das, 2011). Therefore, it has been argued that, without a free, neutral and active media democracy is meaningless (Zillmann, 2002). In view of this, the mass media carries with it a huge responsibility in a democratic setup to discharge their roles and duties objectively to the public (Das, 2011).

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The history of the media in Ghana is one characterised with transition from suppression or state hostility to that of a more liberated or free media especially under the Fourth Republic (Danso-Boafo, 2014; Smith & Temin, 2001). The crucial role of the media that has enriched Ghana’s democratic credentials owes much to the free environment within which they operate. In addition, writers have acknowledged the positive contribution of the media towards the democratic consolidation in Ghana (Gadzekpo, 2008; Smith & Temin, 2001).

However, aside the threat to media freedom, the media’s role towards democratic consolidation can equally be undermined through politicisation and commercialisation. Even in a democratic dispensation, media politicization can be apparent. The ownership of the media houses especially the private ones have been divided along political traditions in which most of them supporting either the government or the opposition political parties (Hasty, 2005; Gadzekpo, 2008; Kafewo, 2006). As some media outlets, either private or public do rely on sponsorship of politicians, who are having the aim of using the media as an instrument for the attainment of power they tend to be manipulated (Wasicka, 2014). According to Gadzekpo (2002), the
media fraternity, especially newspapers have been established to cater for the interest of their owners who mostly are politicians.

In the same manner, a media scholar, Gyan-Apenteng, emphasizing this point, has described the Ghanaian private media in the 2008 Media Sustainability Index Report, outlets as or “the political wing of businesses or the play things for the rich and fame-seekers” (IREX, 2008).

In summing up the state of the private media in Ghana, Owusu (2012) indicated that:

“...The media in Ghana are clearly in a kind of tug of war mainly for political benefit and expediency as they try to outdo one another. Some journalists worked according to the dictates of politicians and political parties, instead of the public good. This must be the main reason why some of the publications are guilty of regular violation of the Code of Ethics of journalists…” (Owusu, 2012, p.71).

It can be argued from the above that, since independence, the media has not been free from the grips of politicians. Thus, they sought to control the media through ownership, highhandedness and other cover means of consolidating their parochial political or economic interest. These phenomena raise questions as to how politicisation and commercialisation of the media affect its role as the ampere in the public sphere.

While some writers on this subject have alluded to the existence of politicisation in the media (Frempong-Mansoh, 2012; Arthur, 2010; Gadzekpo, 2002), they have not critically examined the nature and the effect of media politicisation as well as commercialisation on the role of the media to promoting democratic consolidation. The crux of my thesis, therefore, is to fill the gap in the literature by ascertaining how politicisation and commercialisation of the media affect its roles in the country’s democratic processes. Also critical to this paper, is the assessment of the media’s role towards the deepening of democracy in Ghana.
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to find out how the activities of media houses in Ghana have contributed to consolidating her democracy amidst the perceived politicization of the media. It is therefore an attempt at looking at the role that some specific media houses (including both the print and electronic media houses) have been playing play in consolidating Ghana’s democracy.

The study, in effect, seeks to create awareness to the general Ghanaian public about the role that media houses in the country have played and continue to play in the process of deepening democracy in Ghana. It thus attempts to address the effects that politicization and commercialization of the media have on the performance of the media in the conduct of its various responsibilities. Moreover, the study is an attempt at identifying some of the specific activities and roles of the Ghanaian media and examining the extent to which they affect the efforts made at consolidating democracy in Ghana.

The study also tries to identify some of the major challenges that these media houses face in the conduct of their outlined objectives. Furthermore, the views of other stakeholders such as the political parties, Electoral Commission (EC) and electorates are also taken into consideration as this would eventually help reshape how media houses in Ghana should work to achieve desirable outcomes in the future.
1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

James Madison, the Fourth President of the United States is reported to have said that “A popular government without popular information or means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge for ever will govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives” - (cited in Kumar, 2006). Without much contestation, it stands to agree that this assertion by the American Statesman and theorist summarizes the essence and place of information and the mass media in the governance process, and consequently the deepening of democracies.

African societies including Ghana, in recent times, are attaching increased importance to the mass media. This notwithstanding, some scholars and social in Ghana and elsewhere have argued that most media houses exist to pursue their own parochial interests including commercialization and politicization.

It is therefore imperative in light of the elaborated reasons that studies be undertaken in an attempt to finding out how the politicization of the activities of media houses in Ghana impact on the country’s efforts at deepening her democracy. The study is also aimed at finding appropriate ways to discourage or encourage such politicizations as a way of contributing to previous studies in the field. Eventually, the findings of the study would serve as a basis for justifying, encouraging or improving upon the activities of media houses in Ghana and elsewhere in the world.
1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY
The study is defined within the scope of assessing the role media houses play in deepening democracy in Ghana, particularly, under the Fourth Republican constitution where the practices of the media are largely perceived to have been politicized. It, specifically, reviews how the various media houses—both the electronic and print houses, through their involvement in democratic governance within the Fourth Republic have aided in either strengthening or weakening the country’s democratic credentials.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY
The first chapter of this study constitutes the general introduction to the study. The chapter addresses the background to the study and the research problem. The research objectives, justification and the scope of the study are also addressed in this chapter.

The Chapter Two captures the reviews of literature on the media and its activities. It eventually reviews the workings of the mass media across the globe and narrows it to the Ghanaian media. The literature review makes use of journal articles, books, and other materials that are relevant to the research objectives.

Chapter Three explains the theory that underpins the study and research questions that will enable the researcher answer the research problem. The chapter, also, provides good justification for the selection of the theory and, at the same time, highlights the weaknesses of the theoretical framework.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology that the researcher adopted to execute the study. Basically, the chapter covers the research design, data collection methods and analytical tools employed in the study. In addition, the chapter provides justification for the methodology employed in the study.
Chapter Five discusses the Data Analysis of the study whiles Chapter Six discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter Seven constitutes the concluding chapter. In this chapter, the researcher summarizes the findings of the study, draws the conclusions, and eventually offers relevant recommendations.

1.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS/ TERMS

The operationalization of the concepts employed in this study is meant to clarify the meaning of the concepts as used in this study. In fact, ordinary usage of terms and concepts are often full of ambiguities that make it too difficult for empirical investigations and analysis. Accordingly, the study offers to state in clear terms the precise meaning and understanding that are associated the various concepts.

**Politicization of the media:** Politicization of the media has been used largely to explain dominance of politics over the media through either informal means or formal political institutions and structures. Wasicka (2014), in studying the relationship between the Polish media and politics, adopted the term operationalization to mean the exploitation of formal structures or rules to influence the workings of the media. She concentrated on how formal state structures or rules have been exploited by politicians to unduly influence the media.

Oniszczuk (2011) conceives Politicization of the media as an attempt, made by politics, to dominate the realm of mass media and use them instrumentally to achieve its own, often purely partisan purposes (p.1). The instrumental use of the media by politics (politicization) can be achieved through; filling important managerial positions or sympathizers in the media to express the parochial interest of a particular party, ‘emotional argumentation’ as a result of
focus on personalities or image of political leaders and, exertion of political pressure on the media aimed at subordination or affiliation to a particular party interest (p.14).

The definition by Oniszczuk captures both formal and informal ways through which politicians overtly or covertly subjugate the activities of the media towards the achievement of purely partisan interest. In fact, such an attempt has serious implications on the role of the media to pursuing the goal of objectivity, neutrality, among others, which are very keen to promoting democratic debate and, thence, democratic values or culture.

Politicalization of the media as used in this study is modeled on Oniszczuk conception of politicization of the media. Accordingly, the concept in the study refers to any attempts or mechanisms by politicians or through politics to control the media through ownership of media houses, filling of staff and managerial roles in media houses to promote the interest of a particular party and ensuring political affiliation by either media houses or journalists. These three areas represent a broad conception of politicization that covers the ‘instrumentation’ of the media to achieve parochial or partisan political ends while undermining the media’s role to achieving objectivity, neutrality, etc. This concept of politicization was adopted in Wasicka’s study of the media in Poland. Again, to a limited extent, Frempong-Mansoh’s conceptualization of politicization of the media in Ghana reflects that of Oniszczuk.

**Democratic Deepening/ Consolidation:** By democratic consolidation or deepening, the researcher is in this study referring to the “stability and persistence of democracy” and democratic principles. The definition is in conformity with Larry Diamond’s conception of democratic consolidation. According to Diamond (1999), a democracy is consolidated when there is broad consensus among elites and the masses on the legitimacy of democracy as the
most preferred form of governance. In accordance, he argues that the consensus must manifest in both the norms or beliefs, and actual behaviour of the people over a period.

The definition mirrors two critical areas of interest. It covers the internalization of democratic norms and principles as well as the demonstrable display of democratic behaviour. The internalization of democratic norms may represent ‘a shift in political culture’ of the people (Diamond, 1999, p.65). Internalization of democratic norms is seen to be either promoted or suppressed through the media (Sukosd, 2000). Moreover, the media present the platform, especially in Africa, for the exercise of democratic behaviour or otherwise to the general population.

**Mass Media:** Kumado (1999) indicated that, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana defines media as tools or transmission belts for the ideas and suppliers of the basic need for information. The term media, therefore, is seen as facilities or tools that convey information from a source to a recipient. For the purpose of this study, the term media refers to the means of communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time, such as television, newspapers, magazines and radio, among others.

**Press Freedom:** Ansah (1991) defines press freedom as “the freedom to disseminate information and ideas through the mass media without any government restriction.” It presupposes the guarantee conducive environment through the establishment of the necessary legal and institutional framework to guide and protect the media. In order to ensure press freedom, Ansah (1991) indicates that government should not unduly interfere in the professional activities of the media through covert or overt mechanisms. By press freedom, the researcher is referring to the freedom of communication and expression through various media.
including various electronic media and published materials. Accordingly, the study will specifically focus on newspapers regarding the published materials. On the electronic media, the study will focus on radio and television.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the study of media and politics, especially in a
democratic political system. An extensive literature exists on the media and its role in the democratic
consolidation process. In order to situate this study in context, some relevant literatures on the subject
matter have been reviewed. The literature review is divided into four: The West African Media in
Retrospect, The Ghanaian Media- from when to where, Politics and Media in Ghana and The
Politicization of the Media in Ghana.

More often than not, copious reference is given to the Lincolnian definition of democracy;
government by the people, for the people and of the people. This definition, in substance, refers
to a regime where the rule of law enacted by the people prevails- where none is above the law.
Democracy, therefore, is a government where debate and discussion of the people guards
against arbitrary will or dictate. In essence, the ‘people’ are indispensable variables typically
in the equation of any democratic dispensation. In other words, democracy has to run according
to the wishes, directives and decisions of the people.

According to Opuamie-Ngoa (2010), a well-informed citizenry, freedom to participation in the
decision-making process and accountability to the citizens by those who exercise power on
their behalf presents the three intrinsic requisite of a democracy. However, citizens will suffer
the inability to make enlightened decisions if they do not have accurate information on issues
and problems confronting them. Without such, according to Swant (2000), it will not lead to
citizenry who would be able to comprehend the day-to-day workings of the government nor
participate meaningfully in the political process.
It is in this vein that the eighteenth century French political philosopher, Montesquieu prescribed publicity to be the appropriate spread of necessary information as a cure for abuse of power (Holmes, 1990, p. 24). This prescription connotes that a meaningful political and social life cannot be materialized if citizens are not properly informed. It is also in the same vein that the 16th president of the United States- Thomas Jefferson in clearest terms stated the indispensable role of a strong and independent media. According to him, the functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. He argues that there is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves, nor can they be safe with them without information (Ibid).

The mass media (both the print and electronic) operate in what Curran calls the “public sphere” (Curran, 1991, p.29). The “public sphere” is the space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state. The media channel through their pressures, opinions, views, ideas and preferences expressed in this “public sphere”. They serve as conduit for diffusing information and a battleground for contending ideological forces. In the view of Opumie-Ngoa (2010), not only is the media expected to manage the space between the “public sphere” but are also central to the political process whose primary raison d’être is freedom- as in, freedom of expression and movement. In other words, the media assumes the principal ampere of the public forum which demands critical vigilance and monitoring of the societal war between the “haves” and the “haves not”, that is, the politically and socio-economically influential and those at the margin of society. As Curran (1991) posits, the media are on permanent guard duty patrolling against the abuse of exercise of power and safeguarding individual liberty.

It is at this inception that we ask the central question of whether or not the “fourth estate of the realm” as described by Dahlgren & Sparks (1993) is really performing its duties of managing the space between the “haves” and the “haves not” amidst the current virtual politicization of

http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/
the media? An extensive literature exists on the media and its role in the democratic consolidation process. In order to situate this study in context, some relevant literature on the subject matter has been reviewed.

2.1. THE WEST AFRICAN MEDIA IN RETROSPECT

According to Eribo & Jong-Ebot (1997), the mass media institution was developed in Europe and transplanted in Africa during the colonial period. Thus, it was not until 1822 that the British colonial government decided to establish the Royal Gazette and the Commercial Intelligencer. In his book History, Politics and Early Press in Ghana, Jones-Quartey recounts the origin of the newspaper in West Africa as follows:

The newspaper as a forum for airing of views and the instigation of social change had its inception in English-speaking West Africa as long ago as 1801, in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Ghana then Gold Coast was next in order with its own first paper started in 1822, next, Nigeria, in 1809 and 1863; then Gambia in 1833. But, journalism which was not in 1801, 1822, or 1859 started for its part, only in the middle of that century. Again first in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1885; then it came to Ghana in 1857. The previous and much earlier efforts noted above had been at Freetown and at cape coast respectively by then British administrator of Sierra Leone and Gold Coast settlements (Jones-Quartey, 1975, pxxi).

Currently, the media landscape in West Africa serves as barometer of the condition of democracy in the region. The current composure of the press in most West African states though haltingly in few countries, portrays a gradual liberation of shackles that held it captive in the bosom of colonial, authoritative and what I call “democratic autocracy”. Significantly, there seems to be the emergence of resilient journalism daring to survive against all odds displaying evidently the gradual democratization process across the region.

On the contrary, there have been latent and blatant interference with the press in the region. State authorities use the court machinery to criminalize press freedom (Karikari, 1996). According to Karikari, variables such as poverty, political strife, religious fanaticism, ethnic tensions and the evidence
of a weak or polarized civil society have “conditioned or circumscribed the development of the press in the region” (ibid).

In the context of performance, the widespread picture is the existence of amateurism, and, low professionalism exhibits itself conspicuously in the West African press. According to Karikari (1996) factors such as poor, weak and the absence of formal education has resulted in this dilemma. The widespread of propaganda, partisanship, speculation, unquenchable quest for scandalize, fatalistic explanation of reality explains the very poor academic background of journalism in the region. Journalism is an intellectual activity which requires rigorous training to grasp every nook and cranny of its complexity. Another general weakness of the press in the region identified by Karikari (1996) is the somewhat absence of written African language newspaper or magazine in most countries which is in sharp contrast to some east and south African countries who printed some important dailies in native languages. This phenomenon affirms the limited extent of the people’s cultural self-assertion and enlightenment.

Despite these aforementioned anomalies, the press has now become more vibrant across the region. National Press Associations are gaining strengths with the development of codes and ethics varying however across countries. Thus, the above discussion of the media in Africa does not blind the enormous efforts cultivated. The problem-ridden press has been instrumental in the struggle against many authoritarian regimes across the region. Gadzekpo (1996) expresses the importance of the media by wondering how meaningful development would be in the absence of the media to play the role of the ampere in the “public sphere. She, accordingly, admonishes the press not to only play the role of informing citizens about programmes and policies but also criticizing the government. By so doing, she indicated, the watchdog role of the media would be strengthened.
The regions legal environment has also had a bearing on the development of the media. Apart from Ghana, many countries across the region still have collections of old legislation decreed by the colonial authorities. Even in places where constitutional provision makes way, they are limited. According to her, most Anglophone and Francophone countries have varying laws on sedition and libel criminalization of speech and journalistic expression. There also exist some unrelated media legislations, which make it extremely difficult in gathering and disseminating information (Gadzekpo, 1996).

In conclusion, despite the efforts cultivated by the media in West Africa in fighting authoritarian regimes and the increasingly challenging abuse of human rights, the trend of ‘booking licking’ propaganda, falsification of information, partisanship, politicization and commercialization of the media still persist. And, it is in this remit that the study seeks access the extent to which the politicization and commercialization has affected the democratization consolidation process in Ghana.

2.2. THE GHANAIAN MEDIA: FROM WHEN TO WHERE?

It was not until 1822 that the first Crown governor of Gold Coast, Sir Charles McCarthy, established the Royal Gold Coast Gazette resembling that which was established 21years before in Sierra Leone. Native Press, however, emerged by the hardworking of the Bannerman brothers in 1857 who started hitting the streets of Accra with hand written publications named Accra Herald (Jones-Quartey, 1975). Anokwa (1997) recounts; “the origin of the Ghana Press… dates back to the 19th century… when African participation in the press industry began in 1857 with the establishment of the West African Herald by the Bannerman brothers” (p.8).

There were several themes dominating the aforementioned newspapers and others that joined later. In the lens of Farringer (1991), the emergence and existence of the media industry in Africa or Ghana was
purported toward national independence. “These papers played important role in trying to raise an early consciousness of nationalism and pride in the face of colonial dominance and alien values” (Mytton, 1983, p.4). It is in this manner that Ansah (1991) posits that many nationalist leaders in the region established and edited newspaper in the early stages of their political activities to facilitate the quest for “self-government”. Among them were “West African Pilot”, “Muiguithania”, “Sautiya Tanu”, La Condition Humaine and the Accra Evening News by Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor and Kwame Nkrumah respectively. These individuals, despite their varying political culture, saw the media as an indispensable tool for influencing the course of events on the continent and, what Ansah calls “displaying colonial institution” (Ansah, 1991, p.8). The media, in other words, became conduits for political mobilization, education and a crane for overthrowing colonial government. To a large extent, this aided most Africa states in their respective quest for national or self—government.

This trend of the media began to change after the quest for national independence was exhausted. This alternation, that is, independence changed the morphology of the press. Eribo & Jong-Ebot (1997) explains; having been organized to serve the need of the colonial administration, they became, at independence, ideological tools of the new Africa leaders, and were brought under state control and made to sing the praises of the dictators in the name of national unity and development. According to Farringer (1991), even though these leaders have some journalistic background, once they became heads of government, the press becomes an antagonistic institution or a “baby to master about.” According to Wilcox (1975), most African leaders hated the press due to their knowledge of its potentiality. He therefore argued that “many of them especially those who used the press to garner political power, fear the press because they are familiar with its potential for changing political culture” (p.12).
Amoakohene (2006), in her studies on political communication in Ghana’s emerging democracy observed that, the press was expected by post-independence leaders to perform revolutionary and propaganda role. The former laid in the ambit of consolidating or safe-guarding the independence of Ghana whilst the latter was projecting positive image of government both home and abroad. She observed that, Nkrumah in projecting the revolutionary-propaganda role embarked on rapid development and expansion. According to Ansah (1991) his aim was “to collect and disseminate information at home and project Ghana’s image abroad”. This he did by establishing the Ghana News Agency (GNA) 1957; Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) in 1959. He also expanded radio station now called Ghana Broadcasting Corporation introduced in July 1935 and inaugurated a non-commercial television service (Ibid). Ghana under Nkrumah is credited the honour for laying the communication infrastructure for the best media system in Africa (Ansah, 1991; Anokwa, 1997). Amoakohene (2006) however noted that these developments did not positively impact the environment which media practitioners operate and perform roles as information gatherers and disseminators (Ibid). These developments were tilted against the private media enterprise since it was evidently targeted for elimination by Nkrumah due to his Socialist and neo-communist models. He factually articulated his disgust for private ownership of the media. Nkrumah argued that;

“It’s part of our revolutionary credo that within the competitive system of capitalism, the press cannot function in accordance with a strict regard for the sacredness of facts, and that the press, therefore, should not remain in private hands” (Nkrumah, 1963, p.4).

This begs the question, would the state media express honestly scared facts than the private, one would ask? Ansah (1991) in reviewing the press under Nkrumah stated “while the state-owned or party press expanded, the private press shrank out of existence with the result that at the time of Nkrumah’s overthrow the print media had become a state or monopoly” (p.92). It must also be noted that these developments were not typical of Nkrumah’s regime. Successive governments featured similar media subjugation through legal, quasi-legal, and, sometimes, illegal conduits such as censorship, regulation.
and some various intervention and interference (Asante, 1996; Ampaw, 2004; Amoakohene, 2006). Asante describes this perfectly, he argues that “in Africa, generally and in Ghana particular, a change in government usually signals changes in the press system of that country. And, the press constantly adapts to the changing political environment” (Asante, 1996, p.xix).

Despite these aforementioned demonstration, Ghana today can be described as a country with most vibrant media. The country contains over 70 newspapers, 150 radio stations, over 10 television stations. This accordingly provides a somewhat basis for the country to pride itself as the beacon of democracy in the sub-region since a strong and independent media is a necessary condition for any democratic consolidation process (Curran & Gurevitch, 2002; Brian, 1999).

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE DEMOCRATIZING PROCESS

This section seeks to discuss the role of the press in the democratization process with particular reference to the how politicization or commercialization affects its operation. Thus, the initial section will discuss the role of the media in the democratization process and, the later will deal with the extent to which politicization of the press has impacted its watchdog role in Ghana’s emerging democracy.

Studies have expressed the immense contribution of the media in the democratizing process. For most of them, the media has been the foundation in pre-colonial rule, independence and post-independence transition. To a larger extent, the somewhat democratic stability enjoyed by the country can be attributed to the media (Anokwa, 1997; Ansah, 1991; Karikari, 1996).

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana Article 162 (4) expresses the essence of the media in any democratic dispensation. It states; “editors and publishers of newspapers and other institution of the mass media shall not be subject to control or interference by government, or shall they be penalized or
harassed for their editorial opinions and views, or the content of their publications.” This, in substance, epitomizes the intrinsic nature of the institution. The state has realized that to have a civilized democracy, there must exist, an institution which would regulate or manage the vacuum between the government and the governed. The availability of fora for the dissemination of information and public discussions are relevant ingredients in the polity. The press provides a fillip for the construction and consolidation of a civil society. Thus, if the media fails to act as the ampere within the “public sphere”, citizens will suffer the inability of making rational choices towards the day - to- day activities of government (Swant, 2000).

In a similar comparative study, Belle (2000) observed that the populace depended on the press for feedback from the government in matters of domestic and international importance. Therefore, in circumstances where the media is reduced to a “lapdog”, then news i.e. information from the press becomes nothing but a conduit used by political leaders to create and consolidate power. The repercussion of this phenomenon would be a dwindling faith of the people in the validity of information passed on by political leaders. For every democracy to thrive, a strong and independent media must be created. Patterson, in the same vein, admonishes that the press in the 21st century is not just an agenda setting but also organizing public discussion and the education of citizens on the policy process. According to him, this function has long been in the hands of political parties, however, the problems of finance and politics have reduced its effectiveness and that the media should take on this responsibility (O’Neil, 1998).

In their studies, Oreen & Mayer (1990) maintained that the media have become one important medium through which candidates of elections communicate with voters through which voters also get informed on election issues. Apart from wealth or possession that was used by the Athenians in measuring the competence and popularity of candidates, the press plays an intelligent role in the democratic process
by providing information—through organization of debates and conducting opinion polls to ascertain the likely winner. This in a way promotes peaceful transition of power from the winner to the loser since it was already foretold. They also argue, like others, that the press serves as a check on the abuse of power by the government (Ibid).

In his studies on the Agenda-setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of the Public Opinion, McCombs (2015) observed that it is a well-documented influence of the media to set a nation’s agenda. Thus not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the media, readers and viewers, as well, learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news by the media. “Newspapers provide a host of cues about the silence of the topics in the daily news-lead story on page one, other front page display, large headlines, etc.” He further maintained that when such issues are over flocked, they communicate the importance of each topic to the public. As Cobb & Elder (1972: 1983) posit, the media positions or tables the “general set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time.”

Lippmann (1922), in his classic ‘Public Opinion’ highlighted the role of the mass media. He noted that, the media form or communicate to the public “The world outside and the Pictures in Our Heads” or what Plato calls the world of forms, “The media are a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, a world that for most citizens is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” (Ibid). In substance, elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind. And this raises the essence of the media and its role in the democratic process since what they in substance inform what decisions the public makes. McCombs (2015) in a contrary disposition asserts that, “although the influence of the media agenda can be substantial, it alone does not determine the public agenda.” Thus the said influence of the media “has no way overturned or nullified the basic assumption of democracy that the people at large have sufficient wisdom to determine the course of
their nation, their state, and their local communities. The people are able to determine the basic relevance of news that should be treated with importance. Thus, it has been asserted elsewhere “the media sets the agenda only when citizens perceive their news stories as relevant” (Ibid).

Gurevitch & Blumler (1990), in this same vain, highlighted the importance of the mass media’s role in any democratic dispensation. These important roles include the surveillance of socio-political development i.e. monitoring and scrutinizing of all socio-political development that take place within the country, identifying the most relevant issues that affect people’s lives and the country as a whole, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views and holding public officials accountable in their exercise of power. The mass media provides a platform where citizens can learn and become involved in the political process. Hence, the mass media is an important tool for any democracy (Ibid).

It is therefore reasonable for Venturelli (1998) and McQuail (1993) to posit that a democratic society rests on these aforementioned normative assumptions. Media critics have however asserted that the politicization and commercialization of the media has transformed it into an anti-democratic force that supports the status quo (Kellner, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Keane, 1991). Entertainment, gossip, sex scandals and violence dominates the airwaves. According to some studies, political news now concentrates on personalities rather than ideologies (Bagdikian, 1993; Fallows, 1996; Bennett & Entman, 2001). The media in the absence of any important debate provides the platform with political propaganda containing meaningless slogans creating disinterest in politics. Some also claim that the “watchdogs” have become “lapdogs” and are barking at irrelevant issues As Sabato (1991) describes; they go after wounded politicians like sharks in feeding frenzy. All too often, minor threats are hysterically blown out of proportions, while much more serious dangers in our society go unnoticed.

The control and ownership of the media by some powerful politicians and few multinational conglomerates have transformed that “watchdog” role of the media into a “sit a watch role.” If these
holds merits, then a quick revision of the role of the media in a democracy needs to be undertaken of which this works seeks to endeavour.

Soroka et al (2009) were diametrically opposed to the traditional stance on the agenda-setting role of the mass media as noted by McCombs (2015). They are of the view that, although the media plays a very critical role in the early stages of policy process, their impact is not just at the beginning but throughout the policy process. According to Soroka et al (2009), the fact that the media bring issues on board and sustain public attention to these issues, change the discourse around a policy debate by defining the issues thereby persuading and dissuading the public and establishing the sources and consequences of policy issues. They also indicated that all these can be evident not only in the early stages but throughout the policy process to highlight the potentiality of the media. In short, they emphasize that the media matters not just at the beginning but throughout the policy process (Ibid).

Hence, the media’s involvement in the policy process poses real complications. Since they set the national agenda, any misguided or political motivated intentions can contaminate the informational content disseminated. Some studies however have questioned the nature and tone of the media content on policy issues (Entman, 1993; Patterson, 1994; Larson, 2001).

They raise serious questions about the potential for and difficulties with the role the media in policymaking. Biases in media’s coverage and the excessive politicization of the media make it extremely dangerous if they are to decide the public agenda (Entman, 1993; Patterson, 1994; Larson, 2001).

For the media to be meaningful to the democratic process, other scholars have argued that, they should imbue some values and norms that are highly relevant to being democratic themselves and, towards
promoting democratic culture. In the light of this, it has therefore been argued that, the media is required to be objective, professional and neutral, among others.

Sivakumar (2009) calls for media objectivity. She asserts that in order for the media to perform its function effectively, its objectivity must be guaranteed, and journalists should always try as much as possible to be neutral observers. Hence, the media should not engage itself with any particular party or an individual but must faithfully record events as it (Ibid). For this reason, Sivakumar (2009) outlined the key requisites necessary for a robust and balanced media industry and highlighted some of the issues that are facing working journalists today. It is in this spectrum that Altheide (1999) argued that, the media’s first and foremost job is to serve the interest of the masses and as well as hold government accountable. In other words, the media should bring before the public nothing but the truth in all matters without twisting the facts and should never be afraid of anyone except God (Altheide, 1999).

According to Bharat, for a democracy to run smoothly, the media must be autonomous and independent in terms of performing its functions (Bharat, 2008 as cited in Das 2011).

Das (2011) also cautions that, when the media is given an autonomous environment to operate, it should be very responsible, active and neutral in discharging its duties without being influenced by any political party or any other individual. Wahlberg (2000) also added to this by indicating that politicians are afraid of being exposed before the public and as such will keep them under control to some extent. Hence, the media should always be analytical in pursuit of its tasks within such environment (Ibid).

Wahlberg (2000) further asserted that, if the media is honest and committed in the conduct of its duties, democracy is bound to function more efficiently. Hence, the media can easily deter
the loopholes present in democratic system. On the contrary, however, if the media is biased, corrupt and partial towards a particular party or few individuals in the country, it can pose a threat to the smooth functioning of democracy of a country (Ibid). In the same way, Bharat (2008) suggested that in order for the media to be effective they need to be protected. There should be laws that promote and protect the rights of journalists. To him, this is because powerful groups and individuals can suppress the media at all cost to prevent their effectiveness through legal and illegal means for their own benefit. Hence, he concluded that, some of the ways to enhance the media’s role in any democracy is to enhance its capacity and accountability, and, old laws such as libel, etc, should be abolished (Ibid).

Though it has been argued that the media should uphold to the values of objectivity, professionalism and neutrality in pursuits of its role in the democratizing process, however, they may fall short of these standards. For instance, in their discussion of the social power of the mass media, James, Gurevitch & Woolacott (1979) posit that the mass media have control over individuals, institutions, among others, and, it has the power to bring certain kinds of publics into being and maintain them. Accordingly, they maintain that, a look at the media’s historical precedence indicates that those who quest for political or economic power cherish the means of controlling or owning the media. The control of the media yields several possibilities. The ability of the media to attract and direct attention to problems, solutions or people in ways which favour in search or in power and all together divert attention for rival individuals is one of the possibilities. It again has the power to confer status and confirm legitimacy. The quest to control or own the media is imperative to those with or in search of political and economic power, because it can be used in some instance, for persuasion and mobilization. For this reason, they further argued that, one must look at “those who direct, own or control them or who use them as channels for messages.” The ownership and control be it political, economic or legal are questions that must be asked (James, Gurevitch & Woolacott, 1979).
In sum, the media is seen as a crucial agent in the democratic processes of the state. To be an effective agent of the democratic processes, the media must be allowed to operate in a freer environment. In addition, the media must imbue values and norms that are deemed receptive to promoting democratic culture and, hence, democratic deepening. However, it is rather the exception that the media would be completely free to operate, even in a democracy. The challenges to the role of the media in the democratic process may arise either at the individual level, or state or agential levels.

2.3.1 POLITICS AND MEDIA IN GHANA

The increasing Politicization and Commercialization of the Fourth Republic Media has its background in the history and development of the press in Ghana. During pre-colonial times, the press was used as a political tool to link the center to the periphery then as a tool for information dissemination (Anokwa, 1997; Karikari, 1996; Altsechall, 1984). The press had a different composure during the pre-independence struggle. They were used to arouse “… consciousness of nationalism and pride in the face of colonial dominance and alien values” (Myton 1983, p.38). In short, they were used as mechanism to fight colonial administration. The twist, however, was after independence. This institution which was used to fight, educate and air the views of natives became a tool for suppressing dissent (Wilcox, 1975).

Boahen (1975) summed this in the following words:

“There have been little press freedom in the country since independence, and vigorous, independent press cannot flourish in an atmosphere of constant reprisal, harassment, detentions, deportation of journalists and ruthless suppression of dissenting and independent views” (p.178).

During Nkrumah’s regime, followed by non-democratic regimes there was a long period of unconstitutional rule, that repressed press freedom. There have been both overt and covert mechanisms
used by various regimes to politicize the media. The Nkrumah and other military dictators saw an immense control of the press in pursuit of either an agenda or the parochial political ambitions of the dictators (Anokwa, 1997; Asante, 1996; Ansah, 1991). The state media was mostly government control media that was manned by party supporters and loyalists. However, critical newspapers and journalists were subjected to long prisons terms, long period of banning, repressive legislations and forced flee to exile. Those who remained had resort to self-censorship as a means of survival (Danso-Boafo, 2014, p.268). In elaborating this, Asante (1996) cited the passage of Preventive Detention Act (PDA) passed in 1958, which allow critics of the regime include critical journalists to be detained up to 10 years in prison without trial. Again, the introduction of the Criminal Code in 1960 gave the regime the teeth to impose press censorship and restriction on the publication and importation of anything considered “contrary to Public Interest” (Amoakohene, 2006). Subsequent non-democratic regimes were no better. For instance just before, the fourth Republic, the then Provisional Defence Council (PNDC) government was also a classic example of a regime coupled with press intimidation. The government according to (Karikari, 2003) made stringent measure against the press. This entailed the arrest, detention without trial of publishers, editors, reporters and some were forced into exile. (Asah-Asante, 2004; Danso-Boafo, 2014). The repressive laws such as the Newspaper Licensing Law, 1989, (PNDC 211) and the Preventive Custody Laws, 1989, (PNDCL 4) gagged Ghanaians as well as the media.

On what grounds will Africa attain any meaningful development without the existence of the press? (Gadzekpo, 1960). According to Gadzekpo, the press as the “watchdog” barks out any undemocratic behaviour inherent among citizens. The media contributes their quota by ensuring inclusiveness, transparency, rule of law and accountability among the government. She emphasis the need for the press leading the campaign against some vices such as corruption, abuse of power, and the current “instrumental out” of politics in the sub-region. Therefore, she expresses worry on the antagonistic composure of some political leaders and citizens on the media when they expose some maladies in the
state. In essence, the countries development is dependent on the critical and objective role of the fourth estate of the realm.

According to Obeng-Quaidoo (1987), the propensity of addressing issues such as exploitation, inequalities, political participation and legitimacy by any media institution warrants its contribution to any democratic process. A sharp perusal of the state’s political history suggests that the media has not fully exhausted this role due to consistent military juntas. During these regimes, many covert and overt mechanisms were used to toe the press towards the dictates of a particular regime (Amoakohene, 2006). However, the inception of the fourth republic brought the “watchdog” role of the press into full light, as observed by (Eribo and Jong-Ebot, 1997).

Lowenthal (1997) has argued that, democracy can be consolidated only when institutions like the judiciary, legislature, civil societies and the press are strengthened. Thus, the quest for rule of law, accountability, transparency, equity, equality, et cetera, can only be realized only when these aforementioned institutions are provided with the necessary resources to thrive.

It is in this vein that Crenstil (1991) suggests that, some level of guided freedom should be given to the press to create, facilitate and maintain the democratic consolidation process. In his study on how critical both state-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic) and private-owned (The Pioneer) have been under the People’s National Party (PNP) and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), he observed that, whiles most papers were quiet critical under civilian regimes, they were a little careful with national issues under military regimes. The private media performed the role of “anti-government” whereas the state-own media took the “pro-government” stands. It is therefore justified that for a consolidated democracy to be upheld, and a strong vibrant private-owned media to complement activities of the state-owned media.
In a similar work, Kudzodzi (1998) noted that the *Ghanaian Chronicle* has actively played as the fourth estate of the realm. According to him, the paper, since 1996, has been very objective in the criticism and correctional role on governmental policies. He observed that several publications by the *Ghanaian Chronicle* centred on corruption, embezzlement, abuse of power, among others, of the NDC regime. This critical role, according to Kudzodzi, will help consolidate our fledgling democracy.

### 2.4. POLITICIZATION OF THE MEDIA IN GHANA

Arthur Peter (2010), writing on *Democratic consolidation in Ghana: the contribution of the media, civil society and state institutions*, argues that the media as well as other key state institutions such as Electoral Commission, Judiciary, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and Parliament have played meaningful roles towards Ghana’s democratic consolidation. He examines the role of the media and other institutions and the key progress they have made over the years. According to Arthur, the signs of democratic progress are very clear in the successful election turnovers, popular support for democracy, and improvement in human rights, among others resulting from the activities of various institutions. He further maintains that greater effort by these institutions will stimulate and enhance Ghana’s democratic fortunes (p.221).

While Arthur’s study underscores the roles and contributions of the various agencies, he further identified some of their weaknesses that have greater potential to undermine Ghana’s democratic progress. In discussing the civil society in Ghana, he cited lack of funding, overburdened staff, limited participation in governance arising from lack of clear rules of engagement by government, lack of transparency and unhealthy suspicion, among others as some of the key challenges. Also, Arthur enumerates some of the challenges that face state
institutions such as the judiciary, Electoral Commission and Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) that are core to democratic consolidation.

More importantly, he indicated that media freedom has not necessarily led to the promotion of democratic culture. This is because of low quality of discourse and focus on personalities attack, over-sensationalism, political propaganda and limited coverage of the media to urban areas. He cited a case of Radio Gold’s rumour of Akuffo Addo having being declared winner in the 2008 elections that led to a heightened tension in the country. He further contends that the media environment in Ghana is politically biased and full of allegiances that are demonstrated mostly in elections and campaign seasons. Again, the inability of most press to raise adequate money put them in vulnerable positions to political poaching by politicians.

Accordingly, the study calls for broader coverage area by the media to include all segments of society through the use of indigenous language. The study further recommends that the media be objective, balanced, unbiased in reporting, and offer platform for divergent views.

One of the contributions of the study is that, it offers insight into the institutional challenges that may undermine democratic progress. It pays particular attention to some of the key institutions, especially, the media in advancing democracy in Ghana.

However, the study fails to establish any empirical link between activities of the media and their influence on their audience. That is, while the study enumerates some challenges in the media that may undermine its democratic potentials, it fails to discuss how those challenges affect the media themselves as well as their audience. That is, the study fails to establish a link between these institutional weaknesses and their concomitant effect on the individual citizenry.
According to Smith & Temin (2001), the media in Ghana has become very crucial to the conduct of electoral politics in the country. Focusing on the 2000 elections, the paper argues that the media’s coverage of political events before and after the elections provided access to all political parties, and citizens the information and opportunity to discuss policies to discuss policies and programmes of various political parties.

However, they argued that ‘substantial disparities exist across the country with respect to how Ghanaians use, rely upon and trust the media to provide them with relevant information during electoral campaigns (p.162).

The study empirically assessed the media’s role in Ghana’s electoral democracy drawing on empirical data gathered in forty (40) constituencies involving 4000 respondents throughout the country.

The study established that significant proportion of Ghanaians representing 81% of respondents followed political parties’ activities in the news media. Again, the study established that 47.3% of Ghanaians follow news from radio on whom to vote for followed by television with 19% and newspapers with 4.2%. This indicates the significance of radio in disseminating political news as well as whom citizens wants to vote for.

The paper provides critical assessment of the media’s role in enhancing electoral democracy in Ghana. Smith and Temin focus on media’s coverage of political activities before and after elections to assess how the activities of the media affect the conduct of democratic elections.
The study therefore underscores the relevance of the media, especially, radio in entrenching and consolidating the country’s democratic gains in elections.

Nonetheless, beside elections, the media becomes relevant to the survival or demise of the democratic system. The study, therefore, fails does not provide insight into the activities of the media and their impact on the democratic fortunes of the country, perhaps, due to the limited scope of the study. Accordingly, the study does not provide relevant information on trend of politicization of the media that may affect the democratic progress witnessed during elections. In addition, the study does not reflect recent changes in the media environment that have been aided by modern technology. Thus, while the study reported the absence of Private FM stations in four out of the ten regions in Ghana during the survey, there are a lot of FM stations operating in all the regions with the least having not less than sixteen FM stations as at 2015 per the National Communications Authority’s report.

Frempong-Mansoh (2012) has argued in his article titled, *Democratic consolidation in Ghana: the threat of media-ethnic politicisation*, that Ghana’s democratic consolidation efforts though widely acclaimed still remains fragile amidst ethnic sensations that are created through the media. According to Frempong-Mansoh, Ghana’s democratic achievements and consolidation, gains face imminent threat of ethnic tension and conflicts that have greater potentials of derailing all the consolidation gains. These threats are highly amplified in the instrumental use of the media and journalists by politicians to inflame ethnic tensions to suit their parochial power seeking interest.

The study agrees that both the elites and the masses (p.4-5) do not only amplify Ghana’s democratic consolidation through elections but also through widespread acceptance of
democracy as the solely acceptable means of governance. In relation, he recounts Ghana’s
democratic consolidation efforts that have been largely achieved through vibrant and free
media environment. Accordingly, he advances that the media environment has generated a
participatory democracy through intensive debates and discussion of political issues (p.6). He,
however, contends that sustainable participatory democracy must be anchored on ‘rational
public reasoning or deliberations’ (p.7). Accordingly, Frempong-Mansoh posits that
democratic stability or consolidation ought to consider evaluation of degree of tolerance and
acceptance of cultural pluralism especially in a contemporary African state (p.10). Therefore,
there is the need for a reformed media-independent media to play the watchdog role, more
importantly nurture, and foster democratic values of reciprocal tolerance and free and equal
citizenship (p.3).

The study also argues that in spite of higher strides the country has achieved towards
democratic consolidation, sustainability of the country’s democracy remains fragile in the face
of ethnic tensions and pluralism. Ethnic conflicts pose serious threat to stability of the African
states. In addition, Ghana, like most African states, faces this imminent threat of ethnic conflict.
He, however, argues that ethnic diversity does not, in itself pose a threat, except the potential
for exploitation by politicians who see it as a means of gaining power. In doing so, the news
media becomes an instrument used by politicians to perpetuate this agenda. In his own words,
he stated that, “… politicians and political parties’ manipulation of the news media outlets and
journalists for their exploitation of ethnic groups for their personal political ambitions” (p.10).

The study cited African Media Development Index country report on Ghana that indicated that
many media outlets are used to propagate their owners’ political views (p.11). He further argues
that the instrumental role of journalist and the media can be seen in inter-tribal verbal feud
between NPP and the NDC that present danger to our democracy. Thus the media and
journalistic alliances serve to influence the potency of inter-tribal disputes since they become the convenient channel by politicians to exploit ethnic tensions. Consequently, he calls for self-regulation of the media through the enforcement of professional code of ethics.

The study provides a cogent argument for potential risk factors that may undermine Ghana’s democratic achievements that have largely elude discussions on democratic consolidation. Quite distinctive about the study is that it offers serious acumen into how an important agent of democracy, the media is been used to threaten the very existence of democracy in Ghana. Also, worth noting about the study is its ability to identify the democratic values such as tolerance which are critical to Ghana’s democratic sustainability considering the ethnic composition of the country.

Notwithstanding, one of the weaknesses of the study is that it fails to establish the extent to which ‘media-ethnic politicisation’ fosters and nurture undemocratic values or attitudes in the citizens and, present imminent threat to democratic sustainability. Failure to account for this obscures the mitigating factors that continue to hold the country’s democracy together amidst such politicisation.

Even in democratic dispensation, the media is not spared from politicization. There have been instances of indirect attempts to politicize the media. The ownership of the media houses especially the private ones have been divided along political traditions in which most of them either supporting government or the opposition political parties (Hasty, 2005; Gadzekpo, 2008; Kafewo, 2006). A lot of the media, especially newspapers, do rely on sponsorship of politicians, who are having the aim of using the media as an instrument for the attainment of power. According to Gadzekpo (2002), the media fraternity, especially newspapers have been established to cater for the interest of
their owners who mostly are politicians. In the same manner, a media scholar, Gyan-Apenteng, emphasizing this point, has described the Ghanaian private media in the 2008 Media Sustainability Index Report, outlets as or “the political wing of businesses or the play things for the rich and fame-seekers” (IREX, 2008).

2.5. CONCLUSION

It can be argued that since independence, the media had not been completely free from the grips of politicians. They have sought to control the media through ownership, highhandedness and covert means as a means of consolidating their parochial political or economic interest. In this study, politicization of the media is seen as an attempt either through ownership, laws or other mechanisms to undermine the neutral and objective role of the media. While several writings on media in Ghana allude to the existence of media politicisation (Hasty, 2005; Gadzekpo, 2008; Kafewo, 2006, Frempong-Mansoh, 2012; Arthur, 2010), there has been no empirical assessment on the phenomenon to examine its impact on politics, and, more specifically, democratic governance of the country. Consequently, this phenomenon has raised questions underpinning this study as to what extent has the Politicization and Commercialization of the media affected its role as the ampere in the “public sphere.”
CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0. INTRODUCTION
This chapter looks at the theoretical framework upon which the study is built. This involves theoretical framework made up of the concept of Social Responsibility Theory and the Libertarian Theory of the Press where the various models for the study are elaborated and, then, the deployment of the theory to this work. I have adopted two theoretical frameworks because I believe only one theory may fail to adequately explain the subject under study. Hence, the two theories underpinning the study are intentionally adopted to complement each other.

3.1. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY
Social responsibility theory of the press is one of the four theories of the press propounded by Siebert et al., (1956). This theory, which is the modification of the Libertarian theory of the press, posits that, there must be a free press without any censorship but, at the same time, the content of the press should serve the public interest. In other words, the theory argues that the media should “accept any obligation, be it public interference or professional self-regulations or both” (Siebert et al., 1956). Like the Libertarian theory, it allows for private ownership of the press. However, as Siebert et al., (1956) argues, the theory also moves beyond the simple question of “objective” reporting (facts reporting) to a more “interpretative” reporting (investigative reporting). Thus, the total news is completely factual and truthful. The theory eventually helps in creating professionalism in the media by setting up a high-level standard of accuracy, truth and information.

Even though the social responsibility theory keeps certain areas free for the Press, it puts a lot of responsibility on the media at the same time (Siebert et al., 1956). The media is not just seen
as an enterprise like others in the business sector of any society, but, due to its distinctive nature, society expects a particular role that it must play. The media should be seen as criticizing government policies, exposing other wrong doings in the society, getting rid of some social evils, and more importantly educating people (Sievert et al., 1956). A great sense of responsibility has thus been highlighted more in this theory as compared to other theories of the press. Consequently, the theory postulates that the media has certain obligations to society. Siebert et al., (1956) opine that the media in any democracy, must show truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance in the performance of their responsibilities. To do this effectively, the media should be free but self-regulated. The theory advocates for the existence and application of codes of conduct, and ethics in the media. It is further postulated that the media is pluralistic, that is; it embraces diversity of society, various points of view, and forum for ideas. Finally, proponents of the theory argue that media ownership of the media is a public trust and as such, the journalist is accountable to his audience or readers (Siebert et al., 1956).

Studies have proven that the adoption of the social responsibility theory has many positive implications for democratization and the society as a whole. Firstly, the media will not be able to play monopoly because the audience and media scholars will raise questions when they manipulate stories, publish or broadcast any wrong information. Eventually, it aids the improvement of media standards in the society. Moreover, the media, in fact, will take all classes of audience into consideration in the performance of their duties rather than focusing on higher classes in the society alone.

In sum, prominent theories of democracy have, over the years shown that, democracy requires a distinctive set of political values and orientations from its citizens. According to Diamond (1999) such values may include; moderation, tolerance, civility, efficacy, knowledge, and
participation (p.161). It is also believed that, democratic decision-making provides the only just response to the circumstances of disagreement, notwithstanding, the fact that it does not always yield the just outcome (Mackie, 2009). The media is seen, in this light, to be able to inculcate and promote such values in a democratic system.

However, such achievements are unlikely to occur in any society where the mass media relegate its social responsibilities to the background. Consequently, the existence of the mass media enhances democracy. It makes government more responsive to a wider range of citizens (Diamond, 1999). The greater the opportunities for citizens to express, organize, and represent political preferences, the greater the number and variety of preferences and interests that are likely to be represented in policy making (Dahl, 1989). The mass media is usually the key medium to achieving this objective. It must be however stated that, biased media is perhaps worse than having no mass media. This, therefore, calls for the existence of a vibrant, objective, and responsible media in the society to enhance the democratization of states.

However, this theory does not come without flaws. According to Ochilo (1993), it is misplaced by many African countries to adopt the theory since most media in many African countries have tended to fall into the category of authoritarianism. Other scholars including Severin & Tankard (2001) have raised issues as to who should make sure that the media act in a socially responsible manner, and how decisions should be taken as to the significant opinion worthy of media space or time.

3.1. THE LIBERTARIAN THEORY OF THE PRESS

The Libertarian Theory of the Press that was later modified into Social Responsibility theory had its roots from the ideas of liberal thinkers (O’Neil, 1998). Fundamental to this theory was the idea that, a democracy could flourish and ultimately be consolidated, only where the press
has created an open marketplace of ideas and acted as watchdogs of the government in the state (Siebert et al., 1956).

This theory contrasts the authoritarian approach to media which demands that the media should be owned and dictated to by the government or the state. According to proponents of the libertarian theory, the government in a democratic society should exist solely to serve the interest of the individual citizenry (Siebert et al., 1956). They further propose that, the media in the enactment of its duty should aim at serving the people rather than the government (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956). According to this theory the media enjoys an absolute freedom of expression and has the following as its prominent features.

Firstly, there must be competitive exposure of alternative perspectives in the society. In other words, there must be acceptance of different views. Secondly, it is accepted for the media to criticize and attack government's policies because it serves as a watchdog over the government’s policies. Moreover, proponents of the theory also stress that journalists and media professionals ought to have full autonomy within the media organization. In other words, there should be no explicit connection between the government and the media as this will give the media the needed space to operate freely. Similarly, the press should be free from censorship though it is accountable to the law for any consequences of its activities that infringe other individuals' rights or the legitimate claims of the society. Finally, the protection of dignity, reputation, property, privacy, and moral development of individuals, groups, minorities, is prioritized even as the security of the state. Thus, no infringement is accepted from media in the conduct of its responsibility in freedom.
It must, however, be noted that, such an extensive freedom is also sometimes problematic as all the people have the right to speak and receive information freely, but no one takes responsibility of the wrong doings most of the times. In fact, since the ethics in multicultural or pluralistic societies vary from place to place, there is always complaint against the media of each other’s society.

In addition, despite the fact that the Libertarian theory of the press is widely accepted by democratic nations around the world today, it has not completely settled the debate on the relationship between mass media and democracy. Even after a successful transition from authoritarian to democracies, the media has not always succeeded in consolidating democracy. This point buttresses the fact that, even in democracies, the media can still suffer restrictions that may undermine its democratic potentials (Kumar, 1999, p.140-143). These restrictions can be either self-imposed due to the media’s own weaknesses or factors external to the media.

Duh (2014) indicates that the theory is impracticable in Africa as compared with European countries. To him, it is a purely western theory that does not explain media systems in ‘Third World’ democracies. Moreover, in real world, the hypothesis of this theory is flawed and untenable due to growing government intervention and control. A press system that operates without any form of government control leads to a chaotic competition among private owners for greater profit maximization (Curran 2002, as quoted in Duh, 2014).

Again, not all the audience or citizens are always rational as the Libertarian theory suggests. This is because many consumers have distorted views of the world based on television viewing (McQuail, 1993). Thus the individual who follows the media is likely to be influenced by what they hear and, or seen in the media (Wasicka, 2004). Consequently, because the media has such
an influential role within society, such liberty should be exercised under checks, at least, by the individual.

Moreover, the theory does not expressly capture the possibility of presumed security circumstances, under which the media would be stifled in the performance of its duties. Also related, the theory fails to capture the extent to which individual’s values, interests and preferences may hamper the achievement of press liberty. It sees threats more from external factors like the state, state official institutions and other private individuals or agencies, than from the individual worker or journalist. Thus, individuals form believes, attitudes, preference and values which, without the direct intervention of any third party, may hinder the true realisation of press freedom. Consequently, the Libertarian Theory of the Press fails to address problems that are likely to emerge at the individual level.

Libertarian Theory of the Press, however, projects the liberty of the media to enable them carry out their functions effectively in an ordered society. It, therefore, encourages state agencies, state officials and other private individuals or entities to safeguard the liberty of the media. Accordingly, this theory caters for external factors that may impede the realisation of free media, which is very central to promoting democracy. However, it fails to deal with issues pertaining to individual practitioners or journalists that may undermine the true realisation of press liberty. On the other hand, the Social Responsibility Theory lays upon the media much burden to carry out their duties in an objective, unbiased, fair manner. In this case, Social Responsibility Theory complements the Libertarian Theory of the Press by dealing with challenges that may arise from the individual level.

At the same time, however, it fails to deal with threats external to the media that may undermine its autonomy, that which is better explained by the Libertarian Theory of the Press.
It is, therefore, agreeable to combine these two theories in order to fully appreciate the media in modern democratic governance. Thus, the utilisation of the two theories in the work enables the researcher to extensively tackle issues of media politicisation and democratic consolidation from the perspective of both individual practitioners (internal factors) and external actors.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the above stated objectives, the study has been carried out based on the following research questions.

- What is the relationship between the mass media, politics, and deepening democracy?
- Does the existence of the mass media and media houses in Ghana amidst politicization have any impact on country’s effort at deepening her democracy?
- What is the nature and function of the mass media in promoting deepening/consolidation democracy in Ghana?
- How do mass media and media house activities influence the behaviour of politicians and political leaders (elites) in the Ghanaian society, and how does it influence/deepen democracy?
- How do mass media activities influence the behaviour of the masses (citizenry) in the Ghanaian society, and how does this influence deepen democracy?
- Does the politicization and commercialization of the media affect the performance of the media in the conduct of its responsibilities?
- How do specific media house programs and activities promote effective deepening of democracy in the country?
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a detailed account of the methodological issues utilised for the study. The chapter begins by giving a definition of the research design within which the study has been situated, which is the qualitative research design. The chapter further discusses the qualitative methods that were used in addressing the questions raised for the research. These methods are eventually captured under various sub headings such as the research design, the sampling and sampling technique, sample size, instrumentation and data collection procedures.

4.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Broadly stated, research methods may be understood as all those methods and techniques that are usually used for conducting research. In other words it involves all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his research problem (Kothari, 2004). Research methodology is a step by step approach to solving research problem. In research methodology, one study’s the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them (Kothari, 2004). Research methods do constitute a part of the research methodology. Kothari (2004) has indicated that “the scope of research methodology is wider than that of research methods” and that
“when we talk of research methodology we not only talk of the research methods but also consider the logic behind the methods we use in the context of our research study and explain why we are using a particular method or technique and why we are not using others so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others” (Kothari, 2004, p. 9).

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

To Kothari (2004), research design constitutes decisions regarding what, where, when, how much, etc. which concerns an inquiry or a research study (p.31). According to Creswell (2009), research design provides the structure that guides the researcher to collect and analyse data and as well interpret findings of a research. Consequently, the research design is seen as a frame that guides a researcher in the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings. Yin (2009) posits that research design provides a plan or procedure that a researcher adopts which connects data to the “study’s initial research questions” and its conclusion (p.26). Finally, Babbie (2008) states that research designs help to specify exactly who or what is to be studied when, how, and for what purpose.

The mixed method design is adopted as the most appropriate research design for this study. The basis for which the study adopts the mixed method is that quantitative methods aim at large sample respondents which seek statistical significance whereas qualitative methods involve small respondents and within the content of in-depth studies. Mixed Method Strategy is effectively employed in this study to address the limitations of quantitative and qualitative approaches to understanding social phenomena. Thus, the mixed method research offers practical knowledge based on any possible combination of subjective and objective knowledge in a way that has a bearing on a social problem (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed method is a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell 2012). Thus, it combines description of political phenomena with the desire to exploring to find the reasons
behind some media organizations either active, partial, and or non-involvement partisan politics in Ghana. This will help to gauge its overall implications for democratic deepening or otherwise in the country.

Over the years, studies have shown that social research has the capacity to serve many purposes. However, three of the most common and useful purposes are exploration, description, and explanation. According to Babbie (2008), “although most studies have more than one of these purposes, examining them separately is useful because each has different implications for other aspects of research design” (p.97).

Babbie has indicated that “much of social research is conducted to explore a topic, that is, to start to familiarize a researcher with that topic” (Babbie, 2008:97). Babbie further stated that “this approach typically occurs when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study itself is relatively new” (ibid). Usually, explorative studies attempt to investigate the levels and degrees to which a particular phenomenon exists within a community. It also attempts to find who the actors are in the given phenomenon as well as how widespread the phenomenon is (Babbie, 2008). Moreover, the question of “what kinds of people are active in it?” is all in the domain of the explorative research. Consequently, the adoption of an exploratory approach is justifiable on the basis that; it could help the researcher find, at least, approximate answers to some of the questions raised (ibid). More particularly, it would help address the central questions of the study which include; “to what extent has the seemingly politicization of the mass media affected the role of the media in helping to consolidate/deepen democracy in Ghana?” Or “What has the Ghanaian mass media done within the Fourth Republic to ensure the country’s young and flourishing democracy is deepened, amidst the perceived politicization of the media?
As a matter of fact, since exploratory studies are also appropriate for more persistent phenomena (Babbie, 2008, p.97) and, the study sought to explore the history of the media’s involvement in Ghanaian politics over the years. The researcher therefore met with public officials, media practitioners, as well as the general public to learn the reasons for the current trend of events. The researcher talked to several citizens to get a rough idea of their sentiments on the subject under consideration. Eventually, though this activity would not necessarily be able to yield an accurate picture of citizens’ opinion, it could suggest what the results of a more extensive study might be in the future. Consequently, one of the methods that the researcher utilized in gathering data was by means of focus groups, and guided small-group discussions.

According to Babbie (2008) exploratory studies are most typically done for three purposes namely; to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for better understanding; to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study and; to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study (p.98). He is therefore of the view that exploratory studies are quite valuable in social scientific research. Again, they are essential whenever a researcher is breaking new grounds, and, “they almost always yield new insights into a topic for research” (Babbie, 2008, p.98). However, it must be stated that, exploratory research seldom gives satisfactory definitive answers, the reason being the representative nature of the respondents. Carefully planned questions might not necessarily elicit the required answers. This becomes a challenge to the researcher (Babbie, 2008, p.98).

In attempts to describe and explore the politicization of the media and its implication for democratic deepening, the study was situated in the mixed method research paradigm. The approach therefore helps to rectify the challenges associated with the qualitative design.
4.3 SOURCES OF DATA (DATA GATHERING METHODS)

In-depth interview is one of data gathering methods and it is the repeated face-to-face encounter with informant by researcher, geared towards understanding of their perspectives on their lives and experiences. Such encounters provide accurate information (Bogdan & Taylor, 1998; Kumar, 2011). Interview guides were also utilized in collecting some of the primary data which was based on Simple Random and Stratified Sampling methods for the general citizenry.

Surveys were conducted using these gathering methods to gather responses from respondents. This was to ensure that the opinion as well as attitudes and reasons for certain behaviour are critically investigated. Also, for primary sources of information, the researcher engaged in interviews with some politicians, media practitioners, and journalists. Again, the researcher engaged in focus group discussions with respondents using structured questionnaire.

The secondary sources of information in this study included the use of internet, journal articles, policy documents and library sources as well as other relevant literature such as dailies, press releases, official reports, among others.

4.4 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Research technique for making observations, recording data, processing of data, according to Kothari (2004), is a behavioural instrument. Other research technique on Kothari’s behavioural list includes; recording of notes, analysing content, listening to tape and viewing of films, statistical compilations and manipulations, reference and abstract guides (ibid).
The question of “how far should a sample size be” has engaged the mind of researchers. According to Newman at al. (1998), budget for the study, the objective of the study and the extent to which the recommendation will be implemented are factor determinants.

The sample size of two hundred (200) respondents and fifteen (experts) that were taken flowed from this understanding. In selecting the expert interviewees, purposive sampling was used while random sampling technique was used for the 200 respondents. The use of purposive sampling technique in selecting 15 expert- interviewees is justified by the claim that some subjects are fit for the research compared to others.

Consequently, these interviewees selected for the study were not done by accident or mere coincidence. These respondents were selected for their relative knowledge they have concerning the issue being investigated by the researcher. The researcher found that the wealth of knowledge and expertise they have will be useful to the study hence the choice and the technique adopted. The fifteen interviewees sampled for the study are all enlightened enough to speak to some of the key questions raised by the study. In order to get first-hand information, the researcher embarked on a formal face-to-face (one-on-one) interview with all the fifteen selected interviewees.

On the other hand, the two hundred ‘ordinary citizens’ were chosen using Simple Random Sampling technique. The justification for this is that, all such respondents have their own views and experiences. And, it introduces divergent opinions as far as the role and influence of the media on the political life and participations are concerned.
4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher employed content analysis to do in-depth analysis of the interview data gathered in the study. The rationale for the adoption of content analyses methods is based on the fact that such methods are scientific and eventually produce reliable, replicable and valid results (Krippendorff, 2004). Thus, Krippendorff stresses that “every content analysis requires a context within which the available texts are re-examined.” Therefore, “the analyst must, in effect, construct a world in which the texts make sense and can answer the analyst’s research questions”.

In analysing the survey data, particularly, of the two hundred respondents, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was the major tool for analysis. By this, where necessary, percentage tables, graphs, bar charts and pie charts were used in explaining all the necessary details accrued from the study. Moreover, crosstabs were used in order to establish the perception of the general population, gender, among others.

4.6 ADVANTAGES AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE METHODS ADOPTED

The researcher preferred face-to-face interview over telephone interview. Irvine et al (2012) believe that, with telephone interview, there is no visual encounter and this affect outcome greatly. Important visual cues like body language and facial expression, the nonverbal data, namely, body language and facial expressions, such as the loss of contextual data, including the interviewee’s physical characteristics and the interview setting affects and distorts verbal (spoken) data. Data loss or distorted in any of these respects is inevitably detrimental to the final outcome of the study (Norvick, 2008). It has also been stated that in either a telephone or mail interviews, the researcher may ‘lose much of that empathy, the interpersonal chemistry so vital to generating the motivation and interest of a face-to-face interview’. (Gillham, 2005,
Furthermore, there is the notion that suggests that rapport may be harder to establish in either a telephone or mail interviews because there is reduced potential for ‘symbolic exchanges’ such as sharing food or drink (Chapple, 1999, p.90).

Taking this into consideration, the researcher embarked on a face-face interview as stated earlier so as to avoid the likelihood of biasness and inaccuracies that could be associated with the telephone interview.

Again, as indicated earlier, the in-depth and content analysis methods are scientific methods and, as such, produce reliable, replicable and valid results (Krippendorff, 2000). Hence, the researcher’s choice of adopting these as the primary methods of analysing the data gathered.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

In the conduct of this study, the researcher observed all the required norms of ethical behaviour. Thus, the researcher took all the necessary measures to protect all confidential information about respondents’ personal information. Therefore, the names and identities of interviewees and respondents were not stated in the study. Other ethical measures such as seeking the consent of the respondents before interviewing, explaining the goal of the research and their role as respondents in giving out data were also sought. Additional measures include; seeking the consent of the respondents to record their various responses, using information absolutely for the purpose intended, engaging respondents solely on the basis of the objectives of the research, respecting the views of respondents and not asking any biased or leading questions. The researcher has also duly acknowledged all references used for this study.
CHAPTER FIVE
DATA ANALYSIS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the findings of the study. It is thus dedicated to the discussion of the study. The discussion is placed mainly on the primary data collected from interviews and secondary sources that included relevant articles, books, journals, and other pertinent documents. The findings are presented in a thematically by means of analyzing the objectives of the study and are eventually compared with the extant literature as elaborated in Chapter Two. This subsequently facilitates effective comparison between the findings of the study and the extant literature on the issues under consideration. The appropriate conclusions and recommendations are consequently made in the last chapter based on the analysis and discussions done in this chapter.

People the world over, both enlightened and illiterates, have over the years speculated on how the politicization of the media affects the performance of its responsibilities as a watchdog and voice for the voiceless in society. This speculation has not been limited only to Ghanaians, but also, has been upheld by many scholars and pundits across the globe. Incidentally, this research was undertaken to determine whether the politicization of the Ghanaian media influences the performance of its responsibilities or otherwise. Consequently, the views of two hundred (200) electorates within the Accra Metropolis were gathered through the administration of structured questionnaire. The researcher also interacted with some key political actors, journalists, and media practitioners within the national capital, Accra.
5.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The general citizenry (particularly the electorates, minority groups and the voiceless) are usually the people who the media in any democratic setting are expected to be protecting through their numerous activities. A fair appreciation of the demographic data of these individuals and groups are therefore very important in order to help us make a valid and fair analysis of their views and responses. This is important because these details are the characteristics that are often treated as independent variables that often influence the responses, observations and opinions of these respondents.

Given the fact that the voting age in Ghana is eighteen (18) years and above, the study pegged the minimum age limit to 18 years for respondents. Consequently, all 200 hundred respondents have attained the voting age of 18 and above. The details are shown in the table below.

Table 5.1 Age of Respondents (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41+</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

As can be seen from the table above, 38 respondents representing 19% of the respondents were within the ages of 18-21 years. The rest of the details can be inferred from the same table. The implication that can be drawn from the age distribution is that in reference to the study, the age distribution confirms the authenticity of the work since all the 200 respondents answered the question and is all adults within the voting age in Ghana.
With regard to the sex of respondents, the distribution was skewed in favor of the male. This was not deliberate but resulted from the mode of distribution of the questionnaire. However, the sexual preferences of the respondents do not affect their responses to the issues raised by the study. As can be seen from Table 5.2, 69% of the respondents are male whereas 31% are female. The details are shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Sex of Respondents (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

It is also worth noting that of the 200 hundred respondents, 178 are registered voters and only 22 are not yet registered. This represents 89% and 11% respectively. The data also revealed that 89% of the respondents are registered voters and that 11% of them are not registered voters as at the time of the study. The detail is outlined in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Registered and Unregistered Voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

In a study of this nature, knowing the educational background of the respondents is very important. In this sense, more often than not, the educational level of the individual influences their levels of understanding, especially, when most of the discussions in the Ghanaian media
are extensive. The data in Table 5.4 reveals that only 4.5% of the respondents have no formal education, 10.5% have attained Primary/JSS education, 38% for Secondary education, 21.5% for College/Training, 24% for Tertiary and 1% for other forms of education. The details are shown in the table below.

Table 5.4. Formal Education (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/JSS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/Training</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

The distribution of respondents’ occupation is depicted in Figure 5.1. The data from Figure 5.1 clearly shows that in terms of occupation: 6% are unemployed of the total respondents, 26% are Self-employed, 25.5% are Students, 21.5% are with the Public or Civil Service and 13.5% are professionals in various fields of endeavor.
5.2. Screening Questions (the Respondent and the Media)

The point must be reiterated that the respondents’ ability to respond appropriately to the questions raised by the study is intertwined with their ability to follow and even sometimes participate in the activities of the Ghanaian media. Consequently, the study sought to screen the respondents by way of asking whether they listened to radio, watched television and read newspapers. The frequency or rate at which they participated in such activities was also sought. Interestingly, 176 of the respondents representing 88% responded “Yes” to the question pertaining to the act of listening to the radio. The data from the field indicates that 184 of the respondents (92%) watch television. With reference to the act of reading newspapers, the data reveals that 62% of the respondents read the various newspapers in the Ghanaian market. The details are shown in Figure 5.2.
Figure 5.2 Do you listen, watch or read the news from the following media outlets?

Figure 5.2, therefore, presents the high levels of subscription to the media by the Ghanaian public with overwhelming majority of respondents following news from various media-radio, television and newspapers.

Again, the study also sought to know how often respondents did listen to radio, watch television and read the newspapers. Figure 5.3 present the distribution of respondent subscription to various media on ‘Daily’, ‘Weakly’ or “Once a while”. The data, from Figure 5.3 shows that 71% of respondents listen to radio on “Daily” basis, 15.5% indicated “Once a while” while 7% indicated “weekly”. In a similar manner, Figure 5.3, shows 65% of the respondents indicated they watch television on “Daily” basis, 11.5% on a “Weekly” basis, and 16.5% do so “Once a while”. Also, only 32.5% of the respondents read newspapers on “Daily” basis, whereas 35.5% have indicated that they only read the newspapers “Once in a while”, only 8% read newspapers “Weekly.”
Table 5.3 clearly shows high levels of subscription by respondents to radio as the major source of news, followed by television, then newspapers. Thus people tend to listen to radio more hours on daily basis than watching television or reading newspaper. The findings of the study are clearly consistent with other major credible studies on the media in Ghana. Again, this is not surprising following wide distribution of radio across all segment of Ghanaian society (Smith and Temin, 2001; Arthur, 2010; Frempong-Mansoh, 2012).

The study also sought to know the number of hours respondents spent listening to radio, reading newspapers and watching television in a day. This was to help appreciate the extent to which they are involved and get informed by such media. The details of the responses are summarized in the table below. As can be seen from the table below, in terms of the number of hours spent on the patronage of the media, the radio tops the list. That is to say that more people listen to
the radio for more hours as compared to the watching of the television or the reading of newspapers.

Table 5.5 Patronage Hours for Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours spend listening to radio</th>
<th>Hours spend reading the newspaper</th>
<th>Hours spend watching the television</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3hrs</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6hrs</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10hrs</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

As Table 5.5 shows, in terms of patronage hours, 51.5% of the respondents spent 1 to 3 hours a day listening to radio. Within this same hour-range, 60% read newspapers and 60.5% watched television. Also, within the hour range 4 to 6 hours, 10.5% listened to radio, 10% read newspapers and 25.5% watched television. The table further shows that, 35% of the respondents spent between 7 to 10 hours listening to the radio while 6% and 8.5% spent this same hour range reading newspapers and watching television respectively. Again, Table 5.5 further supports the assertion of high level of subscription to radio by the Ghanaians with 35% patronage of radio on 7 to 10 hours on daily basis. However, a significant minority of 24% did not respond to their patronage hours to newspaper reading.

5.3.1 Respondents’ Knowledge on Democratic Governance

In order to ascertain the knowledge that Ghanaians (respondents) possess on the concept of democratic governance, respondents were asked to explain in simple terms how well they understood the concept of democratic governance in their own words. The chart below gives a pictorial illustration of the level of understanding of the various respondents.
From Figure 5.4, it could be inferred that 58.5% of respondents stated they had a “Better Understanding” of the concept of democratic governance while, 22.5% said they had a “Fair Idea” of democratic governance. This sums up those with much understanding of the concept to 81%. However, 15% of the respondents said the concept of democratic governance was “Not Convincing”. Moreover, 4% were unable to respond to this question. The implication from this aspect of the data is that an overwhelming majority (81%) of the respondents are more likely to give accurate responses to most of the questions raised. This stems from the fact that they already have a clearer understanding of what democratic governance means. Accordingly, respondents are more likely to know what activities of the various media would contribute to either strengthening or weakening efforts at deepening democracy.
5.3.2 Awareness of the Role of the Media and Democratic Deepening

Of the 200 respondents, overwhelming majority of respondents (183) representing 91.5% possess knowledge of the role the media is expected to play in enhancing democratic deepening in the country. On the other hand, a minority of 15 respondents representing 7.5% responded that they do not know the role that the media plays in promoting and deepening democratic governance. The pie chart below shows a graphical presentation of the details.

![Pie Chart](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/)

Figure 5.5 Respondents Understanding of the Role of the Media
Source: Field Data, 2015

It can be inferred from the pie chart (Figure 5.5) that an overwhelming majority of the respondents, and, for that matter, Ghanaians, are very much aware of the role that the various media houses are expected to be playing to deepen democratic governance in Ghana. Thus, it is evident from the data that, such level of knowledge puts the average Ghanaian in a position to demand much from the media, being it electronic or the print, on its roles in the democratic governance of the country.
Figure 5.6 gives the distribution of Ghanaians views on the politicization of the media. From Figure 5.6, nearly 7 in 10 respondents representing more than two-third of all respondents were of the view that the Ghanaian media has been politicized. Whereas nearly 2 in 10 respondents said they are “Not Too Sure” whether the media in Ghana has been politicized. Lastly, a little over 1 in 10 Ghanaians believe that the media in the country in their candid view has not been politicized. The chart below details the views of the respondents.

As can be inferred from the chart above, an overwhelming majority of the respondents confirm the perception that the Ghanaian media has been politicized. This assertion was further confirmed by the interviews. To quote the words of a Deputy Director of Communication of the ruling party (NDC):

‘I am sorry, I don’t know of any media house in Ghana that I can point to and say they are neutral. They are much politicized. They are very political and a lot happens behind the scenes. All the things that are tabled before discussions on radio stations are motivated politically. You know when you tune in to a particular radio station and you hear the kind of discussion that is going on there, quickly you can tell where they are
coming from. We know of instances even where editors and host of programs meet at places and orchestrate and plan the things they want to discuss. Ghanaian media is heavily politicized’ (Interview, 2015).

From Figure 5.7, majority of respondents representing 58% indicated they either disagree or strongly disagree that a relatively politicized media has the ability to enhance democratic governance than a neutral media. On the other hand, a minority of 39% of respondents also stated that they either agree or strongly agree that a relatively politicized media has the ability to enhance democratic governance than a neutral media.

The argument is that a politicized media may be able to give extensive media coverage. Hence, the publicity regarding a particular issue may be overwhelmingly good but the issues may be tilted to the advantage of the group that owns the particular media covering the discourse.
Thus the politicized television and radio stations, newspapers and internet sources actually may claim to be doing their part to promote democratic governance in one way or the other, but the reality is that they may be pushing for their parochial agenda of a particular party or individual.

As a matter of fact, a larger majority of 84.5% of the respondents have indicated that they are aware of such politically-biased and lopsided talk shows, forums and discussions such “Boiling Point”, “Kokonsa” etc. The chart below details how respondents take the various views and comments that usually emanate from such media platforms.

![Bar Chart](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh/)

Figure 5.8 Perception of Views on Politicized Media
Source: Field Data, 2015

From Figure 5.8, 4 in 10 respondents do not take the views expressed on some of these politicized media seriously. In addition, 3 in 10 of the respondents perceive the views presented on such platforms as nothing but “Just an opinion of the panel”. This gives a hint of a large majority of 7 in 10 respondents who do not seriously regard the views expressed on such platforms. However, a minority of respondents of nearly 2 in 10 Ghanaians are of the opinion
that such views should be taken “Very Serious” with almost 1 in 10 Ghanaians also stating that such views are “a true position of the parties they represent”.

Consequently, the kind of influence that these programmes have on the respondents’ political behaviour is as varied as the views they expressed concerning those programmes and their panel. Figure 5.9 presents distribution of respondents’ views regarding the influence of these politicized programmes on their behaviour. A clear majority of 74% respondents indicated that their behaviour are either ‘not influenced’ or ‘not really influenced’ by the programmes they follow on those politicized media. However, only 23.5% confirm that the programmes affect their political behaviour.

A further probe by the study reveals that the programmes aired and promoted by the politicized media do not affect respondents’ voting behaviour and acceptance of election results as well as the tolerance of divergent views in the country. This detail is outlined in the Table 5.6.

Table 5. 6 Do the programs and activities of the media, especially political talk shows in any way affect your voting behaviour, acceptance of election results, and tolerance of diverse views?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Necessarily</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the times</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

As can be seen from the table above, over 50% of the respondents expressed the believe that activities of the politicized media do not affect their political behaviour with about 26% indicating that such programs and activities do affect their behaviour in terms of voting, etc. However, 22% of the respondents have also stated that the activities of the Ghanaian politicized media do “not necessarily” affect their political behaviour.

With regard to the question raised above, a Deputy Communication Director of the NDC has reiterated that:

> In relation to acceptance of results and the toleration, I think the media has become a double-edged sword and that’s what the media has become. The same medium could be used to bring about peace, bring about unity and development. The same medium could be used to bring confusion and chaos (Interview, 2015).

In a related question, the data has shown that for majority of the respondents, the activities and programmes of either the perceived or actual politicized media houses such as Radio Gold, Oman FM, the Daily Guide, the Democrat, Crusading Guide, etc. do not pose challenges to them in the conduct of their responsibilities as citizens and electorates. Respondents have indicated that some of these programmes rather gives them “better understanding” of the issues.

From Table 5.7, majority of 62% of respondents expressed that programmes from perceived politicized media do not affect them in discharging their responsibilities as citizens and as
electorates. On other hand, 29% of respondents said they are affected by the activities from those media. Details for this information are shown in the frequency table below.

Table 5. Do the programs of some perceived politicized media such as Radio Gold, Oman FM, the Daily Guide, Ghanaian Democrat, Crusading Guide and others give you any challenges in the conduct of your duties and responsibilities as a citizen and an electorate in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

5.3.3 The Mass Media as a Watchdog

On the all-important question of how the Ghanaian media has performed on its role as a watchdog in the country’s political dispensation, the details of the chart below reveals of the responses of the respondents. From Figure 5.10, a large majority of respondents representing 61% either agrees or strongly agree that the Ghanaian media has actually performed its role as watchdog in the country’s political dispensation. However, minority of 38% of respondents either disagrees or strongly disagrees with this claim.
Figure 5.10 presents the distribution of respondents’ views in relation to the media’s role towards the consolidation of democratic rule in the country. From Figure 5.10 an overwhelming majority of respondents 77% are of the view that the Ghanaian media has helped in deepening Ghana’s democracy. This is notwithstanding the fact that, 67% of the respondents believe that the Ghanaian media has been politicized as indicated in Figure 5.4.
The assertion that the Ghanaian media has been politicized is based on the premise that, the nature of the broadcast and political discussions by such media houses betrays their neutrality and, the same can be said of their counterparts in the newspaper segment. It must be reiterated that, the politicized nature of the media in Ghana, according to the findings, does not necessarily make it anti-democratic. Hence, such claims in some quarters that, the politicization of the media has become an ‘antidemocratic force which works against the deepening of our democracy” could not be supported by this study.

According to Figure 5.12, majority of respondents representing 51% either disagree or strongly disagree with the assertion that the media has become an anti-democratic force which works against the deepening of our democracy. Also, a minority of 37% of respondents either agrees or strongly agrees that the work of the media is undermining the growth of the country’s democracy. Thus 51% disagree that the media has become an ‘antidemocratic force which
works against the deepening of our democracy”. Twenty of the respondents, representing 11%, however, did not respond to the question.

Respondents also expressed various views about how they believe the political environment in the country has influenced the operations of the media. In fact, respondents were largely divided on the influence of the political environment on the activities of media in Ghana.

Table 5.8 How has the political environment influenced the activities of the mass media in Ghana?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positively well</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately well</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No idea</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 5.8, 4 in 10 (40%) respondents expressed the view that the political environment either moderately well or positively well influence. On the other hand, a little over 4 in 10 (45%) respondents also stated that the political environment negatively influence the activities of the media.
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The primary objective of this study was to find out how the activities of media houses in Ghana have contributed to deepening her democracy amidst the perceived politicization of the media. The study thus looked at the role that some media houses; including both the print and electronic, play in deepening democracy in Ghana despite the perception of politicization.

In order to ascertain the respondents’ knowledge of the role the media plays in deepening democracy in Ghana, the question “What is your understanding of the term democratic governance?” was posed to the respondents. This question was followed by another key question “Are you aware of the role of the media plays in enhancing democratic governance?” The responses to these question by both the respondents of the questionnaire as well as the views expressed by the experts, journalists, politicians, etc. through the interviews reveals that virtually all the respondents understand what it means to say that a democracy has been deepened. Most importantly, they also know the role that the media in any given society is expected to play to ensuring the deepening of democracy. For instance, according to the Head of Administrative Unit of the National Media Commission “the media has contributed to the deepening of democracy in our country and one can’t deny the fact about that, and they are playing their role well” (Interview, 2015).

As a matter of fact, an overwhelming percentage of the respondents and all the fifteen interviewees drawn from media houses including private and state owned, regulators and political parties assert that, to a very large extent, the media landscape in Ghana has been highly
politicized. Some interviewees have stated categorically that “there are some radio stations which have been set up to project or promote the ideologies of a certain or specific political party” and that “you will find out that even with the newspapers, they have been sharply divided into political lines except a few who are doing a neutral job” (Interview, 2015). The Head of Department (Broadcast and Journalism) of the GIJ who also happens to be a Communication Director of the NDC has affirmed this assertion by indicating that:

“…you will find out that about 80-90 per cent of the media houses that we have belong to politicians and if you look at the determinants of our news, me as a media man, I can tell you that the media ownership affects the media houses role. They mostly use these media houses to propagate their message and if it is done properly then it can affect the voting patterns and acceptance of results” (Interview, 2015).

The study consequently finds that the seemingly politicization of the media has impact on the performance the media because it does not enable them to be objective in the work they do. And, this can really affect their activities and the country as a whole. One Managing Editor from a renowned private radio station based in Accra was bold enough to confess that the politicization of the media really influences him. This interviewee in responding to the question “Has the seemingly politicized nature of the media have any significant impact on their performance on it role to deepen our democracy?” stated that:

it does affect our performance because if am being paid by my owner who is for party A, I have it at the back of my mind that even though the owner hasn’t told me that or maybe I shouldn’t do this, I am human. So I will think that if I don’t do what my owner wants, I will lose my job so I need to do something that will satisfy him. So yes those things cloud my objectivity because when I know that what am doing is not in the right direction. But because we are aligned to this particular party, we have to tone to the line of the party involved (Interview, 2015).

With regard to the question of whether the programs of the perceived politicized media give challenges to the conduct of various responsibilities and duties as a citizen and an electorate, the Head of Administrative Unit of the National Media Commission had this to say:
No its does not, but as a media regulator the challenge I will have is the fear that if these perceived politicized media are not controlled, they will raise the tension in the country in an uncivil manner, and when their programs are a threat to national security, especially during election. But apart from that I don’t think I have a problem with them (Interview, 2015).

There is however a mixed feeling among some interviewees as far as the role of the media as a serving as the voice of the voiceless is concerned. One interviewee has consequently argued that:

Look at the advocacy role they (the media) play, and you know we can’t all go on the media or not everybody can have the access to be heard on television set or the radio stations or to make people hear our voice. So the media, we serve as the voice for the voiceless. There are certain issues if not for the media certain people will never know. In its role, the media can be an educator, entertainer, and an informer. If not for the media you and I will have never know Ebola, and just look at the way they educate us on it. Though the media has been polarized, they are serving the voiceless in society (Interview, 2015).

Another has indicated that:

“we do stories that touch or bring out the concerns of the ordinary person who without the media will not get the opportunity to voice out his or her worries or feelings across. So the media is there to intercede for the poor and under privileged in the society” (Interview, Joy FM, Broadcast Journalist, 2015).

The study also finds that the media raises important issues that are currently affecting the country. Thus, the media is an agenda setter. That is to say that the media to a large extent is not only about politics. On the contrary, they raise issues of corrupt acts, developmental issues, as well as health issues. Consequently, the way they talk about cholera, raise issue about school children studying under trees, etc. all attest to the diverse roles the Ghanaian media plays in the country. Recently, Joy FM did a story on leaders who were not supposed to be where they are if we should rate them base on merit. But unfortunately such leaders are occupying those
positions (Field Interview, 2015). Mention is also made of Anas Aremeyaw and the Tiger Team and the investigative journalism that they embark upon. Their work usually raises issues that affect the country in positive ways and goes a long way in deepening democracy in the country.

Moreover, the media according to the findings of the study has performed its watchdog role, notwithstanding, the politicization. Thus, as interaction with the NMC reveals that, the media has exposed a lot of corruption, especially, in the government sector. Thus, through the revelations of the media, some corrupt government officials have gone to prison because they were found guilty (Field Interview, 2015). However, one interviewee has described the Ghanaian media as “a lap dog, that’s a dog that sits on our laps”. According to this interviewee, “when we have a media house defending NPP and NDC, I mean the watch dog role is being played, but not on an appreciable level. There is more room for improvement and it all boils down to this politicization” (Field Interview, 2015). The News Editor of The Ghanaian Times responding to the question of the media’s role as a watchdog opines that:

It depends on the length you are going. It’s yes to the extent that we have exposed some wrongs which in its own way have helped in the democratic development of the country. On the other way round, the media have also peddled falsehood which is unethical and unacceptable. So, yes, to some extent they have performed their watchdog role, and, in some cases, they have caused more harm to the society than good (Field Interview, 2015).

Upon suggesting that the Ghanaian media has become an anti-democracy force that works against democracy, most of the interviewees vehemently opposed this perception. According to one interviewee:

... you can’t say that. The media is a tool that is helping us advance the deepening of our democracy. The media is playing a very good role, educating people; the ills of politicians, the media exposes them. Even during elections look at the role that the media plays. The media helps us to know what is happening here or there. Even before and after election, see the role the media plays. So how can one say that the media has become anti-democratic force? You can’t say that, it is a tool that is
helping the deepening of our democracy. The media is even making people to understand democracy more. It is just that their excesses are very bad or becomes violence and sometimes their language is very flaw (Interview, Head of Administrative Unit, National Media Commission, 2015).

The Ghanaian media, the findings show, has become the means by which the people get information and, it has to a large extent, become authoritative on the way it delivers information to the public. And, as other studies have attested to, most people actually make their minds based on what they hear on radio, see on television and read in the newspapers or online. So the media, especially the radio in Ghana has become the main tool for reaching out to larger audience and based on this the people decide on who to vote for during elections and also take other politically related decisions. This further explains why many political talk shows happen at peak times on radio. In the morning, afternoons, evenings and even weekends, political talk shows have dominated our entire radio life span.

The extent to which the political talk shows influence the Ghanaian population, however, depends on the ability of the individual to analyse what the panellists are saying. One truth is that, sometimes, commercial gains force the media to neglect its social core responsibility (Interview, 2015). This calls for discernment on the part of the audience as all the politicians are in the media to market themselves and their policies.

In connection with the commercialization of the media, virtually all interviews are of the view that “the media has to survive” and to do so means “commercialization is part of the media” though that should not be the ultimate aim (Interviews, 2015). The study finds that some media houses are surviving because some people are helping them to survive else they will fold up. Thus, even some newspapers cannot afford the cost of production let alone to pay appreciable
salary to their workers. According to one media practitioner, the only way such media houses can survive is “to align themselves with a political party who will take care of their overhead cost” (Interview, 2015). This situation is, however, very dangerous because when it happens this way, journalists and media houses are lured into selling their professionalism, competence and credibility to that political party paying the bills. Consequently, one political party representative has argued that “our media is more money conscious than anything”. According to him, “it is money that has come to occupy the conscience of our media. They have no conscience now and it is very sad” (Interview, 2015). This particular interviewee also believes that “a democratic media is a media that allows for the true representation of the very character and values of society to be represented on it platforms” (ibid).

The view of another political party representative and that of the party he represents is that the Ghanaian media is not democratic enough and, as such, does not even have the capacity to help deepen democracy since they have aligned themselves with the two major political parties- NDC and NPP. This notwithstanding, another political party is of the view that:

the fact that they (the media) stays wake sometimes to the next morning just to keep, monitor and watch over the figures that are coming in and feed it to the public (during general elections) shows that the media is helping in the deepening of democracy in Ghana…. So, the media ordinarily has played that effective mandate of informing, educating and entertaining (Interview, 2015).

The foregoing discussion and analysis confirms the assertion that the media in any given society has a very important duty or responsibility of serving as the fourth estate of the realm or the ‘fourth arm of government’. It consequently has the responsibility of serving as the voice of the voiceless in society and also to be watchdog over the activities of the government. Another important function is to inform and educate the citizenry. It performs other important functions that are not the subject of this study. It must therefore be stated clearly that, the
findings and discussions of the study confirms that, notwithstanding the politicization of the Ghanaian media, it still has the ability and, in fact, does perform these responsibilities.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0. INTRODUCTION

The six previous chapters of this study focused on the background to the study, statement of the problem, the objectives, purpose and significance of the study. A review of relevant literature on media and the description of the context of the study have been discussed. Also, the appropriate research methods adopted for the study, and analysis, and inferences that can be drawn from the analysis were considered. This chapter presents a summary of the findings from the study.

7.1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Ghanaian media has not become an anti-democracy force that works against democracy. Instead, the media, especially the radio in Ghana has become the main tool for reaching out to larger audience and based on this the people decide on who to vote for during elections and also take other politically related decisions.

The activities of the media have really facilitated the deepening of democracy in Ghana. They do this through educating people about their rights and privileges, educating them about the election processes and procedures, putting the government and ministers on their toes, informing the citizens about what is happening around the world politically, etc. In sum, the media raises important issues that are currently affecting the country and has thus, become an agenda setter.
The study observed that the politicization of the media does not pose any significant challenge to the citizens in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. This is against the background that the extent, to which the political talk shows influence the Ghanaian population, depends on the ability of the individual panellist to analyse the issue at stake for citizens to understand.

It must be noted that the study confirms that notwithstanding the politicization, and commercialization, the media has been able to perform its responsibility as a watchdog over the activities of the state (government). Consequently, the media has been able to deliver on a key function of providing civic education to the Ghanaian populace. As some studies have shown, unless citizens have accurate and adequate information on all (if not most) of the issues and problems confronting them, they will be inept to take rational decisions. Thus, without such information and education from the media, citizens will neither be able to comprehend the day-to-day workings of the government nor be able to participate in the governance process (Opumie-Ngoa, 2010). To participate meaningfully in political life and have a better understanding of the actions and activities of government, citizens must be properly informed. Otherwise, the governed will not be able to hold governors accountable and, this hinders democratic deepening, hence, the responsibility of the media to educate and enlighten citizens (Opumie-Ngoa, 2010).

The Ghanaian media plays an advocacy role as shown by the findings of the study. By gaining access to the news media and outlining problems from a public policy perspective, citizens and community groups are able to apply pressure purposefully to key decision makers and duty bearers to change environments. Media advocacy consequently aids in creating a trained group of media advocates and thus builds the capacity of the community for further change and the deepening of democracy (Wallack & Dorfman, 2014).
Most Ghanaian media houses are surviving because some people are helping them to survive else they will fold up. In fact, some newspapers are unable to afford the cost of production and this eventually leads to their over reliance on the major political parties and elites who, in turn, influence their objectivity and compromise their professionalism in the long run.

The lack of funds also leads to excessive commercialization of the media. The media consequently sells their airtime and space to the affluent in society. These are usually politicians and parties that are only interested in achieving their parochial objectives, hence, most audience are usually influenced unduly, especially the vulnerable in society. The media is thus highly constrained in giving voice to the voiceless since they need money to operate and stay alive.

7.2. CONCLUSION

Fundamental to the Libertarian Theory of the Press (which is one of the theories that underpin the study) is the idea that a democracy can flourish and ultimately be consolidated only where the press have created an open marketplace of ideas and acted as watchdogs of the government in the state. Moreover, literature on democratic consolidation argues that consolidation occurs, when majority of citizens develop a culture that is receptive to democratic norms, beliefs and behaviour (Diamond, 1999). The study established that the Ghanaian Press, despite all its numerous challenges, especially, the excessive politicization, creates an open market of ideas and consequently act as a watchdog over the government. It consequently reveals the ills of governance despite the politicization and as confirms various studies that uses the Libertarian theory as a basis for assessing the role of the media in democratic deepening.
Thus the theory which contrasts the authoritarian approach to media and, in the case of Ghana, puts the ownership of the media into the hands of private individuals, though, at times polarizes the system, also serves as an effective means of checking governmental excesses and allowing for several preferences for the citizenry. The Ghanaian media, thus, to a large extent, serves the people as advocated by the proponents of the theory (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1959). This consequently leads to the deepening of democracy in the long run.

Social responsibility theory of the press also posits that there must be a free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press should be discussed in public panel and that the media should accept any obligation, being it public interference or professional self-regulations or both. The theory therefore lies between the authoritarian and libertarian theories of the press because it gives total media freedom in one hand but the external controls in another.

Based on the application of this theory, the study confirms that the absence of censorship in Ghana for the past few years has given the Ghanaian media a vast room to operate and to be the voice of the voiceless in the society. However, this has also led to the fledging of the media landscape with many politically affiliated media houses that are usually unethical, unprofessional and consequently bias in their reportage. These media houses also lack objectivity in their conduct and usually hold lopsided views depending on where their affiliations are. The adverse effect of their action is that they usually ‘misinform’ or deceive their listeners. Eventually, they lose sight of their social responsibility as the proponents of the theory have outlined. It thus takes the discerning listener or reader to decipher between truth and cheap propaganda.
7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends transparency in the ownership of media houses. The transparency in ownership will assist the audience in rationalizing the kinds of information they receive from those sources. In fact, the study established that, majority of respondents indicated that they are aware of media houses that are aligned or owned by political parties or party officials and, they are not influenced by the activities of such media. Accordingly, awareness of ownership by citizens is likely to mitigate any undemocratic practices or values propagated by any of such media house.

The study recommends that in terms of their political programs the media houses should introduce third party seat advocate that would make conscious effort to reduce the bipartisan nature of the media and instead make it more representative in their political discussions and coverage. This is more or less like an affirmative action to ensure that we do not have just two political parties (NDC and NPP) representing the Ghanaian at any point in time on any of their media programs. Thus, a third seat that would be occupied by any of the other political parties should be made available at all times. This conscious effort, if accepted and implemented by the media, will gradually sink into the minds of the people that we have more than just two choices. And, more importantly, will help neutralise excessive partisanship that characterise political debate.

The study also recommends that the Ghanaian media should be socially responsible aimed at encouraging practitioners to uphold their professional integrity and ethics beyond monetary considerations. It is recommend that the media must be circumspect especially when dealing
with subject matters or issues that are inflammatory by nature- issues of religion, tribe or ethnicity, among others.

Being a journalist requires that one is very intelligent. It means that the media practitioner or journalist must be very critical. And, being very critical means not just reporting what you are told, instead, have the duty to interrogate what you are told in order to give the appropriate and accurate report. Journalists in this country must have a stake in the affairs of this country, and they should have a view of what is happening in this country. Thus, it is recommended that journalists and media houses on the whole move away from that presumption that ‘journalism comprises a bunch of goods who only report what they have been told’. A true journalist processes what he is told and then based on that investigates the subject under consideration.

Objectivity, truth, honesty and discipline are the hallmarks of any effective and successful journalistic enterprise. Once you compromise or you throw away objectivity and honesty, you lose your credibility and effectiveness for that matter. It is thus recommended that to the media that no matter the influence, which may come, and the sources they may come from, they should be objective and go by the ethics of the profession. This would consequently enhance their credibility.

Moreover, journalists and all media practitioners who work in the various media organizations ought to be trained so that they would know that they have limitations. The point must be reiterated that even freedom of expression is not absolute. Press freedom has boundaries and journalists have to respect those boundaries if the true meaning of democratic deepening is to be realized. In effect, media houses are entreated to make sure that the people they engage for
work are given the kind of training that will make them to approach issues professionally rather than resorting to triviality.

Furthermore, the programs of the various media houses should suit the ordinary person. This is to ensure that the media performs its role effectively as the voice of the voiceless in society. That is to say, the media should project the views and aspirations of the people, not just the few rich and elites in the community.

The study recommends that media houses in Ghana should offer better remuneration and conditions of services for their staff, especially the journalists. This, if done effectively, would go a long way in reducing the tendency of such employee to receive bribes, which, in effect, affects their reportage and, hence, the organisation's credibility and democratic deepening in the long run. In addition to this, the state should endeavour to put in place appropriate measures to build the capacity of state owned media houses and possibly extend same to the private media houses. This could be in the form of providing logistics and other assistance to the media houses as well as providing tools or resources to work effectively.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Interview Guide (Media & Politics)

1. Do you agree that the Ghanaian mass media serves as the voice of the voiceless in society?
2. Do you think that the programs and activities of the media, especially political talk shows in any way affect the voting behaviour, acceptance of election results, and toleration of diverse views?
3. How serious should people take the views that are aired by panellists on political talk shows and programs?
4. Do you think that the Ghanaian media has been politicized? What reason do you have to support your answer?
5. In your candid view, do you think that the seemingly politicisation of the media in the country has any significant impact on the performance of its role in the Ghana’s democracy?
6. Do you think the mass media currently raises specific important issues affecting the country?
7. Do you think the Mass media has performed its “watchdog” role in the Ghanaian political dispensation? If yes how? If no, why?
8. Do you agree that the media has become “antidemocratic force which works against the deepening of our democracy”?
9. Do you think that the Ghanaian media has been commercialized? If yes how?
10. How has the political environment influenced the activities of the mass media in Ghana?
11. Has the activities of the Mass media helped in deepening Ghana’s democracy? If yes, name some of these activities?
12. What recommendations do you have for the various Media Houses in terms of their operations and programs?
13. Do you have any recommendations for the government, other political elites and various actors as well as the general citizenry?
14. Do the programs of some perceived politicized media such as Radio Gold, Oman FM, the Daily Guide, Ghanaian Democrat, Crusading Guide and others give you any challenges in the conduct of your duties and responsibilities as a citizen and an electorate in any way?

15. What are some of the ways you can recommend to improve the media’s role in deepening the Ghanaian democracy?

16. On the Scale of ten (10) how would you evaluate the general performance of the mass media in Ghana…………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
APPENDIX II

Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELECTORATES

Introduction
The researcher is interested in knowing how the politicization of the Ghanaian media has influenced it in the performance of its various responsibilities and how that in effect impacts on democratic deepening in Ghana. Your honest view would be very essential in this study. Please, kindly assist the researcher by providing answers to the following questions. Please tick (/) where necessary. The concealment of your cherished responses assured.

Demographic Data

1. Age.... (1) 18-21 (2) 22-25 (3) 26-30 (4) 31-35 (5) 36-40 (6) 41+
2. Sex...... (1) Male (2) Female
3. Are you a registered voter? (1) Yes (2) No
4. Formal Education;
   (1) None (2) Primary/JSS (3) Secondary (4) College/Training (5) Tertiary (6) Other
5. Occupationation:
   (1) Professional (2) Public/Civil Servant (3) Student (4) Self-employed
   (5) Unemployed (6) Other
### Screening Question

6. Do you listen, read or watch the following media outlets?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If yes, how often do you listen to radio, read newspaper and watch television?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Once a while</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How many hours do you spend listening to /reading/watching the television/radio/newspaper?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>1-3hrs</th>
<th>4-6hrs</th>
<th>7-10hrs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
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<td>Television</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Awareness of the Role of the Media and Democratic Deepening**

9. What is your understanding of the term democratic governance?

10. Are you aware of the role of the media plays in enhancing democratic governance? (1) Yes (2) No

11. In your candid view do you think that the Ghanaian media has been politicized?

   (1) Yes  (2) No  (3) Not too sure

12. A relatively politicized media has the ability to enhance democratic governance than a neutral media. (1) Agree (2) Disagree (3) Strongly Agree (4) Strongly Disagree

13. Are you aware of programs such as ‘Boiling Point’, ‘Konkonsa’, etc?

   (1) Yes  (2) No  (3) Not all of them

14. How serious do you take the views that are aired on such programs?

   (1) Very serious  (2) Not too serious  (3) Just an opinion of the panel  (4) A True Position of the parties they represent
15. Do these programs influence your political behaviour in any way?

(1) Yes        (2) No       (3) Not Really

16. Do the programs and activities of the media, especially political talk shows in any way affect your voting behaviour, acceptance of election results, and tolerance of diverse views?

(1) Yes        (2) No       (3) Not Necessarily       (4) Most of the times

17. The Mass media has performed its “watchdog” role in the Ghanaian political dispensation?

(1) Strongly Agree    (2) Agree    (3) Disagree    (4) Strongly Disagree

18. Do you agree that the Ghanaian mass media serves as the voice of the voiceless in society?

(1) Strongly Agree    (2) Agree    (3) Disagree    (4) Strongly Disagree

19. Do the programs of some perceived politicized media such as Radio Gold, Oman FM, the Daily Guide, Ghanaian Democrat, Crusading Guide and others give you any challenges in the conduct of your duties and responsibilities as a citizen and an electorate in any way?

(1) Yes        (2) No

20. If your answer to Question 20 is YES, how and where did that happen?..........................................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................................

21. Do you believe that the activities of the Mass media has helped in Deepening Ghana’s democracy?

(1) Yes        (2) No

22. Do you think that the Ghanaian media has been politicized?
(1) Yes  (2) No

23. What reason do you have to support the answer you gave in Question 23?
........................................................................................................................................

24. Do you agree that the media in Ghana has become an antidemocratic force which works against the deepening of our democracy?

(1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly Disagree

25. How has the political environment influenced the activities of the mass media in Ghana?
........................................................................................................................................

26. What recommendations do you have for the various Media Houses in terms of their operations and programs?
........................................................................................................................................

27. Do you have any recommendations for the government, other political elites and various actors as well as the general citizenry?
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