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CHANGING FORMS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND VOTER CHOICES IN GHANA'S ELECTIONS, 1992-2008

BY

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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis is, with the exception of specific quotations and references attributed to specified sources, my own original work, which I undertook at the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of the undersigned. I bear personal responsibility for any limitation concerning the study.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

The memory of my parents –Kofi Asah-Asante and Agnes Oforiwa Sabu —whose support and direction have brought me this far;

My wife, Akosua Asah-Asante, for her encouragement, literary contribution and emotional prop which were inestimable; and

My children, Kwasi Asah-Asante, Afua Oforiwa Asah-Asante, Kwaku Frempong Asah-Asante, who are required to go beyond what I have done.

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

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ACRONYMS

ACDR	Association of Committees for the Defence of the Revolution
ACP	Action Congress Party
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AG	Attorney-General
APC	All People's Congress
APP	All People's Party
APRP	All People's Republican Party
ARPB	Association of Recognised Professional Bodies
ARPS	Aborigines Rights Protection Society
AYO	Anlo Youth Organisation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
COG	Commonwealth Observer Group
CPP	Convention People's Party
DFP	Democratic Freedom Party
DPP	Democratic People's Party
EC	Electoral Commission

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ECG	Electoral Commission of Ghana
FC	Fanti Confederacy
FF	Freedom Forum
FM	Frequency Modulation
GA	Great Alliance
GAP	Ghana Action Party
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GCBS	Gold Coast Broadcasting System
GCP	Ghana Congress Party
GCYCU	Gold Coast Youth Conference Union
GDP	Ghana Democratic Party
GJA	Ghana Journalists' Association
GNA	Ghana News Agency
GNP	Ghana National Party
GTV	Ghana Television
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INEC	Interim National Electoral Commission
IPAC	Inter-Party Advisory Committee

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ISD	Information Services Department
MAP	Muslim Association Party
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
NAL	National Alliance of Liberals
NCA	National Communication Authority
NCBWA	National Congress of British West Africa
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NIP	National Independence Party
NLCD	National Liberation Council Decree
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NMC	National Media Commission
NP	Nationalist Party
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NPP	Northern People's Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAP	People's Action Party

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PCP	People's Convention Party
PDA	Preventive Detention Act
PDC	People's Defence Committees
PHP	People's Heritage Party
PNC	People's National Convention
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	People's National Party
POM	Private-Owned Media
PP	Progress Party
RP	Republican Party
RPP	Reformed Patriotic Party
SCS	School of Communication Studies
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SMC	Supreme Military Council
SMS	Short Message Service
SOM	State–Owned Media
SPC	State Publishing Corporation
TC	Togoland Congress

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TFP	Third Force Party
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UNC	United National Convention
UNIGOV	Union Government
US	United States
WASU	West African Students' Union
WAYL	West African Youth League

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ABSTRACT

The Fourth Republic has witnessed **six** successive elections, including those of 1992, 2000 and 2008, which have been examined in this thesis. In all these elections, the role of political communication has been crucial in determining voter choices. Accounting for the accretion of political communication is the liberalization of the media landscape in 1995, which led to the proliferation of radio and television stations as a complement to the explosion of newspapers after the restoration of democratic rule in 1992. In these elections, politicians have made effective use of messages and channels of communication to influence the choice of the electorate. Of the messages that have been used with great effect, those relating to the economy, development, corruption, slogans and gestures stand out. This study, which examined the changes in forms and sophistication of political communication and their ultimate influence on voter choices in the three elections, found out that messages on the economy were most important in influencing voter choices. Significant though were messages on development, corruption and in slogan and gesture, their impact was not phenomenal as the economy. Of least influence were messages on ethnicity, human rights, accountability and transparency. In this study, political rally which emerged as the most influential channels of communicating messages to voters during the three elections has exposed the limitations of the impact of traditional media channels in

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effectively communicating messages during elections. That said, the study has underscored the relevance of political communication in elections and identified the type of messages and appropriate channels available to politicians to communicate their messages. To influence more voters, politicians should seek expert advice in identifying issues of concern to the electorate and develop them into effective messages as well as select relevant channels to communicate such messages.

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CHANGING FORMS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND VOTER CHOICES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Elections by universal adult suffrage have become the means by which countries form a representative government. There are two key actors in this political practice: the electorate on the one hand and candidates who seek election to political office to form a government on the other. The two are bound by a communication system which influences each other's behaviour, particularly during elections.

A credible election is usually based on issues of national concern on the basis of which the electorate makes choices that determine the results of the election. The platform for the analysis and discussion of electoral issues is the mass media of communication—newspapers, radio, television, rallies, emblems, posters, among others. The media provide information, education and entertainment to the people. In addition, they perform a watchdog role: they monitor the management of public affairs by the various arms of the state. Through the media, ideally the rulers and the electorate are in constant communication. The rulers communicate to the electorate and receive feedback from them, thereby enhancing the citizens' participation in governance.

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Since messages are important to the communication process, the choice of message, the form and the media of communicating such messages are very crucial. The channel of communication is a critical determinant of the meaning of the subject in the minds of the target audience (Wilson 1992: 8). Among the main forms used to communicate political messages are words, written or spoken, songs and jingles, and pictures—that is, fliers, posters, manifestoes and emblems. Others are body language—facial expressions and gestures. All these constitute the various forms of communicating political messages: they constitute political communication.

Since independence in 1957, Ghana has held a number of democratic elections, in particular those that gave birth to the First, Second, Third and Four Republics. In all these elections, political communication has contributed significantly towards influencing voter choices (Enninful 2012: 42, 201-202). The place of party emblems is significant. Viewed as the soul of political parties, emblems have created strong attachment of the electorate to political parties and this has not been lost on the political parties (Mensah 2009: 78; Enninful 2012: 3). For example, one of the factors that have militated against the unity of the Nkrumahist political groups has been the thorny issue of a common emblem. Earlier in the 1990s, the People's Convention Party (PCP), one of the Nkrumahist parties, desirous of using the emblem of the proscribed Convention People's Party (CPP), went to court for judicial determination on whether the 30-year-old proscription of the use of red cockerel was still legitimate in the Fourth Republic.

The impact of various channels of communication as well as the various political communication forms on electoral choices, particularly, in the Fourth Republic, has been phenomenal. The use of communication channels such as radio, television, newspapers, manifestoes, posters and fliers with diverse forms of political messages to influence the

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electorate in the 2000 elections was significant (Smith & Temin 2001:169). However, questions still remain whether the media and political message can influence voter choices. So far, the research on this subject has been inconclusive (Negrine 1994: 179).

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Communication is key to the success or failure of every electoral process. It provides the basis for which the electorate receives political information and electoral choices are influenced. So, in a situation where party organisation is weak, the media and the forms of message being communicated are important instruments for facilitating voters' choices (Negrine 1994: 191). According to Wilson (1993: 14), the structure of every communication system is three-fold. These are the source, message and channel. The source of every political message is almost always traceable to politicians. Political messages, communicated in various forms, are passed on to the electorate through various channels of communication. This shows that there exists a critical link between the various components of the communication system and that political communication is not possible if any one of the structures of communication is missing.

Political communication has played a key role in electoral politics in Ghana since 1951. Apart from interpersonal communication, the traditional channels through which political parties have communicated their messages are the press (newspapers and magazines), radio and television. The Fourth Republic has witnessed more changes in the forms of political communication than any other republic. Apart from written and spoken words, political communication has included the use of songs and jingles, pictures and gestures, billboards, balloons, text messages and advertisements on motor vehicles.

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With the increasing sophistication of society and the advent of information communication technology, other means of communication, including mobile phones and the internet, are being used during elections. The political message to be communicated and its intended impact, determine the choice of the channel as well as the form the said message will take. That is why it has been argued that people who are out of reach of the various channels of communication, especially where important political messages are channelled are unable to participate actively in politics (Graber & Smith 2005: 498).

In communicating their messages, political parties consider a variety of factors. Among these are urban and rural settings, literacy levels, language, pre-occupation of the people, local history, religion, and demographical distribution. Studies have shown that different countries tend to have different communication channels and forms of messages which influence voters' behaviour and choices. Factors which determine voter choices in elections continue to remain decidedly mixed and Ghana is no exception. In Ghana, while some scholars believe the media have been instrumental in influencing voters in the choices they make at elections, others claim that other factors including specific issues and messages apart from the media, determine the choice of voters.

Those who view the media as constituting an important determinant of how the Ghanaian will vote argue that the electronic media, particularly radio, is the most powerful medium which influences how voters cast their votes, followed by television, newspapers and magazines. Smith and Temin (2001: 168-169) also found that radio emerged in the 2000 elections as the most trusted medium on which the electorate depended for their political information, especially in Ashanti, Central, Greater Accra, Upper East and Upper West Regions. This, perhaps, explains why voter turn-out in these regions was high with the Ashanti Region leading the regions with 65.1 per cent in the 2000 elections (Electoral Commission 2001: 21).

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In other regions, especially Eastern and Greater Accra, newspapers became the most important determinant of voter choices in the 2000 elections and this obviously had an impact in the voter turn—out of 63.9 per cent and 59.5 per cent in the two regions respectively (Smith & Temin 2001: 168-169; Electoral Commission 2001: 21).

On the other hand, almost every study on Ghanaian elections since 1992 has identified economic issues as major factors that determine voters' choices. Ayee (2005) and Jonah (1998:9) and Frimpong (2001: 145-146) have also underscored the important role ethnicity played in influencing the outcome of the 1996 and 2000 elections respectively. At the micro level, religious, social, cultural and historical factors, political slogans, jingles, gestures and short message service (SMS) texts have become important factors in determining the choice of the electorate (Ayee, 1998; Borre, 1998; Verlet, 1998).

It is evident that many factors influenced voter choices in Ghana. These factors differ according to geographical location of the voters, the history and other cultural variables. The thrust of this study thus relates to the question, whether Ghanaian voters are influenced by the media in their electoral choices? Or is it the case of other factors including specific issues and messages that influence them? Or a combination of these factors? This study, therefore, seeks to examine the vast changes in the forms of political communication compared with other traditional factors and how such forms have influenced the course of choices of the electorate in the 1992, 2000 and 2008 elections, especially after the liberalisation of the media landscape in 1995 and the attendant sophistication that has characterised the said landscape.

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1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

We noted above that since the liberalisation of the media landscape in 1995, a wide variety of forms of political communication has emerged as part of the multi-party electoral policies of the country. The level of sophistication of political communication has also increased considerably, especially since the 2000 elections. This development has not necessarily eclipsed the traditional factors that are known to influence voter choices. We are interested therefore in determining the extent to which the changes in forms and sophistication of political communication have affected voter choices compared to other factors.

1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.4.1 MEDIA

In the broadest sense, the term "media" encompasses television, radio, newspapers, magazines, internet, mobile phones and cinema, among others. In this study, the term "media" refers only to television, radio, newspapers, internet, mobile phone and political rally.

1.4.2 COMMUNICATION/MASS COMMUNICATION

Communication has been defined by O'Reilly and Pondy (1979) as **"**the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver and the inference of meaning between participants". We use the term "mass communication" as defined by Bittner (1996) as "a process through which messages are communicated through a mass medium available to a large number of people", and "political communication" as the exchange of political information between a sender—a politician and a receiver—electorate (O' Reilly & Pondy, 1979).

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1.4.3 CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Channels of communication are the means used to transmit messages (Lipset et al. 1995: 821). In communication, messages are transmitted from a source to a receiver. The channels include television, radio, newspaper and interpersonal communication. In this study, channels of communication are the various communication media through which political messages are passed on to the electorate. Among them are radio, television, newspapers and political rally.

1.4.4 POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

According to Graber and Smith (2005: 479), political communication refers to the means by which political messages are employed to influence the course of politics. In essence, political communication is about the communication of political messages. For the purposes of this study, the term "political communication" refers to the process employed by political actors (politicians) to transmit political messages to their audience (electorate) with the view to achieving a political effect. Apart from the messages themselves, political communication manifests in slogans and gestures.

1.4.5 VOTER CHOICE

There are a number of factors that influence the choice of voters in election. In fact, they are the consideration people make in deciding who to vote for. This study looks at voter choice from this perspective.

1.4.6 MESSAGE

Message relates to communication which is expressed in speech, writing or signal and which is meant for a recipient. Every message is carried by a channel and is generated by a

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transmitter to a receiver, who then acts or provokes a reaction to the message in the form of another message called feedback. There are several message forms. They include those relating to economic, development, rule of law, corruption, health, ethnicity, transparency, accountability, improvement in democratic rule, security, education, human rights, employment, religion, personality of certain individuals, slogan and gesture. This study adopts the above definition of message with particular emphasis on its numerous forms. Details of these message forms are explained below:

1.4.7 Economy

According to the *Encarta Dictionaries*, economy refers to the production and consumption of goods and services (including financial affairs) of a society regarded as a whole. It relates to messages that deal with the general economic situation of a country. Here, the study is interested in aspects of the economy that deal with inflation, debt situations, income levels of citizens and living conditions in the country.

1.4.8 Development

Development in this study refers to infrastructural development in general. Of particular importance to this study are messages that relate to the provision of roads, health facilities, markets, schools, electricity and potable water.

1.4.9 Rule of law

Rule of law has two major important components: equality before the law and due process. By equality of the law, it refers to equal subjection of all the citizenry to the laws of the land. Due process, on the other hand, involves the use of the law in any decision that is taken in the country (Garner, 2004). This study focuses on the use of rule of law to manage the affairs of

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the state. A critical component of this message is the use of the courts, as opposed to any illegitimate means, in adjudicating cases.

1.4.10 Health

Health messages in this study involve those messages that relate to improvement in health care delivery generally with particular emphasis on access and affordability.

1.4.11 Security

Under this study, security relates to issues which focus on possible threats, likely to undermine the quality of any electioneering process and the means of containing or addressing such threats.

1.4.12 Transparency

Transparency concerns openness in the governance process. It deals with how government, in the discharge of its duties, opens up to legislative and public scrutiny (Beetham, Bracking, Kearton & Weir 2002: 14). In this study, we seek to rely on messages that point to how government activities, processes and procedures are made accessible to the electorate without any hindrance whatsoever.

1.4.13 Accountability

This refers to the ability of the electorate to ensure that officials in government are answerable for their actions and inactions (Lipset et al. 1995: 9; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). By adopting this definition, we are interested in messages that suggest, in very clear terms, how the electorate are able to hold their political office holders accountable during their stewardship and to ensure effective and honest performance.

1.4.14 Ethnicity

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Ethnicity deals with awareness of shared origins and traditions of people. It is therefore, a standard by which people connect with ethnic groups (McLean and McMillan 2009: 177). Here, the study is interested in messages that are used overtly and covertly by political candidates to whip up ethnic sentiments for political expediency.

1.4.15 Democracy

Democracy, according to Bobbio (1990), is "a form of representative government in which competitive political parties are authorised to act as intermediaries between individual actors and the government". In a similar but slightly different form, Schmitter & Karl (1996: 50) defined democracy as "a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and co-operation of their elected representatives". The study adopts and adapts the two definitions of democracy above to mean a system of government in which holders of political power are not only elected into office by the people through free and fair elections but also accountable to them as well.

1.4.15 Improvement in Democratic Rule

The above definitions bring to the fore certain basic tenets of democracy which include political parties, accountability, participation and representation (election). It is the promotion, development and maintenance of these tenets and others such as human rights, free media and rule of law which constitute messages for improvement in democratic rule for this study.

1.4.16 Corruption

This relates to the abuse of public resources for private or personal gain. In essence, corruption deals with illegal, unethical and unauthorised exploitation of one's official

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position for personal gain or advantage (Gyekye 1977: 2; Lipset et al. 1995: 310). This study adapts this definition by looking at alleged cases of corruption, which relates to bribery, extortion, fraud, embezzlement, graft, kickback, favouritism, conflict of interest, which have bedevilled public service as well as the means of combating them.

1.4.17 Employment

Messages relating to employment in this study are those that focus on levels of employment and unemployment in the country. It also includes measures to handle the problem of unemployment in the country.

1.4.18 Education

Under this study, education deals with issues that seek to improve the impact and acquisition of knowledge at all levels. It involves policies, programmes and resources that contribute to the strengthening and promoting of quality education in the country.

1.4.19 Human Rights

Human rights relate to an expression of political relationship that exists between individuals and their societies. They are claims that all human beings are entitled to and the corresponding obligations associated with the enjoyment of such claims (Lipset et al. 1995: 573; Henkin 1989:11). For purposes of this study, messages that seek to promote and protect individual rights and freedoms through the country's constitutional and legal processes will be relied upon.

1.4.20 "Other" Messages

Messages regarded as "other" consist of two component, parts, namely; personality of the political candidate and religious affiliation of the political candidate. In this study, while the

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former message deals with issues such as political tradition, personal qualities of political candidates, including charisma and oratory skills, the latter, on the other hand, involves the religion that a political candidate professes.

1.4.21 Slogan

Slogans are the embodiment of ideas about those who make them. They constitute effective tools for mobilising people for political action (Nianxi 2009: 2-3) and are short catchy phrases employed by politicians for electoral effect. The study will also focus on any short saying that expresses any rule that a political candidate intends to live by motto.

1.4.22 Gesture

Gestures, according to Hoven and Mazalek (2011: 256, 275), are hand and arm movements of a human body that seek to communicate meaningful information. They are also viewed as visible body actions used to improve and facilitate communication. By this message, the study concerns itself with any body movement that is adopted for purposes of elections to communicate political messages with the view to influencing the electorate to vote in a specific direction.

1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This deals with the arrangement of chapters of this study. We propose to organise this work into nine main chapters and the details are as follows:

1.5.1 Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter One deals with the introduction to the study, research problems, objectives, definition of concepts and organisation of chapters. In addition to this, the chapter will also include limitations to and contributions of the study.

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1.5.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

The successful discussion of literature is crucial to the handling of any research problem. It is on the basis of this that this chapter looks at the literature surrounding the problem under consideration. The literature is organised along four axes and these include: studies on political communication, studies on voter choices, general studies on elections and studies on elections in Ghana.

1.5.3 Chapter Three: The Media and Elections in Ghana: A Historical Note

Since 1822 when the first newspaper was established up to the period of the first election, that is, 1951, a number of developments have taken place, especially in the country's body politic, that have and continue to shape not only the media and their activities but also elections in the country. While this chapter traces the history of the media and elections in Ghana, it also focuses on the various roles the media have played in elections since 1951.

1.5.4 Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

A number of theories have been developed to explain various phenomena in politics. For the purposes of this study, both political and media theories were used to explain the problem of this study. In particular, the agenda, framing and uses and gratification theories were used to explain the research problem of this study.

1.5.5 Chapter Five: The Changing Forms of Political Communication

This chapter discusses the dynamic changes in political communication in the direction of greater emphasis on the complexity, channels, strategies and messages, especially since the liberalisation of the medial landscape in 1995.

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1.5.6 Chapter Six: Methodology

The chapter focuses on the method of data collection and data analysis. Due to the nature of the problem under consideration, this study will use different research approaches. In this connection, both primary and secondary data will be used to do the analysis.

1.5.7 Chapter Seven: Data Analysis—Political Communication and Electoral Choices in the Fourth Republic

Chapter Seven is the data analysis and interpretation portion of the study. It examines the impact of the various media channels and messages including: gestures, emblems, text messages, manifestos, slogans, songs and jingles on electoral choices since the 1992 general elections.

1.5.8 Chapter Eight: Research Findings and Discussion

After the analysis of the data, this aspect of the study focuses on a discussion of the main research findings. To ensure effective discussion, the findings were discussed in the light of various components of the communication process—source (politician), message, channel and recipient upon which a conclusion was drawn.

1.5.9 Chapter Nine: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The chapter summarises the findings of the study and makes recommendations that would enhance political communication and elections in the country. The questions to be addressed include: (i) What are the findings of the study? (ii) To what extent has political communication enhanced elections in the country? (iii) What recommendations will improve political communication and elections in Ghana?

1.5.10 Limitation of the study

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Ideally, we would have loved to study more constituencies, but resource constraints made it impossible for us to undertake that venture. This limitation notwithstanding, the careful selection of the five constituencies made it possible for us to deal with this particular challenge and contribute to theory and practice of politics

1.5.11 Contributions of the study

Since 1992 when Ghana became a democracy for the fourth time, a number of efforts have been made to ensure the survival of the country's democracy. One of such efforts is the holding of regular elections. This study which has provided relevant insights into political communication and elections in the country, has relevance for politicians, academics and policy-makers, among others, in shaping the contours of democratic governance in the country.

The literature on political communication is generally not extensive as in other disciplines. The situation is worse in Ghana, where very few studies have been done on the subject (Graber & Smith 2005: 479-483; Hinson & Tweneboah-Koduah 2010: 203). It is in the light of this that this study is useful as it deepens our understanding of political communication in the country by shedding light on important issues such as messages and channels and how they contribute to the discussion on elections in the country.

An important aspect of the study is the use of media theories to explain political phenomenon at elections. The three theories used in the study (agenda setting, framing and uses and gratification) have revived the discussion on these theories once again with respect to political communication.

Apart from the above, the strength of the study lies in the applicability of the study to electoral politics. The study offers useful insights on which messages and channels of

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communications are relevant in elections and which are not. In fact, the study has brought to the fore messages that are critical in influencing voter choices and those which have the least or no influence in the choices voters make at the polls. Messages relating to the economy, development and corruption have emerged as critical in swaying the choices of the electorate at the polls. The study has provided insights into channels of communication with maximum effect as regards their potential to influence voters choice as well as classes of voters and the media they rely on for messages said, the study shows which constituency or group of voters favour a particular message and which communication best influences their choices.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review is organised along four axes namely: studies on political communication, studies on voter choices, general studies on elections and studies on elections in Ghana.

2.2 STUDIES ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Scholars like McNair **(**1994: 4**)** Graber and Smith (2005) and Denton and Woodward **(**1998**)** focus on the definition of political communication. McNair admits that there is no generally accepted definition of the term "political communication" and therefore, cautions researchers not to aim at defining the concept with precision. He defines "political communication" as consisting of not only verbal and unwritten statements, but also political images such as visuals, dresses, make-ups, hairstyles and logo designs (McNair 1999: 4). Graber & Smith **(**2005**)**, who share a similar view, maintain that the difficulties in the definition have given rise to many definitions of the concept. They view political communication as a means by which political messages are made to influence the course of politics. This is achieved through construction, sending, receiving and processing of political information. (Graber and Smith 2005: 479). In a related study, Denton and Woodward **(**1998**)** define political communication to include public discussions, which involve how public resources are allocated, taking into consideration those who are entrusted with the power to take such decisions. In essence, McNair **(**1994**)**, in quoting Denton and Woodward, views political communication as dealing with the intentions of senders of political information to influence the political environment. According to him, the political aspect of political communication,

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as he infers from Denton and Woodward, lies in the content and purpose of the message and not in the source of the message (Denton and Woodward cited in McNair 199: 3-4).

In their respective studies, Jeffres and Perloff (1986: 248), Habermas (2006: 420), Neuman (1996: 9), Chaffee and Frank (1996: 48, 58) and Dominick (1990: 547-548) comment on the effect of the media on political communication. Jeffres and Perloff argue that apart from election campaigns, the media are also involved in other activities, such as coverage of government activities and entertainment (Jeffres & Perloff 1986: 248). They note that the electorate make political choices on the basis of issues and images that the media produce rather than their party affiliations. They emphasized the tremendous effect the media has on politics because of the growth in social influence in recent times as is evident in the coverage of media accord to political news (Jeffres & Perloff 1986: 249). They pointed out that depending on a number of factors, different media houses in different jurisdictions tend to influence voters in deciding which candidate(s) to vote for.

Mahama (2012: 109) explores the connection between political communication and democratic development. According to him, the essence of political communication is to generate the necessary debate that will provide the needed solution to the problems of the electorate and not to use it to insult, abuse, vilify and denigrate people. He expressed concern about the manner in which ethnicity is currently used in Ghanaian politics arguing it is a danger to the country's democracy. Admitted that the practice is not alien to politics, he, however, maintained that the negative manner with which the phenomenon is used in politics tends to raise an eyebrow. He said the continuous use of ethnic sentiments as a way of political parties communicating their messages has the potential of undermining the country's fragile democracy as it poses grave danger to peace and stability in the country. He argued

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that the best way to sell political parties during elections is through their manifestoes and ideologies and not through insults, invectives and character assassination.

The study is very instructive as one of the variables in our study hinges on the main theme of Mahama's study, that is, political communication. We have, however, flagged the study for its inability to look at how political communication impacts on the choices of the electorate. We will address this problem and proceed to examine the connection between political communication and messages on the one hand as well as political communication and channels of communication which are mostly relied upon in Ghana during elections.

In Habermas' (2006: 420) view, a free and self-regulated media with the right kind of feedback between political communication and civil-society provide important tools for determining the level of regime legitimacy in certain political environments. He argues that a responsible press have to provide more reliable information and alternative interpretations of the political support of regimes. According to him, in the United States, for example, several findings have revealed that people who depend on political information in the electronic media tend to develop cynical attitudes towards politics (Habermas 2006: 422) which does not inspire regime legitimacy. Neuman **(**1996: 9**)** discusses how recent developments in the mass communication industry have contributed to our understanding of how political support is mobilised in a democratic environment for issues and candidates. He further discusses how citizens make preferences between representatives in democratic societies (Neuman 1996: 9). He notes that there have been scores of publications regarding the significant contribution of television to politics in democratic societies (Neuman, 1996: 10). In this connection, Chaffee and Frank (1996: 48, 58) maintain that television news in America offers more information about political party candidates than the newspaper which basically focuses on political parties. However, they argue that when people are looking for political information, they

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often consult the print media, especially magazines than the electronic media. These views contrast sharply with the position held by Dominick (1990: 547-548) who observes that during the 1930s and 1940s, radio had the greatest impact on voter choices in the United States. He notes that during this period of the country's technological advancement, anytime some political information was presented to the electorate in visual form, political participation increased; the situation changed in favour of newspapers during the 1960s and 1970s. He however, admits that during this period, television and radio became a more effective medium for not only providing political information to the people but also for influencing the electorate's choice of political candidates. This position has already been affirmed by Chaffee and Frank. Das and Choudhury (2002: 66-67) also corroborate this view: they note that most advanced societies depend heavily on the print and electronic media for political information.

Diedong (2013: 13-14) delves into media coverage and effects on Ghana's democracy. He observed that most of the stories that were published by newspapers during the 2008 elections were borne out of party programmes and events. Besides, most of the stories that were carried by the papers favoured only the two leading parties, that is NPP and NDC, leaving out the other political parties. Contrary to the assertion that the state-owned press tend to favour the government of the day, Diedong noted that the private newspapers, especially the Ghanaian Chronicle, gave preponderant coverage to the ruling NPP government than did the state-owned newspapers. He viewed the coverage of the private newspapers skewed arguing that they gave prominence to only political party campaign stories to the neglect of other important issues relating to health, education, environment, agriculture, science and technology. He criticised the discriminatory tendencies of the newspapers, particularly with regard to the coverage of other parties' programmes. According to him, most of the front

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page stories carried by the newspapers were more tilted towards both the NPP and NDC. The coverage received by other smaller parties were scanty. He explained that the prominence given to political parties such as NPP and NDC was part of the reason why people showed much interest in the two parties and their messages compared to other parties. He noted that even where the smaller parties had their stories covered, the level of coverage was scant. He said this attitude of the press makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the press to support the electorate to make informed choices during election.

The study provides some insights on the media coverage and elections in Ghana. However, the effects of such coverage on some of the elections have not been explored. Our study will discuss the effect of certain media, particularly radio, television, newspaper and political rally on the choices of voters in the elections of 1992, 2000 and 2008.

Das and Choudhury (2002) are concerned about the interface between political communication and the political system that supports it. They view the communication system as critical for promoting interactions among human beings. These two Indian scholars identify the key component parts of every communication system as comprising the source from which messages emanate, the message itself, and the medium through which the message is carried to the ultimate consumer. They observe that an efficient communication system should have an effective communication feedback mechanism. Despite the differences that exist between political systems the world over, they observe that the means by which information is passed on to majority of the people are generally similar. However, different systems do exist due largely to the nature and degree of control exercised by the states over their respective media (Das & Choudhury 2002: 65-67).

The studies above show the difficulties experienced by scholars in providing a concise definition of the concept of political communication, but they, however, underscore the

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importance of certain aspects of political communication namely the source, message, channel and recipient in the political system. Our study builds on those aspects of political communication and how they affect the choices of the electorate in Ghana's elections.

Scholars like Dahlgren and Habermas have touched on the problems associated with political communication. Dahlgren contends that currently there are two main problems in the form of communication traditions which affect political communication; these include the public sphere and the culturalist tradition. The public sphere approach, according to Dahlgren, places emphasis on the norms of democracy and notes that it underpins democratic engagements. This tradition influences institutions in the media industry and also shapes communication patterns and how they affect society. Dahlgren (2004: 14-15) agrees that the culturalist tradition, has not affected political communication to any substantial degree. It merely offers a framework for analysing and assessing features of political communication. Habermas, however, identifies problems facing political communication other than the public sphere and the culturalist traditions identified by Dahlgreen. According to him, ownership structure of the media constitutes a major factor that affects the performance of the media: it determines the degree of political pressure or freedom that the media experiences (Habermas 2006: 420). Habermas cites Italy where Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has exploited the legal opportunities existing in the Italian media industry to promote his political agenda, thereby gaining first, political power and, second, using the media to promote controversial legislation which only aims at promoting his personal interest (Habermas 2006: 421).

Making reference to ownership of media in a country, Habermas asserts that none of the other two problems, that is public sphere and cultural tradition, maters when it comes to problems of political communication. Though the position by Habermas is to some extent true, it is not the only problem the affect political communication globally. It can be said that the use of the

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inflammatory language, media restrictions, propaganda and even social media can serve as source of problem for political communication. Though our study will not discuss the problems of political communication, it will rather examine some of the strategies employed by political parties in Ghana in communicating their messages, which include inflammatory language, propaganda and so on.

Simon and Iyengar (1996), Graber and Smith (2005), on the other hand, discuss the various theoretical and methodological approaches that underpin political communication research. The theories they discuss include rational choice theory, game theory, selective choice and gratification theories. They touch on some of the methods that are employed in political communication research. Notable among the methodologies are experimentation and content analysis. Simon and Iyengar identify two theories that are often employed in political communication research, namely, rational choice theory and game theory. Simon and Iyengar; Graber and Smith (2005) and Kanazawa (1998) underscore the importance of rational choice theory in political communication. According to Simon and Iyengar (1996: 29-30), the strength of the theory lies in the analytical and mathematical tools it employs in deriving testable research propositions. They therefore, regard this theory and other models as crucial to the study of political communication. Shedding more light on theoretical foundation of the rational choice theory, Kanazawa (1998: 974, 991) examines the truth or otherwise of the rational choice theorists' position that people vote based on the benefits they intend to derive from such exercise. This position, according to him, presupposes that voters are forward-looking rather than backward-looking when it comes to the exercise of their franchise. Kanazawa observes that contrary to the position of the rational choice theorists, people use elections to assess their past choices against what the general outcome of the previous elections brought to them so as to decide whether to vote in the next elections or not

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(Kanazawa 1998: 992). According to him, if voters decide whether or not to vote in elections, then the problem of paradox, which is said to be associated with voter turnout, is completely removed. Based on this analysis, Kanazawa urged rational choice theorists to factor into the structure of their theory, the backward-looking attitude of voters if they (rational choice theorists) are to make the logic underlying the theory complete.

Though this theory is not one of the theories that underpin our studies, there is no doubt that it will definitely be beneficial to our study, especially as our study depends on the uses and gratification theory and part of the assumption of that theory is based on the rational nature of the electorate.

With regard to game theory, Simon and Iyengar discuss the usefulness in describing the behaviour of candidates. They note that the theory employs rules of mathematics to describe how individuals make very important and beneficial choices, especially when the voter is faced with two-candidate elections. Black, Bryant and Thompson **(**1998**)** and Wimmer and Domminick **(**1983**)** agree with Simon and Iyengar on the role of theory in political communication research, but go further to discuss other theories that underpin the study of political communication.

Agenda setting basically deals with the media's function of telling the public what to think about (Black et al.: 1998: 47). They posit that the basis of agenda setting rests with the importance the media attach to stories they publish. According to them, the way and manner stories are carried or framed by the media, help in determining how important the public think such stories are. Sharing similar views, especially on the way and manner media stories are carried, Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 428) underscore the relevance of framing in media messages. They state that the media in carrying out their stories, frame them in a way that portrays the issues they report about. Aside agenda setting and framing theories, Black et al

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(1998: 27) again made some basic observations with regard to the place of uses and gratification theory in political communication. They observe, among other things, that since individuals depend on the media for their needs, they tend to behave in a certain way that satisfy their interest.

Dahlgren (2004: 12), on the other hand, points out the role of theory in shaping the media institution processes of communication and the fundamental features and processes of the global environment (Dahlgren 2004: 12). He argues that since the 1980s, Western democracies have been shaped by market forces to the extent that democratic controls and accountability have been enhanced. Though Dahlgren admits a number of theories abound in the area of political communication, some of them, according to him, permeate the field of political communication from other disciplines. He emphasizes that, like theories in other disciplines, the rate at which media theories are currently being imported into the area of political communication is very high (Dahlgren 2004: 8-9).This view is shared by Graber and Smith.

These studies are of grave significance to our work because they provide some of the theoretical foundations that underpin this work. Our study will rely on three of the theories namely agenda setting, framing and uses and gratification theories to explain how political messages influence the choices of voters during elections in Ghana.

Away from theories, Jackson and Jackson (2003: 376) as well as Jeffres and Perloff (1986: 262) discuss models as constituting important canon for interpreting political communication theory. According to Jackson and Jackson, models help in judging voting behaviour of the electorate. They identify three models including: supermarket, social group and attitudinal voting. In the case of supermarket voting model, Jackson and Jackson posit that the rational nature of human beings makes it possible for the electorate to examine the various options

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contained in the media messages and choose from those options that best suit their interests. The choice of this option by the electorate, according to Jackson and Jackson, is mostly taken on the voting day and it is based on strong loyalty developed by the electorate towards the party in question. On the social group voting model, Jackson and Jackson argue that electoral choices of voters are determined by economic and social factors including social class, education, ethnicity, income and religion, etc. They however, criticised the model arguing that it has lost its variability, thereby rendering its analytical powers ineffective (Jackson and Jackson, 2003).

As regards attitudinal voting, Jackson and Jackson argue that attitude constitutes the most important factors that influence voter choices. They identified three components of voter attitudes, notably, the effect of the issues under consideration, the effects of the candidates and the party leaders and the strength of the individual's party identification. In addition, Jackson and Jackson maintain that the whereas electorate with strong partisan positions are unlikely to change their positions on the parties that they favour, those with weaker partisan interests base their electoral choices on the issues at stake, leaders, candidates, the media, images among others Jackson and Jackson, 2003).

Jeffres and Perloff (1986: 262) identify two models which explain mass media effects, particularly on politics. These are reinforcement and strong effect models. Under the former model, the researchers indicate the existence of two main arguments. In the first argument, the media is said to have largely indirect or limited effects on consumers of media messages. Instead, the media seek to reinforce the existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the recipients of their messages without any attempt at changing the peoples' political ideas. In this model, according to Jeffres and Perloff (1986), choices made by the people with regard to the information available are always consistent with what the people believe and prefer. In

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the second argument, they observe that, media activities tend to have direct consequences on the attitude of the electorate. This, according to them, makes it possible for the media to harp on issues that satisfy their gratifications and ultimately ensure a change in the beliefs, cognition and behaviours of the people.

Though our studies do not employ models in explaining the behaviour of voters in elections, they are, however, useful since some of the basic ideas underlying these models emphasize the considerations voters make in the face of electoral choices.

Simon and Iyengar **(**1996 and Graber and Smith **(**2005**)** link theory to methodology. They identify and discuss some of the important methodologies used in political communication research with the most popular ones being experimentation and content analysis. On experimentation, Simon and Iyengar (1996: 30-31) posit that the only way for a political communication researcher to establish cause-and-effect relationship is through experiment. According to them, experiment serves as a means by which political messages are analysed and their effects identified. They identify a number of problems associated with the experimental method of data analysis, including lack of proper representation of research population, and manipulation of certain vital information (Simon & Iyengar 1996: 30-31). Simon and Iyengar (1996: 32) conclude with a discussion on the relevance of the content analysis to the study of political communication pointing to its usefulness as a tool for analysing political messages and news items. Graber and Smith (2005: 494), on the other hand, assert that content analysis has been the most widely used tool for examining political messages. Other methods entail semiotics, public opinion polls, surveys, focus group discussions and interviews. They however, admit that multiple analysis procedures, complex quantitative and clinical as well as laboratory procedures have become important research tools in quantitative analysis.

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The studies by Simon and Iyengar and Graber and Smith have brought to the fore the importance of communication methodologies in the analysis and discussion of political communication. Besides, the studies have highlighted the strength and weaknesses associated with some of the methodologies of political communication. Our work seeks to draw on the lessons that would be learnt from these studies as we adopt some of the methodologies, especially content analysis and survey for the discussion and analysis of this work.

2.3 STUDIES ON VOTER CHOICES

Schimitt-Beck (2003: 240-241), Perloff (1993: 156), Turow (1992: 14) and Jeffres and Perloff (1986: 260) argue that different factors affect voter choices in elections. The factors are messages or contents and institutions. According to the scholars, media messages or contents constitute the main driving force behind political communication**.** They determine the focus and direction of voter choices during elections. Because of this, these scholars have focused their studies on different aspects of media messages or contents. On his part, Schmitt-Beck examines the effects of human exposure to messages, especially one-sided ones from the mass media. According to him, media exposure serves as a substitute for powerful messages communicated personally to voters. He argues that media influence occurs not in a few effective messages but rather in a large amount of messages that are communicated, received and accepted over a long period of time. In essence, media influence on voting behaviour, according to Schmitt-Beck, depends on one's choice during elections. So, exposure, Schmitt-Beck notes, only depicts how far the individual has been using the media.

Linking exposure to categories of messages, Perloff (1993: 156) discusses various categories of messages in the political system. Among the main categories he identifies are those that pertain to content, structure and language. In addition, Perloff identifies certain

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characteristics associated with each category of messages to include evidence, vividness, fear, etc.

On message content, Perloff (1993: 156-15) views evidence as constituting an important aspect of persuasive message. He argues that without concrete evidence, no message can gain acceptability. In his view, evidence adds to the strength of persuasion contained in messages. He observes that poorly prepared messages affect individual attitudes negatively and therefore, views quality evidence as necessary for changing human attitudes. Besides, Perloff observes that vivid messages have strong influence on people's attitudes (Perloff, 1993). In addition to content and vividness, Perloff examines the effects of fear on individual attitudes. He admits that though messages that contain high doses of fear elements tend to engender change in human attitudes, there are exceptions. Sometimes, the fear appeal in messages, according to Perloff, does not count because the element of fear has either not been manipulated properly or because fear is considered a weak psychological weapon, its application is unreliable.

On structure of messages, Perloff argues that the best message structure is the ones with two sides as opposed to one-sided ones. He explains that two-sided messages are more capable of changing people's attitudes than one-sided ones. According to him, while one sided messages strengthen the position of the persuader on an issue, the two-sided ones provide arguments for both sides of the issue, thereby enabling the persuader to develop counter arguments to opposing views (Perloff 1993: 167).

Even though opinions are divided on which factors really influence voter choices in elections, the studies above affirm the fundamental role played by political messages in general and their contents, in particular, with regard to political communication. Our work takes a cue from these studies and proceeds to investigate fourteen specific messages with the view to

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determining which particular message influences voter choices mostly in Ghana during elections and why it does so.

Aside of categories of messages, Turow (1992: 14) examines the role of information communication technology (ICT) in message dissemination. According to him, since the development of ICT, tons of media messages have been communicated to a large number of people around the globe. In his view, what this means is that, scores of people can now focus on the same issue via the media of mass communication. This, Turow states, leads to the development of opinion on the communicated messages by the people.

This work is relevant in that it provides some information on ICT and the dissemination of messages. However, the study fails to points out how ICT causes the spread of messages in specific channels of communication. While drawing on some of the issues provided by this study, our work will focus on how ICT has influenced message dissemination, especially in radio, newspaper and television during the 1992, 2000 and 2008 elections.

Regarding media institutions, Jeffres and Perloff (1993: 286-287) maintain that such institutions are capable of having long-term effects on politics. They further argue that basic changes and growth in the media institutions generally bring about changes in the political system. Dominick (1990: 549), who holds similar views, considers psychological and social factors as the most powerful factors that influence how the electorate vote. He identifies reinforcement and crystallisation as key psychological and social factors. Dominick defines reinforcement as the process of strengthening and supporting existing attitudes and opinions associated with the electorate in the political system while crystallisation refers to the means by which attitudes are sharpened and elaborated and occur where there are undecided voters. According to him, there is reinforcement if in the course of an election, the electorate have already made up their minds (Dominick, 1990).

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The works of the scholars above are useful to our work. However, they are too descriptive. While the study of Jeffres and Perloff only sheds a little light on the real effect of the media on politics, that of Dominic merely deals with psychological and social factors that cause voters to vote the way they do. We are interested in how the various media, including radio, television, newspaper and political rally work to influence the choice of voters in Ghana.

Dreyer (1971-1972: 544-545) discusses mostly the effects of party loyalty on voter choices in elections in the United States. Following Butler and Stokes, he argues that three factors explain the influence of party loyalty on voter choices in elections. The first is the age composition of the voter population. He observes that the differences and attitudes pertaining to youth groups often influence voters' choice one way or the other. Second, he maintains that anytime there are changes regarding basic, social and psychological characteristics of the voting population, it takes a while for loyalty to be built. He however, contends that whenever there are severe social and economic crises, voter loyalty is affected. Third, Dreyer maintains that circumstances that surround any election have direct consequences on the choice of voters and tenure. According to him, in situations where the political changes are caused by "short-term partisan forces," such changes tend to produce long-term political effects on voters (Dreyer 1971: 545-546). He however, notes that since the work of Lazarsfeld et al (1971-1972) on the above subject, not much study has been done concerning how voters react to the flow of current political information. Instead, most of the studies that have been undertaken have centred rather on the electorate's surveillance behaviour (Dreyer 1971-1972: 545).

Wantchekon takes a different position on the factors that influence voter choices, apart from the media. He identifies political violence as the main factor that influences voters' behaviour at elections. According to him, when the electorate are aware of the violent capabilities of a

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political party, they tend to shy away from that party by voting massively against it (Wantchekon 1999: 255). In contrast, Ayee (1998: 47) does not consider the attribution of violent orientation to a party as being a significant factor in an election. On the basis of the results of the 1996 elections in Ghana, he points out that despite the success of both the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) government and the opposition in communicating their political messages to the electorate, the message of the opposition appealed to the elite while the rural and urban poor appear to have been receptive of the message of the NDC: because they regarded the government as the provider of basic social services.

The woks of Wantchekon and Ayee are very important for our study since they discuss two of the factors, that is, political violence and campaign message respectively, which influence the choices of the electorate during elections. Our study even though will not deal directly with political violence, it will make use of the insights that will be offered by the studies as well as go beyond the other factor (message) and discuss in addition fourteen specific messages that influence the choices of voters in Ghana.

In a more comprehensive study, Smith and Temin (2001: 168-169) discuss the usefulness of the Ghanaian media during elections. Apart from the traditional channels of communication of radio, television, newspapers and magazines, the two scholars identify television, candidate rallies, friends and families, posters and fliers as useful mediums that Ghanaians rely upon in deciding who to vote for during elections. While Smith and Temin (2001) describe radio as the most useful medium that Ghanaians use in deciding who to vote for in constituency elections, the print media happens to be the least patronised channel of communication in voter decision making. Television, candidate rallies, friends and families and posters and fliers occupied second, third, fourth and fifth positions respectively in Smith and Temin's ranking. In addition to these, Smith and Temin (2001) note that newspapers

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constitute the most useful source of information for voters in Eastern, Greater Accra and Ashanti regions. Radio was found by Smith and Temin to be the most reliable mode of communication that influenced voters' decision making in Ashanti, Central and Greater Accra regions: television ranked the lowest as the medium that was used in making electoral choices.

The study is important as it discusses the role of certain channels of communication – newspaper, television, radio and political rally in influencing the choice of the electorate. While drawing on the findings of this study, our work emphasizes on messages and their effect on voter choices.

Carpentier (2008) corroborated the well-known view that selected exposure to a message tends to increase as the intensity of the magnitude, likelihood and immediacy of outcomes contained in a message increases. He further notes that receivers of radio news retain more information from high utility radio stories than those stories with low utility. He however, states that in the case of the former that, consumers of such stories do not find the stories relevant to them (Carpentier 2008: 585-586).

This work is very useful as it confirms the relationship between exposure of media message and the influence such message has on those who receive them. Though the study touches on one of the channels of communication, that is radio, it however fails to examine the link between selected exposure and other channels of communication, especially newspaper, television and political rally. Out study will fill this gap by providing a detailed examination and analysis of such relationship.

Dreyer holds an identical view. He notes that the lower the dosage of such political information, the less likely that the individual would imbibe that information. Dreyer argues

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that when the electorate is denied political information, it is said to be cut out of the political processes and make them change their minds for a short-term depending on when it receives new information (Dreyer 1971-1972: 548)

Apart from the issues discussed above, a number of scholars view both media channels and their contents or messages, which are in the form of gestures, emblems, text messages, slogans, songs and jingles, as constituting the main determinants of voter choices during elections.

In their study, Gamble and Gamble (1996: 145-146), McNeil (1992: 146) and Halliday (1992; 290-291) focus their attention on the relevance of gestures in human communication. According to Gamble and Gamble, gestures involve the movement of arms, legs, hands and feet. They are a means by which human beings convey non-verbal data. The two scholars argue that though gestures are performed by human beings all over the world, they do not have universal meanings. Gestures are culture specific and therefore, differ from one culture to the other. In sum, gestures constitute motions of human limbs or body used to depict moods and ideas etc, of a given people and they are culturally connected by some similarities (Gamble & Gamble 1996: 145-146).

For their part, McNeil and Halliday look at the relationship between gesture and speech. McNeil argues that due to the relevance of speech in human life, speech is always adjusted to sensory motors and thought processes in human beings. This, McNeil notes, changes with time, as semiotic extensions (relating to signs and symbols) find their way into speech processes in humans. In the case of gestures, McNeil traces their roots to semiotic extensions but maintains that gestures by human beings are always linked to mental patterns and they are essential to speech making (Ellis & Beattie 1992: 146).

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On the other hand, Halliday observes that children, in their early years of development, combine gestures with words in order to communicate. However, Halliday states that those words and gestures that are uttered and made by children indicate different elements in the messages that they produce (Halliday quoted in Ellis & Beattie 1992: 290-291).

The studies are very instructive as they identify the role of gesture in communication in general and gesture in relation to speech as well as words in particular. Each of the three studies fails to examine the relationship between gesture and electoral campaign. This study will provide a critical analysis between gestures and the responses of the electorate.

In a related study, Knapp (1980), Ellis and Beattie (1986), as well as Kumin and Lazar (1974), view emblems as constituting an important aspect of non-verbal communication. In his study, Knapp states the meaning of emblems as generally different from one culture to the other, but argues that some of the meanings associated with certain emblems are general in character and as such, are used by different cultures for the same purpose. He therefore, notes that while some emblems are used directly, others are adopted to suit different groups and interests. According to him, emblems have many uses; but they are mostly used when other verbal channels of communication are blocked. Emblems have general and contextual meanings (Knapp 1980: 4-6).

Ellis and Beattie, who share a similar view, argue that emblems are one of the non-verbal acts; nevertheless, he maintains that emblems can be translated verbally without any alteration to the information they carry. Based on their usages, emblems, according to them, contain specific messages that are relevant for different situations (Ellis & Beattie 1986: 47-48).

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But Kumin and Lazar's study of emblems is directed at the school setting instead of the general communication environment. According to their study, as children grow in age, they are able to interpret, understand and appreciate many issues in their environment, including those things that symbolise objects, ideas, etc. (symbols or emblems). They also note that between boys and girls, boys tend to interpret symbols better than girls in younger ages (Kumin & Lazar 1974: 708-710).

The two studies above are very important to our work in that they tend to provide insights into the relevance of symbols, particularly in both cultural and academic settings. Though our study does not focus on symbols, we will build on the knowledge obtained from the studies.

Apart from gestures and emblems, scholars like Dale and Strauss (2009: 787-788, 801), Prete (2007: 12), Schuler (2008: 12-13) and Yankah (2004: 19) examine the place of Short Message Service (SMS) text messages in politics. Dale and Strauss identify text messaging as constituting one of the powerful devices for mobilising voters for elections, particularly in the United States (US). They observe that due to the low cost of messaging, text messages have not only become popular in elections but also more effective means than the traditional face-to-face method of canvassing for votes. This way, Dale and Strauss note, through text messaging, politicians and political parties alike in the US, are able to reach out to about 80 per cent of the electorate compared to 30 per cent using the traditional methods. Though, in conclusion the scholars admit the relevance of social connectedness in election, they did not believe it is the most mobilising factor in elections. According to them, constant reminders of the electorate through text messaging constitute the most important mobilising force in elections, a position that has been challenged by Prete (2007:12). He notes that SMS text messages do not alter voters' intentions significantly, especially in Italian elections as the

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people consider text messages as unreliable, useless and unconvincing. That not-withstanding, Prete concludes that SMS texts could be used to reach out to both loyal and undecided voters. Yankah agrees with Dale and Strauss on the popularity of text messages in elections and goes further to discuss their role in political discourse. He views text messaging as constituting an important means by which the Ghanaian electorate participates directly in political discourse. He notes the popularity of the use of electronic text messages in radio programmes in Ghana, particularly in both local and foreign languages (English), arguing that it has promoted grassroot political participation. Among some of the factors that have contributed to increase radio text messaging in the country, is the low cost of text messaging and the avoidance of time wasting on the part of contributors to radio programmes.

To Schuler (2008), apart from elections themselves, text messages assist in election monitoring. He argues that election monitoring, like elections themselves, has become a critical condition in promoting citizen rights and ensuring legitimacy of governments that are borne out of such elections. He notes the efficacy of SMS text messages in addressing some of the logistical problems associated with elections. According to him, the speed, flexibility and coverage abilities of SMS text messages have, in no doubt, made it possible for electoral officials to mobilise people to respond promptly to electoral challenges. This, Schuler maintains, constitutes an effective way of bolstering the confidence of the electorate, especially in politically tensed elections (Schuler 2008: 12-13).

The studies by Dale and Strauss, Prete, Yankah and Schuler discuss one of the most important means by which people communicate in elections, that is through text messages. Also, the studies bring to the fore the use of text messages in mobilizing the electorate during elections. Though our study does not deal directly with text messages, since text messages are another important means of communicating messages in elections in recent times, we will

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take a cue from such messages in explaining other aspects of the work. Our study focuses on messages, including slogans.

Apart from politics, Rettie and Brum (2001: 1, 12) explore the role of SMS text messages in marketing. They argue that while internet-based marketing has failed to deliver public goods, SMS text messages are making important contributions towards marketing globally. Rettie and Brum attribute the causes of failure of m-marketing to restricted internet sites, slow download processes, small computer screen sizes and limited number of computer handsets worldwide. According to them, the strength of SMS text messages lies in the ease with which such messages are received by various mobile phone users. In addition, Rettie and Brum view SMS text messages as constituting a low cost interactive medium arguing that it promotes high level interactivity and intrusiveness. They observe that due to the inability of users of mobile phones to refuse or block unwanted SMS messages, there is always the tendency for some players in the information communication industry to hide behind such messages and create offences that have the potential of undermining the whole industry.

Though text messages per se are not studied in this work, their strengths and weaknesses in marketing are very interesting to note. Some of the strengths of text messages in marketing include ease of such messages and their cost effectiveness. On the other hand, the inability of the recipient to block unwanted messages and the fact that people can hide behind them and create problems are some of the problems with text messages.

In a related study, Morse (1949) and Nianxi (2009) view slogans as necessary towards the promotion of political communication. To Morse (1949: 507-510) slogans are important in politics. Like that of newly born babies, Morse views the mind of the electorate as *tabular rasa* on which politicians write slogans. He notes that after the politicians have written their slogans, the electorate responds by selecting from the slogans those messages that best serve

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their interests. He identifies two slogans, “Hang the Kaiser” and “Make Germany Pay,” as constituting important slogans which influenced the choices of the electorate in the 1918 elections leading to the political victory of the Chinese Coalition Party.

Sharing similar views with Morse on the importance of slogans to party political activities, Nianxi (2009: 2-3) observes that rulers of the various dynasties sometimes made declarations of their slogans either to boost or consolidate their power. He underscores the influence of slogans on the political life of the Chinese, explaining why the Chinese Premier, Mao Zedong, relied on slogans to solicit support for the promotion of his revolutionary agenda. He admits that though slogans are relevant in politics, he, however, adds that they can sometimes have negative effects. He therefore, urges makers of slogans to be circumspect and analytical before making them public. He distinguishes good slogans from bad ones and maintains that good slogans should not only be beneficial to the people but also be easily remembered and rationally demonstrable. Besides the good and bad categorisation of slogans, Nianxi also categorises slogans into two: audio and visuals, arguing that both are critical in political life as they appeal to people’s sense of hearing. He argues that visual slogans are useful, especially for special occasions but maintains that audio slogans are more effective than visuals because of the influence they have on people’s thoughts, especially in China. He views slogans as not only the embodiment of ideas (ideology) of those who make them, but also constituting effective tools for mobilising people for political action.

The studies are very instructive as they explain the role of slogans in politics. They also explain how slogans are used by politicians to convey messages and also strengthen their support base. However, the studies do not take into account the relationship between slogans

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and elections. To fill this gap, our study will offer an in-depth analysis of slogans and how they influence voter choices in Ghana.

In addition to audio and visual slogans, Nianxi distinguishes between commercial advertisements and political slogans, adding that the two differ both in content and form. He was quick to add that the two share similar features. In contrast, Zhu (2009: 1, 30) examines the impact of slogan in labour affairs. He underscores the significant roles of slogans in transforming the Chinese Trade Unions arguing that slogans constitute important mobilising factors in the promotion of changes within the Chinese labour unions. Apart from promoting human resource management, slogans, according to Zhu work to defuse tensions, particularly in Chinese Trade Unions. This, Zhu notes has contributed to the widening of representations within the Chinese Trade Unions.

Part of the studies offers insights into commercial advertisement and political slogans, especially in China, and goes ahead to bring the differences and similarities between the two. The other part of the studies focuses on the effect of slogans on labour. Apart from its role in extending the labour front in China, the studies were used to mobilize workers in the Chinese labour union to bring about the needed change required to move the organisations forward. Our study will take advantage of some of the ideas this study brings to the fore and extend the discussion of slogans to politics so that the relationship between the two will be explored and examined as part of our effort to understand how and why slogans influence voter during elections.

Songs are other determinants of political actions. In their individual studies, Agu (1991) and Wilson Jr. (2006), acknowledge the important position songs occupy in political conflicts. Agu's study looks at the meaning, content and value of the Biafran war songs that emerged

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during the secessionist war in Eastern Nigeria. Apart from their educational, emotional and propaganda values, the songs, according to Agu, also served as an intellectual tool in the hands of the Igbo fighters. He notes that the songs recounted the experiences of the people of Igboland and also represented the identity of the people of Biafra and the cause they fought for. Besides, Agu notes that songs pointed to some of the vested interests in the war and were also used to demonstrate strength and virility. Like the Zimbabwean war of independence, the Biafran war songs, as Agu notes, flourished, conscientised and raised the political consciousness of the Igbo people (Agu 1991: 5-19). In a related study, Wilson Jr's (2006: 388) study focuses on how political songs in Kikuyuland help shaped the minds of individual school children on such issues as ethnicity, identity and nationalism. He notes that before the uprising, the use of political songs in independent schools in Kikuyu homelands was not popular as "there was no incentive to compose or sing Kikuyu political songs". Later on, as Wilson Jr notes, these songs became popular and were mostly used by independent school pupils to organise public performances in the Kikuyu communities. In addition, Wilson Jr notes that the political songs that were taught in Kikuyu schools emphasised the importance of education in the world that the children found themselves. He notes that the political songs that were taught in the said schools strengthened the people in their political struggles in the 1950s, especially when the infamous "State of Emergency" was declared.

Apart from political violence, Cooke and Doornbos (1982: 37, 40, 42) discuss the role of songs in political movements. These scholars note that during the era of the Toro government in Uganda, various protest songs were composed by the Rwenzururu movement, which offered insight into the political orientations and sentiments of the people of Rwenzururu districts. In essence, according to the two scholars, Rwenzururu songs tend to offer insights into the popular sentiments, feelings and particular events of the people, which are expressed

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in songs and thus differ from time to time. Cooke and Doornbos also note that some of the songs made by the movement connote hope, despair, fulfilment and defeat of the lives of the people of Rwenzururu district. They also note that different songs of the movement epitomised different phases in which the movement itself has undergone, including eras for the demand for equality, violent rebellion and their dream for ultimate justice. These, the scholars observe, have manifested in the variety of orientations and concerns in Rwenzururu protest songs.

Even though our study is not based on songs, the studies by Agu and Wilson, as well as Cooke and Dombos, offer important education about the relationship between songs and political conflict on the one hand and songs and politics on the other.

Apart from songs, there is a growing view that jingles are becoming popular in education and politics. This view is shared by Gillis (1977: 106) and Cooper (1947:376). According to Gillis (1977: 106), jingles comprise songs, words and music which concern a person or an organisation's product. He stated that jingles involve identification and promotion of any given product by way of music. Having defined jingles this way, he goes on to identify the various steps involved in the composition, arrangement and production of jingles. He observes that for a jingle to be produced, it requires knowledge and techniques in handling composition and arrangement of music in a harmonious and proficient manner. Apart from knowledge in composition of simple or pleasant melodies, it is required of every jingle composer to be able to compose to suit the experiences of the past and contemporary eras. Besides, knowledge in vocal and verbal techniques is also necessary in addition to recording basic procedures. In a related study, Cooper (1947: 376) underlines the importance of radio jingles in Spanish education. He notes that jingles promote attendance and interest in Spanish schools. In addition to this, jingles seek to promote extracurricular teaching, vocabulary

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development and improvement in word pronunciation. This, Cooper maintains, enhances the quality of human education.

Like songs, jingles are also not considered in the discussion and analysis of this study. But they throw light on their relevance of them in education as well as music. The studies have brought out the relevance of jingles in Spanish schools as they tend to whip the interest of students and thereby encourage attendance in schools.

2.4 GENERAL STUDIES ON ELECTIONS

Bratton (1999) and Goodwin-Gill (1994) underscore elections as the pivot on which democracy revolves. While Bratton admits that due process, independent civil society, free media, and regulation of executive powers are enabling factors that made democracy work (Bratton 1999: 19), Goodwin-Gill maintains that for any society to be democratic, its elections should be free and fair. Among the ten indices for measuring free and fair elections are the electoral law and system, constituency delimitation, election management, civic education and voter information, electoral campaign, and voter's registration (Goodwin-Gill 1994: 27, 79-80). In addition to ensuring that elections are conducted in a free and fair manner, Bratton (1998: 54) underscores the importance periodic elections in ensuring the consolidation of democracy—that the democratic order would be sustained. Choe also examines the role of free and fair elections in a democracy. He questions the extent to which free and fair elections can be measured. In his view, there are no clear-cut tools for measuring free and fair elections; nonetheless, such democratic elections can be measured as free and fair if election administrators and judicial bodies handle the electoral processes in an independent manner and impartially. He develops a three-stage model for measuring free and fair elections: the pre-election period, the election period and the post—election period. For the first stage of the process, Choe examines processes such as constituency demarcation,

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civic education and voter information, voter registration and election campaign (Choe 1997: 262-263).

Even though Goodwin-Gill and Choe identify a number of factors that promote free and fair elections, the two scholars, in addition to Bratton underline the crucial rule elections play in a democracy by maintaining the democratic order. However, the discussion of elections by these scholars did not extend to messages and channels which are the focal points of this study. While our study will discuss three of the elections in Ghana (1992, 2000 and 2008), effort will be made to identify how messages and channels affect the choices of the average voter in Ghana.

On the other hand, Butler (1981) emphasise the importance of electoral rules and systems in countries. Butler observes that these differences occur mostly in terms of their legal frameworks which have been borrowed from other countries. For example, most Commonwealth countries have chosen the first-past-the-post system, while the rest of the democratic world has opted for proportional representation (Butler 1981: 8).

The study discusses one of the important issues in elections, that is, electoral system and how they have become popular in Commonwealth countries as opposed to proportional representation, which is mostly adopted by the rest of the democratic countries around the globe. Even though our study will not deal directly with electoral systems, it will benefit from insights gained from Butler's work, particularly when Ghana's electoral system is based on first-past-the-post system.

Diamond (2008) discusses the significance of electoral commissions in electoral processes. He argues that the task of election management, including voter registration, publication and distribution of voters' lists, counting of ballots, collating and certification is often undermined

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by fraud and ineptitude within the electoral management bodies themselves. To surmount these challenges, Diamond urges electoral commissions to be professional in the execution of their duties, while calling on governments to refrain from interfering in their work (Diamond 2008: 308).

Diamond states that even though the electoral commission plays an important role in elections, its efforts are sometimes undermined by fraud and ineptitude, which tend to mar the beauty of its work. There is no doubt that Diamond's study is too general we intend to rely on some of the ideas that will be distilled from the study to assist us in understanding the specific case of Ghana.

Heywood (2002) deliberates on the functions of elections which include elite recruitment, legitimation, representation and voter education. On the voter, for example, he notes the importance of political communication in providing the electorate with vital information concerning the parties, candidates, policies, political record of the government of the day and so on to enable them to make a good choice at the polls. He emphasises that electoral information, especially those that are meant to engage the public interest and stimulate debate are vital in influencing voter choices (Heywood 2002: 229-231).

The study provides an overview of the functions of elections by indicating the role of political communication in elections, which is part of the focus of our study. Besides considering the role political communication plays in elections, our work will also examine how and why change in political communication have occurred in Ghana since 1995.

Dickerson and Flanagan (1990) emphasise the role of the media in ensuring freedom and equal opportunity for political contenders. They argue that whenever such freedoms are curtailed, electoral campaigns are affected as the electorate lack full political information

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(Dickerson and Flanagan 1990: 307-308). Roskin, Cord and Medeiros (1991) identify the media and personality factors as important in affecting voter choices: They argue that the media, especially television, is an important means by which political candidates are sold to the electorate. Through the power of television the image and even physical appearance of the candidates are sometimes branded to make them more appealing to the electorate (Roskin et al. (1991: 248). Jingles, ideological and allegorical clips form part of the political symbols employed to communicate a party or candidate's message to the electorate. Because of the power of the media very often, the electorate vote without necessarily knowing why or what policy they are voting for, arguing that this does not augur well for the growth and sustenance of democracy (Roskin et al. 1991: 249-250).

The work provides us with the media environment that is necessary for ensuring free and fair elections. In addition to this, the study identifies some of the channels, particularly, television that influence the choice of the electorate. However, the study fails to examine the other channels of communication, notably radio, newspaper and political rally, which also have effect on voter choices. Our study will fill this gap by including radio, television and political rally in the discussion to identify which of the channels of communication Ghanaian voters do rely upon most in making political choices and why it is the case.

On the whole, studies on elections in general have focused on issues other than political communication. Especially regarding elections in Africa, scholars have been preoccupied with problems, conditions and factors that are likely to affect the continent's democratisation process. For example, Gyimah-Boadi notes that in Africa, though elections are widely accepted as central to the democratic agenda, there are a number of other weaknesses associated with them, particularly the deliberate attempts by parties to rig elections at all

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costs. This, he notes, has contributed to fuelling post-election conflicts in Africa (Gyimah-Boadi 2007: 27).

The study identifies rigging as the main cause of conflict in Africa. Even though there are other factors that are responsible for post-election conflicts in Africa, our study will not focus on electoral conflicts per se. We will direct our attention to elections, particularly three of such in Ghana's Fourth Republic and examine how political communication have affected those elections..

Adejumobi (2000) calls for emphasis on the nature and content of multiparty elections as opposed to the form. He condemns the attitude of the West that tends to praise any form of elections on the continent, arguing that it would only spell the doom of African states. He suggests five major remedies if democratisation in Africa is to succeed. These are the promotion of constitutionalism and the rule of law, neutrality and autonomy of electoral institutions, empowerment of civil society organisations, poverty reduction and the deliberate prevention of the military from active politics (Adejumobi 2000: 71).

Adejumobi explained how the West has been praising elections in Africa without taking the trouble to examine the nature and content of such elections on the continent. He specifically identifies five means by which democracy can succeed in Africa. Our focus is not democracy itself, rather its tenet of election, which are our study is considering in relation to factors that influence the choice of voters during elections.

Anglin also suggests a host of election monitoring proposals for solving the problem of elections in Africa. He argues that anything that raises the level of professionalism either by rigorous training or by recruitment of specialists will advance the cause of elections. Furthermore, Anglin suggests that international observers must undertake pre-election

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missions regularly, and collaborate with local observers. Boafo-Arthur (2001: 102-103), on the other hand, highlights some of the key issues concerning election monitoring in Ghana. Among the key issues he discusses, are democratic institutions and domestic observers as well as the question of whether the latter is relevant in the current democratic dispensation in the country. While acknowledging the role of international bodies in election monitoring, he nevertheless argues that African countries have sovereign responsibility to develop a strong and robust electoral process. In his view, the time has come for new democratic states to dispense with the services of international observers to enable domestic observers build their capacities for election monitoring and observation (Boafo-Arthu, 2001).

The studies of Anglin and Boafo-Arthur provide solutions to some of the electoral problems, particularly, election monitoring in Africa. While Anglin believes the continuous reliance on external election observers holds the key to credible and successful elections in Africa, Boafo-Arthu holds a contrary view, arguing that the states in Africa must develop their own capacity to handle such exercise. Since our study focuses on elections, it will not be out of place to rely on these studies, except that our emphasis will be on factors that influence voter choices in Ghana's elections.

2.5 STUDIES ON ELECTIONS IN GHANA

Boafo-Arthur (2008), Karikari (1998) and the Commonwealth Observer Group (1997) discuss some of the factors that fuelled political tension during the 1992 elections. Boafo-Arthur attributes political tension during the 1992 elections first, to the decision of the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) to indirectly hang on to power through the democratic process; some of the provisions of the 1992 Constitution which were designed to protect Flt. Lt. Rawlings and his cohorts, and third, a section of Ghanaians did not want Flt. Lt. Rawlings' return to power as leader of the National Democratic

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Congress. Boafo-Arthur is mainly concerned with factors that might have affected the quality of the 1992 elections. He believes that the role of the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) in the 1992 elections was to avoid a potential electoral crisis which had by then become the hallmark of most elections of Africa.

The study by Boafo-Arthur has brought to the fore the factors responsible for the tension that was experienced during the 1992 elections. Our work will draw on the lesson learnt from this study in our bid to understand the changes that have occurred in the field of political communication and how such changes have affected the choices of the electorate in that election.

Ayee (1998) on the other hand, examines how in the 1996 elections the NDC exploited its incumbency and its impeccable organisational machine to the detriment of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). But Jeffries disagrees with Ayee. He argues that the NDC delivered public goods like roads, water, electricity, clinics and so on to the rural communities for which the rural voter paid by voting for the party. He did not rule out the part that the Rawlings image played in the elections. According to him, scores of the electorate viewed the charisma of Rawlings as an important contributory factor to the NDC's victory in 1996 (Jeffries 1998: 204-206). Other election-related issues or factors that some writers have examined include the role of the Electoral Commissioner in ensuring free and fair elections. Debrah (2001); (Frempong (2001), Gyimah-Boadi (2001) and Nugent (2001) are unanimous on the role successful ethnic mobilisation played in the victory of the NPP in the 2000 elections.

It is refreshing to note the confirmation of these studies on the plethora of factors that influence the choice of the electorate in Ghana's elections. However, the studies, particularly those conducted by Nugent, Electoral Commission of Ghana, Debrah, Frempong and Gyimah-Boadi fail to recognize the fact that not only did ethnicity play a crucial role in the

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elections, but other factors as well. Our work will fill this lacuna by including in the discussion the effect of economic, development and corruption, among other messages which influenced the choices of the electorate.

In a related study, Ayee (2011: 367, 379-380) examines the role of manifestos in the electoral successes and failures of both the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) since the re-democratisation in 1992.

He held that part of the achievements and failures of the two parties can be attributed to their manifestoes, which spelt out their policies and programmes and how the parties intended to rely on them to address the country's numerous problems .

Ayee observed that though some successes have been chalked by the two parties in fulfilling their manifesto objectives, a lot more have to be done. He identified a number of issues including poverty reduction, corruption, employment which continue to serve as key features in the parties' manifestoes.

He provides three useful lessons that can be learnt from the study. First, he underscored the crucial role political manifestoes play in elections and argued that no "serious and credible" political party can win power without recourse to developing an attractive and elaborate political manifesto that will be used to deal with national priorities. Advising the political parties in the country and beyond to take their manifestoes seriously than what is the case currently, Ayee cautioned political parties to find out what is in the national coffers before developing any such documents. He said the ability of the political parties to undertake such exercise will provide them the opportunity to know at first hand the true financial status of the country and thereby helping them to fashion out programmes that they (parties) are

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capable to implementing in order to fulfil their manifesto promises. To this end, he urged political parties to rely on research findings on manifesto issues in order to develop their own.

Second, Ayee maintains that in order for the political parties to develop manifestoes that party loyalists and sympathisers will be associated with, efforts must be made to solicit and incorporate the views of those at the grassroots. In addition, he said, the parties must make conscious efforts to create more platforms to discuss their manifestoes, arguing that it will make it possible for the parties to involve the electorate in such discussions.

Third, he concluded that given the basic aim of political parties in wining power ultimately, it is therefore incumbent on them to develop elaborate manifestoes that will aid the electorate in identifying which of the parties will be able to address their problems and use them to press for change.

Ayee's study highlights the relevance of political parties' manifestoes in elections. The study also points out some of the lingering challenges political parties must address if they are to succeed in elections and ultimately governance. Our work will draw on the lessons learnt from this study in our effort at studying the role that political communication plays in the electoral politics of the country. Specifically, efforts will be made to examine how political parties make use of manifestoes a part of their strategies to win political power.

Karikari (1998:176) is one of the few scholars who have studied the role of the media in Ghanaian elections. He notes that apart from political and other factors, the media also contributed to the acute political tension of the period by engaging in acts that disturbed the peace and security of the country, and compromised their ethical standards and professional competence. He cites the combative posture the media assumed in the course of their work during this period. In their report on the 1992 presidential elections, the COG also noted the

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polarisation of the political scene through the use of inflammatory and hate language, particularly directed at political opponents. This situation, according to the report, exacerbated the antagonism between political opponents, especially during campaigns, and re-opened old wounds (COG Report quoted in Gadzekpo 1997: 59).

The study affirms the contributory role of the media in encouraging tension during elections. Even though people hold different opinions on such matters, it can be said that the role of the media in fomenting political tension during elections cannot be buried under the carpet. Our study draws from this position in understating the role of the media in political communication in the country.

Boadu-Ayeboafoh (2001) also discusses the role the Ghanaian media played in the 2000 election. He argues that during the elections, the Ghanaian media was an important avenue through which the people gauged the capacity of their leaders and made informed choices. By this role, the media was obliged to be objective, fair and transparent. However, especially the state-owned media, demonstrated the high level of bias that compelled the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) to take legal action against the national television—Ghana Television (GTV). Gadzekpo (2008:1-2), on the other hand, contends that since 1996 the Ghanaian media have effectively played their traditional watchdog role very well and contributed to the conduct of free and fair elections in the country. She notes that over a decade now, the media landscape which had been dominated by the state media had now been liberalised, resulting in the establishment of a number of private media houses. In her view, the transparent and fair manner in which the media plied their trade went a long way to influence the outcome of the 2000 elections, and contributed to the consolidation of the country's fragile democracy.

This study provides useful insights into how the Ghanaian media played their education, information and monitoring roles during the 2000 elections, thus contributing their quota

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towards the firming of the country's democratic structures. The study, however, fails to look at how the media communicated political messages and the effect such messages had on choices the electorate made during the elections. Our work will address this shortfall by examining which of the media outlets in Ghana most Ghanaians relied upon in making political choices during the 2000 elections.

Hinson and Tweneboah-Kodua (2012) study centred on marketing strategies and elections in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. They identified political marketing as a critical component in the electoral success of political parties. The study probes into the effectiveness or otherwise of marketing communication influence on voter choices. Apart from this, the study also investigates whether other factors, apart from marketing communication, play any role in the choices voters make during elections in Ghana.

Hinson and Tweneboah-Kodua identified a number of factors that led to the defeat of the New Patriotic Party and these include, first, the fact that the product of the NPP, which comprised of its flag bearer, party itself and their ideology were tainted by allegations of corruption, insensitivity and arrogance. Second, the study of the two gentlemen touched on the inability of the NPP to deliver on the campaign promises it made including fixing the economy, improving the standard of living of the people and the return of lands acquired for public use to the their original owners, that is Gas. Third, they also identified that the neglect of the party's faithful at the grassroots. Fourth, Hinson and Tweneboah-Kodua also point out the inability of the party to address the internal feud that existed in party leading to the destruction of the internal harmony of the party.

Even though the study identified a number of factor that influence voter choices in the 2008 elections in Ghana, the mention of the economy as one of the factors that influence the choice of the electorate was very instructive in the sense that it constituted an important factor of

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influence for the choice of the electorate in both the study of Hinson and Tweneboah and ours. However, the study failed to look at specific channel of communication which also influence voter choices. Our study considers channels such as radio, television, newspaper and political rally as important determinant of voter choices.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE MEDIA AND ELECTIONS IN GHANA: AN OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The media are among the important benchmarks for measuring the success or otherwise of democratic governance. They provide useful information for the people's participation in the governance process and also the basis upon which the electorate make decisions related to the selection of their leaders. This means that the role of elections and the media complements each other in shaping the frontiers of a country's democracy. From their inception in the seventeenth century, the Ghanaian media have gone through various political developments including elections. Beginning from the era of colonial rule to independence through the colonial period, the history of the media has been punctuated with certain electoral and political developments. This chapter examines the various political developments in the history of the media.

3.2 THE GHANAIAN MEDIA FROM 1822 TO DATE

3.2.1 Early Colonial Period (1800-1890s)

Before 1874, British colonial officials had set up the first media outlet to pursue their interests. The *Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligentsia*, sometimes referred to as the *Gazette*, was established in April 1822 by Sir Charles MacCarthy, who was the first Crown Governor of the Gold Coast Settlements (Jones-Quartey 1975: 1, 93). Perhaps, the principal reason for the establishment of the newspaper was to enable the British colonial authorities to inform British companies operating in the country of the activities of their neighbours. The ancillary reason was purely economic. British officials in the colony also depended on the *Gazette* to know from first hand, "about the process and progress of

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commerce" in the Gold Coast (Jones-Quartey 1975: 2). As an official organ of the colonial government, the *Gazette* became the main conduit through which the British colonial officials passed on information to both European merchants and the civil servants in the colony. In addition to this, the *Gazette*, was used to disseminate news on education and development. Furthermore, it became a tool for dealing with the political situation in the country. That said, there is no doubt that this paper was useful to the colonial administration but the British could not sustain it. After a few publications the *Gazette* became extinct, especially after the death of its publisher in the British-Ashanti war in 1824 (Jones-Quartey 1975: 93).

3.2.2 The Early African Press

The establishment of the *Gazette* gave impetus to African journalism. The educated elite of the Gold Coast established their own newspapers to promote their interests. The first newspaper was *The Accra Herald* which was established in 1857 by the Bannerman brothers—Charles and Edmund. The *Accra Herald*, which began as a handwritten medium, later had its name changed to *West Africa Herald* and focused on economic, political and social issues. Between 1857 and 1885 several other newspapers including the *Western Echo* were established by the indigenous educated elite. Missionaries also established newspapers including the *Christian Messenger and the Examiner* (1859) in addition to other newspapers like the *Gold Coast Methodist* (1885) and the *Gold Coast Methodist Times* (1894) which emerged on the scene later. These church-based newspapers focused mainly on social and religious issues but occasionally veered into politics (Asah-Asante 2007: 146-147).

3.2.3 The Era of Protest Movements (1850 -1900)

From 1850 to 1900, the political climate of the country had begun to change. A number of protest movements had been formed. Among them were the Fanti Confederacy (FC), the

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Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) and the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA). The movements contributed to shaping the focus and direction of the newspapers owned by the indigenes. For instance, in 1852 when the British decided to use force in the collection of tax as under the Poll Tax Ordinance, resulting in fierce resistance by the local people and the subsequent bombardment of certain places in Accra, Teshie and Labadi by the British officials, the *Herald* responded swiftly by attacking the colonial authorities on the manner in which they handled the matter. Subsequently, the tax law was abolished in 1868 (Boahen 200: 46; Kimble 1963: 176-179).

3.2.4 The Emergence of Fanti Confederacy (1868-73)

In 1868, chiefs and people of the southern states in the Gold Coast formed the Fanti Confederacy. Part of its main aims was to respond to a number of issues in the colony including activities of the educated elite, the invasion by Asantes of the coastal areas, British response to the invasion and the exchange of forts between the British and the Dutch in the Gold Coast Colony (Boahen 2000: 48-50; Amenumey 2008: 146-147; Kimble 1963: 222-224). Even though the confederates did not have their own newspaper, they relied heavily on the existing ones at the time, particularly *The African Times* to publicise their views, ideas and messages (Ekwelie 1971: 88-89).

3.2.5 The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society and the Lands Ordinance (1889-1900)

In order to sanitise the land sector which had long been affected by mining and land disputes as well as the arbitrary granting of mineral concessions by traditional rulers, the British colonial authorities enacted the *Public Lands Ordinance* and the *Crown Lands Bill in* 1876 and 1896 respectively. While the main object of the former Ordinance was to facilitate the acquisition of land for public use, the latter aimed at vesting what the British regarded as

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waste and forest lands as well as minerals in the British Crown for the use of the colonial government (Kimble 1963: 331-335; Opoku-Agyemang 2009: 67).

Enraged by the actions of the colonial government, some educated elite and chiefs of the Gold Coast formed the ARPS in 1897 to resist the colonial land policies and ultimately bring about political reforms in the colony. In furtherance of its objective, the Society established its own mouthpiece, the *Gold Coast Aborigines* in 1898. Among the objectives of the paper were protection of the rights of the Aborigines to their own lands, promotion of unity among the Aborigines, and serving as a medium for educating the people on their historical past as well as protecting their interests in general (Ekwelie 1971: 90-91). Apart from land issues, the paper also criticised the quality of education in the colony and demanded an educational system, which according to the paper, would bring improvement to the culture of the people (Boahen 2000: 119). In one of its issues of February 1902, the *Aborigines* declared: "We want Educated Fantis... not Europeanised natives. We simply want our education to enable us to develop and to improve our native ideas, customs, manners, and institutions." Other newspapers which supported the cause of Society were the *Gold Coast Methodist Times* and the *Gold Coast Chronicle*. These two newspapers became important assets to the Society and were used to launch attacks on the two land bills (Amenumey 2008: 153-156; Kimble 1963: 330-357).

The media's involvement in the country's politics gained prominence between 1900 and 1930. Before this period, the type of nationalism was aimed at securing reforms and participation by the indigenous people in the administration of the colony. This perhaps explains why some of the newspapers were not militant on political issues (Asah-Asante 2007: 147).

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3.2.6 Agitations for Political Reforms

The inter-war period was one of the periods for the agitations for reforms in governance in British colonies in West Africa. Spearheading the agitations was the NCWA, a regionalist body comprising representatives from The Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The Congress aimed at reforming the colonial system ultimately, particularly, in the areas of administration, legislation, education and healthcare, among others. Apart from these, the issue of self-determination also occupied the attention of the Congress (Boahen 2000: 127). The Congress employed papers like the *Gold Coast Leader,* the *Gold Coast Independent, The Eastern Star* and the *Akuapem Chronicle* to advance its cause. The *Gold Coast Leader,* for instance, was emphatic in its demand for reforms in the colonial administration (Ekwelie 1971: 93-94)

The period after World War II was one of mass nationalism. The nationalist leaders of this period were no longer interested in reforming the colonial administration but rather self-government for the colony. In pursuit of their goal of self-government, they spearheaded the formation of youth movements, political parties and demanded that the conduct of elections be based on universal suffrage. All these developments had far reaching implications on the operations of the media in the Gold Coast.

The formation of youth movements was the most dramatic development. The youth included the West African Students' Union (WASU), the Gold Coast Youth Conference Union (GCYCU) and the West African Youth League (WAYL). The WFYL, was the most insistent on self-government. In pursuit of its aim of achieving self-government for Britain's West African colonies, the League employed newspapers like the *African Morning Post* to attack some of the bills of the colonial government, particularly the *Water Works Sedition Bills*. The

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paper angered the colonial government resulting in the deportation of Wallace Johnson, who was the paper's editor and founder of the League (Boahen 2000: 142-145).

The formation of political parties marked a major step towards the organiSation of popular elections in the country. Several newspapers were also formed to assist the nationalist leaders in their struggle for self-government. Two important political parties—United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and the CPP —were formed during this period and both parties established their own newspapers. The UGCC operated the *Liberator* as its mouthpiece. The CPP established several newspapers including the *Evening News*, *Morning Telegraph* and *Cape Coast Daily Mail* to press home its demand for self-rule. The virulent attacks that the newspapers waged, especially by the CPP newspapers led to the arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of the editors of those media houses (Boahen 2000:179). Even though the arrest and detention of the CPP functionaries, including Nkrumah, seemed initially to have reduced the tempo of the party's activities. It however, did not deter the party from achieving its aim of capturing political power from 1951 onwards. What accounted for the electoral success of the CPP?

3.2.7 The Media and the 1951 Election

Scholars have attributed the electoral victory of the CPP to a number of factors, including the reduction in the voting age to 21, the charisma of Nkrumah and the organisational skill of the CPP. The media was another significant factor in the electoral victory of Nkrumah and his CPP. The media became instruments for mobilising political perspectives on Kwame Nkrumah during the turbulent period preceding the 1951 elections; first the CPP newspapers were used to state the party's position on the agitation of independence and why the Coussey Committee's Report was unacceptable. Some CPP stalwarts, including three editors of the party newspapers, were arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for seditious crimes. Nkrumah

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himself had been hauled before the court and fined for contempt. To press home the demands of the CPP, Nkrumah declared "Positive Action" in January 1950 which resulted in a general strike of workers throughout the country.

The *Evening News* together with the *Morning Telegraph* and the *Cape Coast Daily Mail* made it possible for Nkrumah to launch his campaign of Positive Action (Asante 1996: 5-6). The colonial government responded swiftly by arresting Nkrumah and a number of CPP journalists, for declaring Positive Action (Austin 1964: 114-116). Thus, by the time of the election, a number of CPP stalwarts, including Nkrumah and some prominent journalists were languishing in jail. Those journalists who were later released from jail used the media to carry the message of Nkrumah from prison to party faithful and urged them to be steadfast. The CPP members who were jailed and later released were given the symbolic title of "prison graduates". Austin notes that the party newspapers gave prominence to those symbolic actions and kept the interest of the party alive, and also galvanised support for it in the upcoming election.

When the electioneering campaign began in full swing, the contending political parties made extensive use of other forms of communication to sell their messages. The painting of propaganda vans in party colours, the use of emblematic materials to communicate the party's messages as well as party songs and dances helped in no small way in canvassing support for the parties that contested the election (Austin 1964: 117, 127). When the official dates for the election were released, the CPP for instance, urged its supporters to rely on the *Evening News* for political direction, which the paper gave through daily articles, features and captions. The *Evening News* exalted the CPP through the use of phrases and quotations from the Bible and other books to whip up support for the party. Here are a few examples: "Chameleon organisations shall pass away, but the political Holy Ghost, CPP, shall stay for

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evermore. Long Live Kwame", "Oh Dynamic Cii Pii Pii, Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (Austin 1964: 127-128). Besides, the CPP also made use of slogans. Through the *Evening News,* the party published these on a daily basis. Here are a few examples: "We prefer Self-Government with danger to servitude in tranquillity", "We have the right to live as men" and "We have the right to govern ourselves". Other slogans of the party included "Ci Pi Pi Beko Asemblee"—literarily meaning, "CPP will be in the National Assembly" (Austin 1964: 128). In addition, the *Evening News* publicised in its columns activities of the party. This, according to Austin, "provided some measure of the energies and devotion among the CPP leaders in its early years" (Ibid: 128). The CPP intensified the use of propaganda vans, which were painted in party colours to spread their messages. Other parties found these activities quite intimidating, and expressed concern over it (Austin 1964: 127). All these contributed to the CPP's electoral success in 1951.

3.2.8 The 1954 Election and the Media

After rejecting the previous constitution, the CPP forced the colonial government to introduce a new one in 1954. The new constitution, which was to have an all-elected legislative assembly and a cabinet was intended to usher the country into self-rule within the shortest possible time and June 15, 1954 was set aside for the election of the 104 members of the Legislative Assembly (Boahen 2000: 170, 178).

The 1954 election was contested by eight political parties. These were the Northern People's Party (NPP), Ghana Congress Party (GCP), the Muslim Association Party (MAP), the Togoland Congress (TC), the Anlo Youth Organisation (AYO), the Ghana National Party (GNP), the Ghana Action Party (GAP) and the CPP. With the exception of the CPP, the other parties were regional, ethnic and religious in character (Ibid: 179-181). The June 1954 election ended with the CPP emerging victorious, winning 72 out of the 104 seats. The NPP

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then became the main opposition party with 12 seats. The GCP won only one seat. TC and AYO performed poorly with one and zero seats respectively (Boahen 2000: 181).

According to Boahen, the success of the CPP is attributed partly to the use of the slogan 'self-government now'. Even though the NPP's slogan of "the North for the northerners" was very important as it created a strong sense of unity among the leaders of the party (Austin 1964: 229-229), it could not match that of the CPP, which was in tune with the aspirations of the people. In addition to the "self-government now" slogan, the CPP relied extensively on propaganda to mobilise the electorate against the opposition parties, especially the GCP.

It is true that the opposition tried to counter some of the CPP's propaganda. However, the results of those rebuttals were not effective to erase the negative impressions the CPP had created about the opposition in the minds of the voters. For instance, in one of its publications, the *Ashanti Pioneer*, the main mouthpiece of the opposition, exposed what it described as the ostentatious lifestyle of the CPP leadership. It alleged:

…the masses should be reminded that the CPP entered the Legislative Assembly as tramps in N.T. smocks. Today, within barely three years, they are riding not in buses, not even in taxis, but in luxurious American saloon cars. A good number of them have built mansions and go about in tails and toppers (Boahen 2000: 212).

3.2.9 The 1956 Election and the Media

It took the people of the colony three more years before attaining independence. Two important developments, including the Togoland question of unification or secession and the birth of the National Liberation Movement (NLM), delayed the independence of the Gold Coast (Boahen 2000: 182).

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Germany lost not just the Second World War; it also lost its overseas colonies. Togoland, which was one of the colonies of Germany became part of the mandated territory that was given to France and Britain to administer. Portions of these areas that were controlled by these two powers became known as French and British Togoland (Boahen 2000: 70). In 1954, Britain, prior to the granting of independence to the Gold Coast, requested the United Nations (UN) to unite British Togoland with the Gold Coast since it was not prepared to administer British Togoland after Gold Coast's independence. This led to the plebiscite of 1956 and the subsequent unification of British Togoland with the Gold Coast (Boahen 2000: 182).

Three months after the 1954 general elections, a new party, the NLM was born. Two problems arose after the formation of the party leading to the delay of independence. The first was the kind of constitution that was to be adopted by the Gold Coast after independence. The second had to do with whether it was necessary for the Gold Coast to have another election. While the CPP favoured a unitary constitution, the NLM advocated a federal constitution. The CPP argued against fresh elections claiming that the 1954 election was conclusive. But the NLM believed otherwise. According to the party, another election was necessary to determine which of the two parties deserved to rule the Gold Coast after independence. The *impasse* was ended by another election on July 17, 1956 (Boahen 2000: 182).

In the 1956 elections, the political parties made effective use of the media and other channels to communicate their messages. For instance, the CPP in one of its messages asked the electorate to vote for the CPP if they (Gold Coasters) were, indeed, interested in independence. To the CPP, a vote for the NLM would not only divide the country but also delay independence (Austin 1964: 329-330). The use of propaganda leaflets also became part

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of the means by which both the CPP and NLM sold their messages to the electorate. In one of such leaflets, the NLM urged voters not to vote for the CPP because it regarded them as gangsters, thieves, rogues, traitors and corrupt people. The leaflet further accused the CPP of having corrupted the moral fibre of the society by introducing a number of immoral forms of behaviours. The CPP leaders were alleged to be "crooks" and "swindlers" (Austin 1964: 332).

The CPP responded swiftly by describing leaders of the NLM as saboteurs, tribalists and federalists (*Evening News* of July 13, 1956). The election of 1956 started with some difficulties. The main political parties, the CPP and NLM, employed violence and intimidation as part of their campaign strategies. Their respective newspapers, *Evening News* and the *Liberator*, were according to Austin, "replete with bloodcurdling accusations and threats of reprisals" (Austin 1964: 336-338; *Daily Graphic* of April 27, 1956).

In the end, the CPP once again won the election with 71 seats. The rest of the parties— the NLM, NPP, TC, MAP and FYO—won 12, 15, 2, 1 and 1 seats respectively. The two remaining seats went to independent candidates. In terms of votes, the CPP garnered 398, 141 votes with all the other parties polling 299,116 votes (Austin 1964: 247, 354). Soon after the election, Nkrumah introduced the "Motion of Destiny" in the Legislative Assembly, in which he demanded independence for the Gold Coast.

3.2.10 The Government of the CPP, 1957-1966

The immediate post-colonial period witnessed two important elections, especially during Nkrumah's reign. The two elections were mainly plebiscites and were held in 1960 and 1964. But since there were no national elections other than plebiscites, which is not the main focus of this chapter, it is important to defer any detailed discussion on the subject and rather

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concentrate on the core issue of the media and politics at the time. In this section, we focus on the relationship between the CPP government and the media during the 1957-1966 years.

A number of decisions that were taken by the CPP government set the tone for media operations in the country. The CPP government established the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with the sole responsibility of overseeing government's communication with the public. The *Evening News*, which was later converted into *Ghanaian Times*, became the official mouthpiece of the government, and was used to counter the influence of the old colonial newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*. Later on, the *Daily Graphic* became part of the pro-CPP newspapers as its publishers, the Mirror Group of London, sold it off to the CPP government (Asante, 1996).

On August 19, 1960, the CPP government established the Ghana News Agency (GNA). The object of the Agency was to:

> *...provide for the dissemination of truthful unbiased news, and to carry out such other activities as may appropriately be associated with the dissemination of news*.

From this time onwards, the CPP government decided to expand the frontiers of the country's anti-colonial media by establishing a broadcasting station – Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) to broadcasts messages in Portuguese, French and Swahili to other parts of the continent still under colonial rule. The GBC, which emerged from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as "a small wired relay station" broadcasts in six of the local Ghanaian languages (Asante 1996: 8-9). To propagate its political and ideological objectives, especially at the grassroots, the CPP government established the Information Services Department (ISD), which made extensive use of the Department's mobile and information vans to

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disseminate information to people in the rural areas (Gadzekpo 2000: 36). This, according to Asante (1996: 17), proved to be an effective strategy that made the CPP popular among the rural dwellers.

Earlier, the various institutions of state that were under the thumb of the colonial government, particularly the media, had begun to change colour; and from that time onwards pursued the agenda of the CPP government. Meanwhile, the CPP administration was becoming increasingly authoritarian and intolerant of opposition to its rule and criticisms (Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966:62). The government also redefined its relationship with the media, including imposing restrictions on the media through a number of repressive legislations. Laws including the *Preventive Detention Act* (*PDA) 1958* and *Newspaper Licensing Act, 1963 (Act 189)*, the *Criminal Code Amendment Act* and *False Report and Sedition Acts* were among the instruments used by the government to consolidate its hold on the media and this obviously rendered the media's advocacy and watchdog roles ineffective (Gadzekpo 2000: 36-37; Gadzekpo 2003: 4).

The effect of these repressive laws on the opposition was far-reaching. Bluwey (1993) notes that, during this period, the Nkrumah-led CPP government "haunted and harassed the opposition" until finally banning it. But this did not come as a surprise. From the late 1950s, the CPP government had already begun tightening the noose around the opposition through the passage of *Avoidance of Discrimination Act 1957*. The objective of this Act "was to prohibit an organisation using or engaging in tribal, regional, racial or religious propaganda to the detriment of any other community or securing the election of persons on account of their tribal, regional or religious affiliations and for other purposes connected therewith".

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Chiefs were also not spared in the process. Those perceived by the government as belonging to the opposition were deposed and their positions taken over by those who enjoyed the favour of the government (Essuman-Johnson 1991: 54).

The result of these developments was to turn the media into instruments of repression. Sometimes the media, particularly those controlled by the CPP, prompted government on harsh measures it had to take against its opponents. The ban of the *Ashanti Pioneer* in the 1960s was a typical example. The paper was accused of constantly criticising the CPP government over its policy on the Congo crisis. The CPP party media, especially the *Evening News*, which responded to the scathing attacks of the *Pioneer*, instigated the government to ban that newspaper (Asante 1996: 22-23).

The CPP government applied additional policies to bring the media firmly under control. The policies included the following: first, editors of the state-owned media (SOM) were made functionaries of the CPP; second, the government appointed the governing boards of the state owned-media. These policies in addition to the appointment of a 9-member committee by the CPP government to inspect published works in schools and libraries in the country obliged the media to toe the government's line (Arhin 1974: 331; Gadzekpo 2000: 37).

3.2.11 The Government of the National Liberation Council

On February 2, 1966 the military toppled the CPP government and was replaced by the National Liberation Council (NLC) which ruled the country for about three years and handed over power to a democratically elected government of the Progress Party (PP) in 1969. Meanwhile, various sections of the Ghanaian population had hailed the coup and its leaders. The state-owned media lent their support to the military administration. The G*hanaian Times*, for instance, had declared: "Tyranny is dead...democracy is reborn" and went on to say that

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Ghanaians were **"**grateful for the timely intervention of the Army and Police who have saved us [the country] from destruction of the tyrant Kwame Nkrumah who ran the country as a mad man would run his house". The paper concluded that "it is our bounded duty as people who have been witnesses to the tyranny and arbitrary rule of Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP to give full support to the Army and Police authorities in their present situation", adding:

> *One has to take a short stroll through the streets of Accra to become aware that the people of Ghana fully support the National Liberation Council in its determination to clean up the mess created by created by Kwame Nkrumah* (quoted in Asante 1996: 39).

Apart from urging Ghanaians to support the junta, the media, both private and state-owned, wrote a series of articles, editorials and comments that did not only laud the government but also attacked the previous administration. The *Christian Messenger*, for instance, endorsed the new administration by describing the coup as a "glorious revolution", which according to the paper, made it possible for the people of the country to know and live in freedom.

The junta reciprocated the media's support by taking decisions and enacting laws that enhanced civil liberties including the freedom of the media. For instance, the NLC ordered the release of all political prisoners and lifted the ban on the *Ashanti Pioneer*. In addition, all those several foreign correspondents and individuals who had been banned by the CPP administration were once again made to practice their vocation in the country (Asante 1996: 39). Two years later, the junta also passed into law the *Ghana Broadcasting Decree, 1968* (*NLCD* 226) which sought to provide for and open, independent and impartial broadcasting services in the country (Ampaw 2004: 26). Another law which was passed by the military was the *National Liberation Council* (Defamation by CPP Newspapers, etc.) *Decree, 1966*

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(NLCD 50). Section 1 of the law made it impossible for any action to be brought against the state, the State Publishing Corporation (SPC), the Graphic Corporation, the Guinea Press or the Spark Publications in respect of certain statements published before the coup (Ampaw 2004: 642).

According to section 1, paragraph 1 of the law:

> *No action for defamation or injurious falsehood shall be brought against the Republic, the State Publishing Corporation, the Graphic Corporation, the Guinea Press Limited, or the Spark Publications in respect of any statement published by the Government of Nkrumah, the said Guinea Press Limited or the Spark Publications before the 25th day of February, 1966 whether the statement was published in any newspaper or in any other manner.*

Paragraph 2 of this section added that: "Without prejudice to the general effect of sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph, any reference to a statement published before the 25th day of February, 1966 in any of the newspapers specified in the First Schedule of this Decree". Newspapers that were mentioned in the First Schedule of the Decree included the *Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Evening News, Spectator Weekly, Daily Gazette, Spark* and *L'Etincele* (Ampaw 2004: 642).

Section 2 of the law indemnified the SOM (*Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Evening News, Spectator Weekly, Daily Gazette, Spark and L'Etincele*) from prosecution regarding statements they must have published under the CPP government. The immunity was also extended to the editors of these newspapers. Under the Second Schedule of the law, four

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newspapers were identified and these were the *Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, Evening News* and *Spectator Weekly* (Ampaw 2004: 643).

Clearly, these actions by the NLC, particularly the decision by the government to promote radical legal reforms regarding freedom of speech and of the press (Amenumey 2008: 237-238) led to the establishment and growth of several newspapers in the country despite their ideological leanings. Apart from the *Echo* and the *Star*, which were sympathetic to the cause of the Danquah-Busia tradition and the *Evening Standard*, which supported the interest of the CPP, other newspapers, particularly the *Spark, Daily Gazette*, the *Sunday Punch and* the *Evening* News, which the CPP government used for ideological purposes were banned completely. However, newspapers, including the *Legon Observer, Western Tribune* and *Ashanti* Pioneer (*Pioneer* as it was later called) which were banned by the CPP administration were allowed to resume publication (Amoakohene 2004: 29).

Notwithstanding the seemingly late liberal attitudes of the government, when the junta found it expedient, it took strong measures against the media. In 1966 after setting free people the CPP administration had detained under the PDA, the military government immediately placed in protective custody a number of people including four editors of the SOM, who were subsequently replaced by new editors (Asante 1996: 38). In addition to this, the NLC passed on October 4, 1966, the *National Liberation Council* (*Prohibition of Rumours*) *Decree, 1966* (*NLCD 92*). Section 1 of the decree states:

> *Any person who publishes any statement, rumour or report which is likely to cause fear and alarm or despondency to the public or to disturb the public peace or to cause disaffection against the National Liberation Council among the public or among members of the Armed Forces or of the Police Service, shall be guilty of an offence*

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> *and upon conviction, shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 1,000 Cedis or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three years or to both.*

Under this law, it was a crime for any individual to air any statement that has the potential of causing "disaffection" against the government, the police or the armed forces (Asante 1996: 38-39).

The government's crackdown on the media continued unabated. In December 1967, editors of the *Evening News, Ghanaian Times* and the *Daily Graphic* were dismissed for criticising the government over the agreement on the divestiture of a pharmaceutical company. The Commissioner for Information, Mr Kwabena Osei-Bonsu, resigned his position in protest describing the action of the government as one that tended to "jeopardise media freedom" in the country. On the other hand, the Chairman of the NLC, General Joseph Ankrah justified the dismissals at a press conference arguing that the editors could not go contrary to government policy. On January 11, 1968, 28 members of the editorial board and the editor of the *Legon Observer* were all put before the High Court on charges of contempt. The basis of their offence was that the *Legon Observer* had criticised the slow manner in which the courts were handling cases before it. The Attorney-General (AG) felt the action of the newspaper was tantamount to bringing the courts into disrepute. Hence the legal action against them (Asante 1996: 47-48). Before leaving office in 1969, the NLC repealed most of the stringent laws it had enacted including *Rumour and Newspaper Decrees*. The government also lifted the moratorium on political activities (Asante 1996: 49).

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3.2.12 The 1969 Election and the Media

Following the lifting of the ban on political party activities on May 1, 1969, about twenty political parties declared their intention to participate in the impending election. Only eight of them were able to register; namely, the Progress Party (PP), the All People's Congress (APC), the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), People's Action Party (PAP), the Nationalist Party (NP), the Republican Party (RP), the All People's Party (APP) and the Ghana Democratic Party (GDP) (Crabbe 1975: 130). The CPP was banned by the NLC on June 6, 1969 under the *Prohibited Organisations Decree of 1969*. Those who survived the action of the military government, with the exception of NAL, formed alliances with other parties to compete in the elections. Among them were the RP, APP, NP and GDP that formed the All People's Republican Party (APRP). The proscription and alliances contributed to a further reduction of the number of political parties from nine to five which finally contested the 1969 election (Crabbe 1975: 131; Twumasi 1975: 140; Debrah 2005: 96).

Notwithstanding the problems discussed above, the 29th August, 1969 election came on as scheduled. The election resulted in a landslide victory for the PP. Out of the 150 seats, Dr Busia's PP won 105. The other parties garnered a total of six seats (Twumasi 1975: 1)

Though the 1969 elections ended smoothly, it was very much polarised along ethnic lines with most of the ethnic Akans and Ewes voting overwhelmingly for their tribesmen who were leading the PP and NAL respectively (Gocking 2005: 155). Despite the repression and intimidation of the military regime, the media played an important role in the election by educating the electorate on the issue at the time. Apart from the SOM, some of the parties, which had established their own newspapers made effective use of such newspapers to propagate their messages. For instance, while the *Star* and *Echo* promoted and defended the

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interest of the PP during the electioneering campaign, the NAL, on the other hand, depended solely on the *Evening Standard* for coverage of its campaign activities.

Around the same time, the *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation*, which was the only radio station operating in the country, also reported rallies, statements and press conferences of the various political parties. Some of the issues the media dwelt on included the promotion of rural and infrastructural development, expansion of educational opportunities as well as the creation of enabling environment for foreign investment (Gocking 2005: 155).

3.2.13 The Progress Party Government

The NLC handed over power to the PP government headed by Dr K.A. Busia on September 3, 1969. During the twenty-two month rule, the PP government implemented liberal policies that sustained the sturdy growth of the rule of law, political pluralism, freedom of speech and the protection of human rights. The liberal political environment also encouraged the growth of a vibrant media in the country. Following the government's repeal of the *Newspaper Licensing Decree* scores of newspapers emerged on the media scene. The notable ones being the *Palaver*, the *Echo*, the *Post* and the *Spokesman* which joined the existing church-owned newspapers like the *Christian Messenger* and the *Catholic Standard*. The expansion of the media landscape created an important forum for the free flow of ideas and for the media to demand accountability from the government. The *Spokesman*, for example, continued to criticise the PP administration and exposed what it regarded as "corruption in the government" as well as the law that banned the display of pictures of former President Nkrumah. Admittedly, sometimes, "less than subtle methods were occasionally used to ensure that individual pressmen occasionally behaved themselves" (Ansah 1973: 316). However, even the SOM, which traditionally toed government line, could attack the government when the need arose. For example, Kofi Badu, the editor of the *Spokesman*, who

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was alleged to have published false statement likely to injure the reputation of the PP administration was charged with libel against the PP government. The *Spokesman* had accused the PP government of inappropriate spending on General Afrifa's township development project in the Ashanti Region. The case was later withdrawn by the government (Asante 1996: 55-56; Gocking 2005: 159).

Despite its liberal credentials, the PP government sometimes showed a great deal of intolerance with regard to certain issues. For example, Cameron Duodu, editor of the *Daily Graphic* was dismissed for criticising Dr. Busia's policy of dialogue with the then apartheid regime in South Africa. (Asah-Asante 2007: 153). The control of the SOM by the PP government became tighter, especially from 1971 onwards when Dr Busia himself handled the Information portfolio after reshuffling his cabinet (Goldsworthy 2000: 19).

3.2.14 National Redemption Council/Supreme Military Council I and II

The PP government on January 13, 1972, which had ruled for only 22 months, was removed abruptly by soldiers in a coup d'état that ushered in the National Redemption Council (NRC). The new government's attitude towards the media was not different from its predecessor. The period immediately following the coup d'état was characterised by arrests, detentions, dismissals and censorships of the media (Asante 1996: 60). Editors of the SOM were arrested, detained and subsequently replaced. Newspapers, particularly the *Ashanti Pioneer*, which had previously aligned with the NLC and the PP, were banned initially only to resume publication later with a changed tone (Asah-Asante 2004: 153). On July 17, 1972 the NRC further promulgated the *National Redemption (Council Control of Publications) Decree, 1972 (NRCD 89)* which banned two leading private newspapers—the *Echo* and *The Pioneer*. According to section 1 of the decree:

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> *On and after the commencement of this Decree, it shall be an offence for any person to publish, distribute, sell, offer for sale, or circulate any of the newspapers specified in the Schedule to this Decree or any part of such newspaper or to be in possession of any such newspaper or part thereof published in contravention of this section.*

In September when the ban was lifted, only the *Echo* resumed publication. *The Pioneer*, which had been critical of the government, began publication later but eventually succumbed to pressure from the military government by replacing the paper's editor. Following that, *The Pioneer* changed colour and began to sing the praises of the government of the day (Asante 1996: 60).

On March 2, 1973 the government reintroduced the *Newspaper Licensing Decree,1973 (NRCD 161)*. Section 2 of the decree stipulates that:

> *Without prejudice to the provisions of section 3 of this Decree, the Commissioner may, if the holder of a newspaper licence fails to comply with any condition included in such licence or for any other reason, by Executive Instrument published in the Gazette revoke or suspend such licence for such period as he thinks fit"*

The decree which empowered the NRC government to grant, refuse or withdraw the license of any offending newspaper in the country had negative consequences on free expression, leading to the closure of both the *Legon Observer* and the *Echo*. During this period, newsprint was in short supply and the government had become the sole supplier. This obviously made it possible for the NRC to use the supply of newsprint as a bait to win certain critical newspapers to its side. Those papers which did not play ball with the government,

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including the influential *Legon Observer* had to cease publication (Asante 1996: 61-62; Asah-Asante 2007: 154). The media became docile and ineffective as a result of these restrictions and were used to champion the cause of the government (Asah-Asante 2007: 154).

From 1975 onwards, governance in the country grew from bad to worse with corruption and trade malpractices, known as "Kalabule," became pervasive. Later, the military government attempted to legitimise and perpetuate its rule through the Union Government (UNIGOV) proposal which was to comprise soldiers, the police and civilians. This proposal provoked stiff opposition from a section of the society – students, the business community and professionals who agitated against the government under the umbrella of the Association of Recognised Professional Bodies (ARPB). Notwithstanding the massive opposition from society, the state media defended the UNIGOV proposal. They attacked the opponents in disparaging terms (Asante 1996: 63-64; Boahen 1988: 15; Oquaye 1980: 84). In March, 1978 when the government announced the date for the 1978 referendum, the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* gave preponderant coverage to the UNIGOV proposal, including favourable editorial comments and ignored arguments against the concept. Even when the government had clearly rigged the referendum and subsequently arrested and detained members of the various civil society groups who opposed the referendum, the SOM remained in support of the government's proposal (Asah-Asante 2004: 67).

The opponents of UNIGOV had the support of papers like the *Christian Messenger* and the *Catholic Standard.* For instance, in one of its July/August 1977 feature articles, the *Christian Messenger,* after questioning whether the concept of UNIGOV would work, concluded that the concept after all was not the panacea to the problems that have necessitated the introduction of the new political concept (Koomson 2004: 170).

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The General Akuffo-led Supreme Military Council (SMC) II government replaced SMC I in a palace coup soon after the 1978 referendum. The SMC's relations with the media were not entirely liberal. As contained in the *Ghanaian Times* editorial of August 8, 1978, the SMC government pledged to ensure media freedom in the country. "The government yesterday assured the press of freedom to report, criticise and comment on any subject of public interest without fear or favour provided they are not libellous, seditious, discourteous and state security busting items, the Press does not consist in the freedom of an editor to crucify principle so that he can say one thing today and other tomorrow...".

This assurance notwithstanding, the SMC II government redeployed the supervising editor of the *Ghanaian Times* to the Ministry of Information (Koomson 2002: 168; Asante 1996: 71). Also though it had pledged to establish a Press Council which would "provide a suitable framework within which the media, Ghanaian and foreign journalists could practice" (Udofia 1982: 397-398), it never did. However, in most cases, the media remained non-partisan, especially regarding issues of national concern; and the environment was relatively congenial. On the other hand, the state-owned media had a tendency to defend the government on almost every issue (Otuo-Acheampong 1981: 32).

3.2.15 The Era of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

On June 4, 1979 the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) seized power from the SMC II government and unleashed bloody retribution during its three-month rule. The period was characterised by draconian prison sentences on alleged wrongdoers, the execution of eight senior military officers, including three former heads of state, for corruption. It also embarked on public flogging of offenders as well as confiscation of ill-acquired properties. To cap it all, the Makola market was infamously razed down for allegedly becoming a den for economic crimes (Gyimah-Boadi 2007: 128).

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Initially, the media, especially the state-owned ones, were sober in their reporting. Later, they rallied to the side of the new military government. They turned a blind eye to the human rights abuses that were being committed by the government. Some of the headlines carried by the media after the execution of the eight generals of the Armed Forces appeared to endorse the killings; for example, the *Ghanaian Times* and *Catholic Standard* wrote: "A Lesson to All Ghanaians" and "Great Lesson" respectively (Koomson 2004: 172-173).

3.2.16 The 1979 Elections and the Media

The Akuffo-led government had before it was ousted in June 1979, lifted the ban on party politics on New Year Eve. Six political parties namely, the Popular Front Party (PFP), the United National Convention (UNC), Action Congress Party (ACP), Social Democratic Front (SDF), People's National Party (PNP) and Third Force Party (TFP) registered to contest the elections. The AFRC allowed the democratic election to take place on June 18, 1979 and subsequently returned the country to constitutional rule.

The election, which brought to power, Dr Hilla Limann's government of the People's National Party (PNP) was keenly contested by the six political parties. In spite of the few media outlets at the time, the 1979 electioneering campaigns made effective use of the media, particularly newspapers. Almost every space in the newspapers was filled with election messages, information and stories. In addition, the newspapers published pictures of scenes from the campaigns of the political parties, particularly pictures of presidential candidates. Other areas the media focused on included voter education and the political choices open to the electorate. Though the coverage of the 1979 electioneering campaign by the SOM was generally fair, nevertheless, some of the reports by the media favoured some of the political parties more than others. The *Ghanaian Times*, for instance, gave more space to the campaigns of the six political parties than the *Daily Graphic* (Mensa-Bonsu 1979: 33, 35).

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Apart from newspapers, the only television station in the country, GBC Television, gave coverage to the political parties. Various presidential candidates were quizzed on national television on various subjects. Some of the interviews, particularly those that bordered on marriage became very important for some women voters in casting their votes (Oquaye 1980: 174-175).

3.2.17 The Government of the People's National Party

For its inauguration on September 24, 1979, the PNP government created the needed environment for the media to operate freely. It established a Press Commission on 25th July 1980 with the mandate to "insulate the press from direct political interference so that journalists in the public sector can discharge their duties of objectivity informing the people and acting as watchdogs on governmental activities without fear of reprisals from the government" (Ansah 1991: 8). The PNP government further abolished the Press Freedom Complaints Committee. The Committee, which was established on January 21, 1981, sought to investigate, among other things, any acts that had the potential of militating against the freedom of the media in the discharge of their duties. The Committee was also to identify existing laws that have negative consequences on press freedom in the country (Asante 1996: 82). Consequently, both the state and private media could perform their watchdog roles. They were critical of government policies when necessary (Ansah 1992: 52).

3.2.18 The Provisional National Defence Council Government

The PNP government had spent only 24 months in office when it was removed from office by Flt. Lt. J. J. Rawlings on 31st December 1981. The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government, which took over from the PNP government, comprised retired, serving

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and ex-soldiers and professionals, and it lasted eleven years before handing over power to the government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in January 1993. The PNDC government pursued a number of policies which were akin to those undertaken during the AFRC era. The policies, included seizure of private properties, workers taking over management of state companies and corporations, establishment of tribunals that dispensed revolutionary justice, detentions without trial, the establishment of People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and Workers Defence Committees (WDCs) as organs of popular government (Gyimah-Boadi 2007: 128). Sooner, the policies of the PNDC regime took a toll on the media. Editors and deputy editors of the SOM were replaced. Some editors in the POM, including Ebow Gordon of the *Punch* newspaper, who had been critical of Rawlings before his second coup, had to flee into exile. Other journalists who remained in the country and were still critical of the government were either silenced or detained. Notable among those who suffered detention were Tommy Thompson and John Kugblenu, publisher and editor respectively of the *Free Press* (Asah-Asante 2007: 156-157).

3.2.19 The 1992 Elections and the Media

The 1992 elections, which constituted the first democratic election after decades of military dictatorship, saw the emergence of five parties on the political scene to contest the polls of November 3, 1992. The parties were the NDC, led by Jerry John Rawlings, New Patriotic Party (NPP) by Prof. Adu Boahen, People's Heritage Party (PHP) by Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Erskine, the National Independence Party (NIP) led by Kwabena Darko and the People's National Convention (PNC) by Dr Hilla Limann (Nugent 1995: 222-234). Despite his initial lack of enthusiasm to democratic rule, Rawlings, who finally served as a candidate for an alliance of three political parties, namely, the NDC, NCP and EGLE Party (EP), won the first multi-party elections of the Fourth Republic with 58.3 per cent of the total votes. Prof. Adu

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Boahen, who came second, obtained 30.4 per cent of the votes. The other three political parties obtained a meagre 6.7, 2.8 and 1.7 per cent respectively of the votes (Nugent, 1995). Following the results, the opposition parties complained about what they called massive irregularities with regard to the polls and boycotted the parliamentary elections scheduled for December 6, 1992. The boycott made it possible for only the NDC, NCP and EP parliamentary candidates as well as a few independent candidates to contest and win the election. Out of the 200 seats, the NDC captured 189 leaving the NCP, EP and independent candidates with eight, one and two seats respectively (Nugent, 1995).

The 1992 elections were characterised by a number of controversies that compelled the Electoral Commission (EC) to take a number of measures that contributed to the total overhaul of the country's electoral system. But this feat could not have been achieved without the support of civil society, including the media, whose presence was greatly felt in the realm of voter education and registration, advocacy and *reportage* of campaign messages of the political parties. Before the 1992 elections, the country's media were under the thumb of the government (Karikari, 1998). The state-owned GBC radio and television backed the government and its new party to the hilt. But this situation was to change when in May 1992, the PNDC government repealed the *Newspaper Licensing Law 1985*. This singular action by the government gave impetus to the media, especially those that belong to the state, to resume their role as the watchdog of society. For instance, the state-owned *Daily Graphic*, which hitherto had refused to provide coverage for both the opposition parties and some individuals, reversed its position (Karikari, 1998). This situation had positive impact on the state-owned newspapers (SONs) as they became credible sources of information to the electorate prior to the 1992 presidential and parliamentary elections. The period also saw the emergence of scores of independent newspapers, which were critical of the government. Even though none

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of the political parties had established its own newspaper, the private newspapers almost unanimously campaigned against the ruling PNDC government during the 1992 electioneering campaign. In other words, the private newspapers campaigned for votes for the opposition political parties and also exposed some of the excesses of the PNDC government, including allegations of corruption and human rights abuses.

The PNDC reacted to the harsh media criticisms by resorting to legal suits and physical harassments with the aim of stifling the growing opposition from the media; but the media were not to be intimidated. They continued to monitor the activities of the government and exposed all wrongdoings. In terms of overall media coverage of the 1992 elections, Karikari has noted that while the private media gave more coverage to the opposition, the state-owned media favoured the government (Karikari 1998: 173-183). The partisan coverage of the 1992 campaign by both state and private media was also echoed by the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG). The Group observed that, apart from a few instances, the media particularly the independent ones, abandoned any serious attempt at addressing the issues and rather indulged in ferocious and scurrilous attacks on their opponents. This, the Group noted, only opened old wounds (COG 1992: 45-49).

3.2.20 State of the Media before the 1996 Elections

The NDC assumed office on January 7, 1993. The media was conscious of the freedoms that the 1992 Constitution had granted them and were determined to exercise them. They endeavoured to hold the government accountable and also exposed corruption in government and criticised government policies. It was in pursuance of these rights that Dr Charles Wereko-Brobbey established the first private radio station – *Radio* Eye—without being allocated frequency by the Frequency Board. The close-down of the radio station and seizure of his equipment set in motion a series of policy changes that led to the re-allocation of the

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frequency to another station—*Joy FM* to operate the first commercial private radio station. The changes in policy on private broadcasting led to the liberalisation of the airwaves that has witnessed the emergence of more than 200 radio stations and about 10 television stations in the country. In spite of the freedom that the media enjoyed, government periodically harassed journalists over stories it found distasteful (Asante, 1996). It can be said that prior to the 1996 elections, 42 libel suits had been filed against editors of some private press. Interestingly, most of the cases were filed by people close to President Rawlings. One of such cases was the one involving the editor of the *Christian Chronicle*, George Naykene, who was tried and convicted for 18 months under the *Criminal Libel* law. He was accused of publishing a story suggesting the some close associates of Jerry John Rawlings during the era of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) had engaged IN fishy monetary deals from dubious sources. Apart from this, the head of the Ghana National Petroleum Company, Mr. Tsatsu Tsikata also hauled the Ghanaian Chronicle to the court for accusing him of financial impropriety at the Company (Karikari 1998: 180-181).

3.2.21 The Election of 1996

The second democratic elections took place on December 7, 1996. Three political parties and a few independent candidates contested the election. With the exception of the PNC, which went solo during the elections, other political parties formed political alliances to either consolidate their hold on political power or end what some people regarded as “the long reign of Rawlings” in the political life of the country. Those whose aim was to ensure that Rawlings continued to retain power formed the Progressive Alliance (PA), which consisted of the NDC, EGLE and DPP. The others who wanted to change the status quo formed the Great Alliance (GA). The GA was made up of the NPP, People’s Convention Party (PCP), which was a combination of PHP, NIP and some members of the NCP. The only party that

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did not join forces with another party was the People's National Convention (PNC). Rawlings won the 1996 elections with 57.4 per cent of the votes while the leader of the GA, John Agyekum Kufuor, obtained 39.6 per cent. Dr Limann of the PNC trailed with only 3 per cent of the votes cast. Out of the 200 parliamentary seats, the NDC won 133, NPP 61, PCP 5 and PNC 1 (Ayee 1998: 41-43**).** In the 1996 elections, all the political parties focused their campaign on the economy. While the GA campaigned under the banner of "Change and Development", the NDC and its allies campaigned under the slogan "Continuity and Stability" using every available airtime and space in the SOM. The state-owned *GBC Radio* and *GTV*, gave equal airtime to each political party that contested the elections (OAU Observer Mission 1996: 3).

The decision to allot equal space and time to the political parties was taken by the NMC. The rationale behind that decision was to provide guidelines for political reporting during that election (Mills, 1998: 51). But the coverage of political activities by the state-owned newspapers was biased towards the ruling NDC government. In fact, as the campaign progressed, the front pages of both the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* were dominated with campaign messages of the NDC and these were accompanied by advertisements that showed the gains so far made by the government, even from the PNDC era. In contrast, the private-owned newspapers showed biased towards the ruling NDC government in terms of their reportage. In relative terms, the 1996 electoral campaign "was conducted on entirely level playing field" (Ayee 1998).

Most of the political parties based their campaign on issues. However, there were few cases where the campaign took the form of personal attacks. Nevertheless, the 1996 election ended on a free and fair note resulting in both the victor and the vanquish accepting the results of the elections (OAU Observer Mission 1996: 24). Even where issues were discussed, the

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media, especially the *Ghanaian Chronicle* and the *Daily Graphic*, ended up trivialising the issues. Sometimes the media resorted to activities that only discredited the major political players in the election (Mills 1998: 52). Despite the NDC's domination of both the electronic and print media advertisements, there existed reasonable opportunities for the opposition parties to get their messages across to their voters (Ayee 2001: 44). In fact, the congenial environment that had been created at the time made it possible for the political parties to focus their campaigns on issues instead of personalities.

3.2.22 The 2000 Elections and the Media

The 2000 elections were an important landmark in the political history of the country. For the first time, a constitutionally elected government was completing its full tenure without any intervention whatsoever by the military. Ghanaians used the ballot box to change their government. Indeed, it was a period when Rawlings, "the main dominant figure in Ghanaian politics" left office, after almost two decades in power (Gyimah-Boadi 2001: 56; Gadzekpo 2001: 267). Essentially, the 2000 elections were an improvement over the previous elections for a number of reasons. Not only had the electoral system been improved, the election administration had been overhauled (Gyimah-Boadi 2001: 6).

Despite a few hiccups, the degree of competitiveness during the 2000 elections was very high. All the seven political parties and about 60 independent candidates participated. Among the parties were the NDC (made up of its allies—the DPP and EGLE), NPP, PNC and CPP. There were three new political parties: Democratic People's Party (DPP), the United Ghana Movement (UGM) and the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP). Furthermore, the EC had implemented a number of policies that were put into place by the EC that contributed to the open free and competitive nature of the elections. Notable among the policies were the EC's collaboration with the National Media Commission (NMC) and the Ghana Journalists'

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Association (GJA) to design a framework for political reporting and voter education (Ayee 1998: 22-32).

The media scene was equally vibrant. A number of FM radio stations had been established across the country in addition to existing newspapers. The national spread of radio stations enabled the media to play a significant role before, during and after the 2000 elections (Smith and Temin 2001: 164). Prior to the elections, the NMC issued a directive to the state-owned media requesting them to provide practical guidelines on how they would cover the 2000 election. The NMC's initiative was boosted by a number of civil society organisations (CSOs), which organised seminars and workshops aimed at sensitising the media about their role in the elections. The GJA, in conjunction with Freedom Forum (FF) and GBC, organised a public forum for the aspiring presidential candidates. The face-to-face political programme made it possible for the public to assess, at first hand, the capacity of various presidential aspirants. To ensure equal and fair coverage for the political parties, a media monitoring programme was introduced in September. The SOM gave the ruling NDC wider coverage than other political parties. One area the media performed equitably during the 2000 elections was election monitoring. On the day of the elections, the media deployed staff all over the country to monitor the voting. The media's presence throughout the country enabled various irregularities and breaches of the electoral processes to be reported to the EC. The media provided ample education to the electorate. They created a number of platforms that engaged the public on policy issues, party manifestoes, and the general voting rights of the people (Boadu-Ayeboafoh 2001: 66-73).

3.2.23 The 2004 elections

By 2004, both the country's electoral system and the media landscape had seen qualitative improvements. The continuous reforms of the country's electoral system by the EC, for

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instance, had increased the public confidence in the capacity of the EC to manage the electoral process efficiently and in a free and fair manner. In addition to the replacement of the voters register, which had been in existence since 1995, the EC had created 30 new constituencies prior to the 1996 elections, thus bringing the total number of constituencies in the country to 230 (Electoral Commission of Ghana 2005: 11-12). The next important exercise taken by the EC was the voter registration exercise. The media gave prominence to the 13-day voter registration exercise by sensitising the public on the essence of the exercise and the need for every citizen to take it seriously (Electoral Commission of Ghana 2005: 20). Six political parties, the NPP, the NDC, the PNC, the CPP, the DPP and the NRP contested the 2004 elections. The NPP emerged as winner of both the presidential and parliamentary elections, with President Kufuor obtaining 52.4 per cent of the total votes cast. The second and third positions were taken by the NDC and PNC candidates with of 44.6 and 1.9 per cent respectively of the total votes cast (Boafo-Arthur 2006: 48).

Prior to the elections, about 123 FM radio stations had been established throughout the country which provided effective platform for the electorate to participate in the political process of the country. This enhanced grassroots political participation prior to the 2004 elections (Yankah 2004: 7). There is no gainsaying that the media during the 2004 elections played an important role in ensuring the success of the elections. Throughout the campaign, the media provided space and airtime respectively for political parties to educate and inform the electorate on their policies. Even though both the print and electronic media contributed to the overall success of the elections, the electronic media particularly, the radio stations, most of which broadcast in local languages, made it possible for the electorate to know and appreciate the electoral processes and the various messages of the political parties. Through the various radio programmes including the phone-in segments, the political parties easily

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interacted with their members, obtained instant feedback which further enriched and enhanced message delivery. On the day of the elections, the radio and television stations despatched correspondents across the country. They monitored the voting process and reported cases of irregularities to the appropriate authorities for redress. Sometimes, they provided reports and updates on the trend of voting at the various constituencies. The presence of the media at various polling stations made it difficult for people to engage in ballot box snatching, rigging and other actions that undermine the electoral process.

3.2.24 The 2008 Elections and the Media

The December 7, 2008 elections featured seven political parties competing for the presidency. None of the seven political parties including the NPP, the NDC, the CPP, the PNC, the DPP and two new entrants, the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) and Reformed Patriotic Party (RPP), which contested the elections, was able to gain the mandatory 50 plus one percentage vote to win the elections. The results which pushed the election to a run-off was subsequently won by the NDC on December 28, 2008..

The 2008 electoral campaign was conducted on an even playing field, and all political partied had reasonable opportunities to get their messages across to the electorate. During the campaign itself, the political parties, particularly, the NPP and the NDC concentrated their campaigns on a number of issues including their achievements and the need for change respectively. While the NPP focused its campaign on the successes it had achieved so far, the campaign messages of the NDC and the other opposition parties focused primarily on the need for the electorate to ensure change in both leadership and policy direction for the country (Gyimah-Boadi 2009: 142). The campaign of change by the two leading political parties resulted in the use of slogans including “We are moving forward” by the NPP and the promise of “Real change” by the opposition NDC (COG 2008: 22).

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Soon after the campaign for the second round had begun, it became apparent that both the NPP and the NDC had changed their campaign strategies. They relied more on propaganda as opposed to issue-based campaigns. This resulted in the use of invectives and appeal to ethnicity by the political parties. At the same time, the use of the media, particularly, radio and television was among the political parties. The two political parties in the second round relied extensively on the media instead of public rallies to get their messages across to the voter. Even in some instances, the media, particularly radio, became an important platform from which politicians launched attacks on their opponents and also incited violence. For example, prior to the declaration of the second round results, a pro-NDC radio station, Radio Gold, had urged its supporters to march on to the EC to demand the early declaration of the NDC candidate, Prof. Mills, the winner of the elections. The action by the NDC supporters and media houses attracted similar response by NPP supporters who also besieged another local radio station in protest against the NDC's victory (Gyimah-Boadi 2009: 142-144)

In addition, there was extensive use of posters, billboards and advertisements throughout the campaign period. This means of communication provided the political parties the opportunity to sell themselves as well as their parties to the electorate. Throughout the campaign period, the NDC sponsored a total of 17 advertisements. The NPP, on the other hand, sponsored 32 advertisements. The CPP and the PNC sponsored only five and two advertisements respectively. In general terms, the advertisements that were sponsored by the political parties centred on issues and gave important information to the electorate (Oye 2009: 78).

3.2.25 Conclusion

This chapter examined role that the Ghanaian media have played from its inception in 1822 to the Fourth Republic. It examined the various epochs in the country's political history and how the media contributed to the running of the affairs of the state. That said, the studies

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undertook a critical examination of each of the 10 elections that country has organized since 1951 and explored in detail the contribution of the media. It appeared that in all the elections, the contributions of the media were different depending on the regimes that was in office. Prior to independence for instance, the media was less vibrant and this affected the way and manner they contributed to the elections that were held during this period. After independence, the media landscape changed, especially after 1995 when most of the obnoxious laws criminalising free speech that militated against the operations of the media were removed. The media became more vibrant than before. This made it possible for them to contribute effectively towards elections in the country by way of provision of education and information and also monitoring the conduct of the various elections.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

There are a number of theories that explain media effects in political settings. A few of such theories include: consistency, crystallisation, agenda setting, rational choice, uses and gratification theories and so on. For the purpose of this study, the agenda setting and rational choice theories will be used to explain the problem under consideration. The choice of various theories in this study is explained by the fact that media impact studies, especially those that are based on messages, tend to depend heavily on content and framing as a way of determining how the electorate internalises such message during elections (Graber and Smith 2005: 490). Before the discussion of the theories, it is important to explain the communication process as it exists in the political system.

4.2 THE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Every communication starts from a source. In an election environment, the source can be a political party, politician, individual, or the media, among others. In elections, any of these sources can communicate a message to the target audience—the electorate. The message, which is the idea that the source transmits to the receiver, is often expressed in various forms including words (spoken and written), songs, jingles, gestures, pictures, emblems and in recent times, cellular phone text messages, which have become important aspects of the political communication processes. Although messages are present in any communication process, they tend to have no meaning in themselves: meanings of messages are assigned by both the source and the receiver.

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Equally important aspect of the communication process is the channel or network used to communicate the message. To ensure effective communication, it is important that the purpose of such communication is clearly spelt out because the purpose ultimately determines the channel to be used. Among the channels used for communication are newspaper, television, radio and recently mobile phone and the internet. Generally, the role of any channel of mass communication is to distribute messages—political messages across time and space. The process involved is called information diffusion, which consists of three main stages namely: newsbreak, dissemination stage and saturation stage. The newsbreak, which is the first stage of the diffusion process, deals with the length of time required by the media to spread the essential facts of political information or message.

The next is the dissemination stage. As the name suggests, the dissemination stage is that stage of the diffusion process during which political information is communicated to the electorate. It is at the third or saturation stage that most recipients tend to have full knowledge of whatever message or information is being published, aired or telecast. Though news stories generally do not saturate easily, those that are of grave importance to the people, tend to diffuse quickly. This means that diffusion levels of news vary according to the type of information that is being communicated.

In fact, the final stage of the communication process rests with the receiver of the message—the electorate. It is at this stage that the message is decoded. In other words, the receiver of the information—the electorate at this level try to grasp the underlying meaning of the information that has been communicated to them. The reaction of the targeted audience or the receiver of the message constitutes the feedback which is necessary for effective operation of the communication system (Dominick 1990: 523). As the sender of the message chooses his

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or her channel of communication, he or she proceeds to outline the things he or she wants to consider in communicating the message. This is the agenda setting aspect of the process.

4.3 AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

The word 'agenda' means a list, plan, or an outline of issues to be considered. The basic principle underlying the agenda-setting theory is that the media, in the performance of their traditional role of educating and informing the public, determine which of the information on their list they want the electorate to see, read or hear; and which aspect of such information deserves prominence or otherwise (DeFleur and Dennis 1998: 269-270). The more attention the media gives to particular information or topic, the greater the importance the electorate tends to ascribe to that piece of information. One way to measure the media's attention to such political information is the size of a newspaper's headline, a magazine cover, or amount of time allotted to a news item on television or radio newscast (Williams 1984: 273). Agenda-setting is therefore about the correspondence between salient topics for the media and the audience, as well as the various topics, issues, persons to be discussed. Since the first application of the agenda-setting theory to the media and elections by McCombs and Shaw, a number of scholars, including Klarevas (2003: 275), Rill and Davis (2008: 609-621), have employed it in their studies.

According to Klarevas, Bernard Cohen was the first to apply the agenda-setting theory to a study of the media; he concluded that the press may not at all times succeed in telling people what to think but will rather succeed in telling people what to think about. In another study conducted by Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs, the two scholars studied the 1969 presidential election in the United States (US) using the theory and came up with the following findings: First, the research revealed, on one hand, a strong correlation between issues that were important to the press and on the other hand, those issues the electorate

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regarded as important. Second, there was evidence to the fact that anytime an election was due in the U.S. voters who did not make up their minds about the forthcoming elections often tend to rely on the media for their political cues. Finally, after exposing the electorate to the content of the press, Shaw and McCombs concluded that in the US, press content determined the behaviour of the electorate arguing that issues that were prominent in electoral campaigns and the press were the very issues the electorate placed premium on (Hanson 2008: 92-93). Recently, Rill and Davis have also applied the theory to investigate the effects of print media stories about the 2006 war in Lebanon (Rill and Davis 2008: 609-621).

In spite of the various applications of the theory, it has come under some criticisms. In politics, the theory is criticised for its difficulty in determining whether the agenda followed by the public is that of the media or the politician, (Dominick 1990). Another weakness of the theory is that no matter how important an issue may be, if it is not deemed important by the media, it will not attract media's attention; and the public will be denied access to it. That notwithstanding, the theory is believed to be the most noticeable theoretical approach to analysing the effect of media messages on their targeted audience (Graber and Smith 2005: 489). Tankard et al. (1996: 20) have argued that it is the attributes that define the central theme of any political information or message. According to them, agenda-setting has two main levels, the agenda-setting processes and the attribute. Under the agenda-setting process, the media tells their audience, and in this case, the electorate, what they need to think about. In the attribute agenda-setting, the media tells their audience how to think and feel about what they have published, aired or broadcast (McCombs et al. 2000: 77-79). Studies have also shown that not all theories are compatible with others. The relevance of this theory, however, lies in the fact that it is compatible with other theories (including framing) and concepts in communication. As we have already indicated above, an important aspect of the

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communication process is how information flows from the sender to the recipient. The two-step flow of information, which agenda setting theory accommodates, makes it possible for a message to be passed on from the source to the recipient who then influences it in a manner that will provide him or her with the intended gratification (Severin and Tankard, 1998; Kwansah-Aidoo, 2005). Another usefulness of the theory can be seen in the area of politics. We have known from the earlier discussion that the media, as part of their agenda-setting role, choose and emphasise on issues they consider relevant. But in elections, no decision of the electorate is possible without adequate knowledge of what the agenda of the politician is. As a tool in electoral politics, the theory of agenda-setting serves as an important barometer in measuring the agenda of politicians (Dominick, 1990). In policy formulation, the theory makes it possible for researchers to finding out whether issues that are important to individuals in the public realm are necessarily important to those who make policies for the state. This is because of the important role the media plays in the making and shaping of public policy (McCombs and Shaw, 1993).

Following the media's definition and highlighting of what they want their audience to know, the latter must now choose from the list of the messages which will advance their interests. To ensure the best choice from the available messages, the messages are framed in a certain manner to achieve its impact.

4.4 FRAMING THEORY

As a theory in sociology, framing was introduced by Erving Goffman in the early 1970s. It focuses on how the media portrays the issues they report (Wimmer and Dominick 2000: 428).

The theory places emphasis on the most important aspect of an issue under consideration. It suggests how an issue has to be presented to those it is intended. According to the theory, the

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way and manner an issue is presented determines the decisions that are made on that particular issue. Unlike agenda-setting, framing theory provides direction about how an issue has to be thought about. Frames are ideas that give meaning to messages. They are conscious mental processes that make it possible for people to understand complicated or difficult information (masscomtheory.com; (journalism.uoregion.edu).

The theory assumes that in a society, it is the people who give meaning to things around them. Part of the assumption of the theory is that individuals have what it takes to use the frames that are created in the society. In addition, the theory postulates that part of the duty of the media is to organise and present ideas, events and topics that they report on in the society. The theory supposes that sources in communication process specify and develop information that society needs (masscomtheory.com).

Despite what the media want the public to focus on, individuals select messages that are of relevance to their needs (Iyenger and Kinder 1987). This leads to voters' impression being organised, focused and directed at important themes (Davis 1994).

Being an extension of the agenda-setting theory, framing has in recent times become fashionable in advertising, political communication and elections. In her study, Gheho (2000) examines the effect of political advertisement on voter choices during the 2004 elections in Ghana. She observed the influential role framing played in the development of campaign messages by the two main political parties—NPP and NDC. According to her, the framing of the NDC advert was mostly negative compared with the NPP. She explained that since negative adverts have emotional appeal, the NDC adverts were intended for that effect, but they did not produce the effect the party wanted. She attributed the poor performance of the NDC in the 2004 elections to the negative adverts it ran during the electioneering campaign.

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It is clear from the above that framing has a number of strengths: first, it helps to strengthen dominant views and perceptions people have in the public realm (Norris, 1997); second, it enables people to attach importance to certain issues due to the way the issues are presented. In essence, it is a way of giving some overall interpretation to some facts (McQuail 2005: 379); third, there is also the belief that due to the manner in which electoral messages are framed, there is always the tendency for the electorate to retain some of them to guide their electoral decisions; fourth, since framing required simplification, prioritisation, skill and tact, it inevitably adds fillip to the development of media messages for their intended purposes. These notwithstanding, the theory of framing has been criticised in a number of ways. There is the argument that despite the manner in which the media present issues, it is not always the case that people will pay attention to all the issues the media raise (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Sometimes there is also the problem that due to the manner media messages are framed, the recipient's attention tends to be skewed largely towards a particular thing or issue. This, according to Davis (1994) serves as a limitation on recipient choices.

Despite the arguments, the interest of the individual consumer of media messages can only be served when the consumer of the messages makes a careful choice of the media that can serve his or her interest. This constitutes the basis of the uses and gratifications theory.

4.5 USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Uses and Gratifications Theory is one of the media—effect theories that emerged in the 1940s. The theory was developed as an attempt to measure the short-term effect of exposure of individuals to mass media contents (Blumler et al 1973). It answers the question how people use the media the way they do and the satisfaction they intend to derive from such media behaviour (Wimmer and Dominick, 1983). In other words, the theory attempts to explain the role that mass communication serves societal audience (Severin and Tankard Jr.

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2001: 294-295, 297). The gratification is the actual need that the media satisfy in society (Dominick, 1990). The Uses and Gratifications Theory is based on a number of assumptions. First, it stipulates that individuals depend on the media for their goals and needs (Black et al. 1998: 27). In essence, the theory shows how people behave towards various forms of media by depending on them to satisfy their needs and desires. Second, as a human institution, the media almost always compete with various sources of needs of human beings in society. Third, in order to satisfy their numerous needs, individuals exercise a lot of care in choosing the best option for their needs. Fourth, the value of the media that must be used to address the gratification of the individual depends upon the perspective of the audience (Hanson 2008: 93).

This theory has been applied in many research works including those conducted by Blumler and McQuail (1969) as well as the one by Canary and Spitzberg in 1993. In the case of the former, the research was used to study the 1964 general elections in Britain. Among the aims of the research was not only to determine why individuals pay or refuse to pay attention to messages of political parties on television but also what use do the people put such messages into (Blumler & McQuail 1969 quoted in Severin & Tankard 2001: 294-295). The later examines the use of the media to satisfy a particular need, especially loneliness. The study shows evidence of such need in the US society but states that it depends on the extent of loneliness Severin & Tankard 2001: 301).

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1983), the theory is useful in many areas of human endeavours, including organisational communication, new technologies and popular music. Apart from this, the theory, which is anchored in concepts, provides explanatory notes about the link between the intention of those who receive media messages, the benefit derived from receiving such media contents and the ultimate outcomes from consuming various media

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messages. A great deal of research has shown that uses and gratification theory provide an opportunity for researchers to examine the interaction that exists between the various media channels and their audience in the society (Dominick, 1990). Besides, the theory places emphasis on the rationality of the individual in deciding what best suits his or her interest. In this direction, the ability of the media to address the gratification needs of those who depend on media contents goes a long way to promote the reliance on the media and ultimately enhances its credibility. Despite these strengths, one major problem that is associated with the uses and gratification theory is that fact that sometimes it is difficult to determine the extent of importance the media attaches to an issue. This obviously has effect on those who use the media. Apart from this, there is also the argument that since studies under this theory is opinion-centred, it is possible for such results to suffer from measurement or sampling error, which can impact negatively on uses and gratification studies (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000).

In spite of the weakness associated with these three theories, the applicability of them to a number of studies around the globe demonstrates that they can equally be applied to this study.

4.6 APPLICATION OF THE THEORIES

In this study, I employ these three theoretical frameworks to explain the problem under consideration. Despite their varied forms, political messages are generally developed in such a way that they reflect the agenda of the source or the one who sends them. Depending on the purpose of the message, a channel of communication is selected for maximum effect. As part of the agenda of the sender or source, a determination is made regarding which message the electorate have to see, read or hear as well as which aspects of the message deserve more emphasis than the others. Based on the recipient's interest in the message, age, education, place of living, political involvement and other considerations, a choice is made with regard

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to the message that has been communicated (Dominick 1990: 525-526). I used the following steps associated with information processing and selection to determine how the electorate choose the type of message that best maximises their interest: (i) information or messages circulating in the environment; (ii) the electorate become aware of them only when they pay attention to them; and (iii) such information or messages get to the electorate through the channels of communication.

4.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The major empirical questions this study seeks to answer are as follows:

1. Which message (economic, health, ethnic, gesture and slogan among others) determines voter choices in Ghana and why?;
2. How and why does the constituency or residence of a voter influence his or her choices of messages or channels in elections?;
3. How does the educational background of voters influence the choices of messages or channels of communication during elections?;
4. How and why does party gesture or slogan influences voter during elections?;
5. Which channel of communication do Ghanaian voters rely upon most in making political choices and why?;
6. How and why does change in form of political communication in Ghana occurred since 1995 and why?

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHANGING FORMS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Political communication has become an integral part of democratic elections in the Fourth Republic. Over the years, political parties have relied extensively on the media to get their messages across to the electorate. Messages in the form of songs, slogans, jingles and gestures, among others, that have featured in the various elections have been communicated by the media. The effect of these messages on voter choices, as we have earlier indicated, has been considerable. This has made the media an important factor in the electoral politics of the country, which means that a free media is not only a prerequisite for liberal democratic rule but also for effective political communication.

The primary objective of this chapter is to understand the dynamic changes that have occurred in political communication in terms of complexity, strategies, channels and messages following the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1996.

The chapter is organised along the following themes: first, the state of the media before and after 1992; second, the liberalisation of the airwaves in Ghana; third, nature of political communication; fourth, channels of political communication; fifth, messages in political communication; and sixth; strategies in political communication.

5.2 THE STATE OF THE MEDIA BEFORE AND AFTER 1992

5.2.1 The Media after 1992

Before the inception of this Republic in 1992, the Ghanaian media had scarcely been free due to rampant military interventions. For decades, the country's governance was characterised

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by authoritarianism, with brief periods of liberal democracy. The instability caused by the gradual decline in the quality of politics had impacted negatively on the growth and development of the electronic media until 1995 when the airwaves were liberalised as part of the processes of strengthening democratic rule in the country. The liberalisation of the airwaves was at a time when the press (newspapers), already enjoyed considerable freedom even though they had limited circulation. To deal with the problem of media freedom, the 1992 Constitution allocated Chapter Twelve, to media freedom and independence.

The Constitution further provided for the establishment of the National Media Commission (NMC) to insulate the state-owned media (SOM) from governmental control. The NMC is further enjoined to ensure high journalistic standards. Prior to that, the Newspaper Licensing Law had been repealed in 1985 by the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) and this made it possible for a lot of newspapers to emerge and operate freely. The corollary to these developments was the emergence of scores of private newspapers most of which were critical of the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) (Karikari 1998: 174). A feature of the media was their polarisation into pro- and anti-government based on ownership. The SOM were seen as sympathetic to government while most of the private newspapers were plainly hostile. P. A. V. Ansah described the media scene in the following terms:

"The year 1992 started inauspiciously enough, and the media played their normal role of singing and amplifying the master's voice. Criticism was muted and there was very little analysis or backgrounding in the papers. The performance of the state-owned radio and television was predictably dull, flat, insipid, bland, prosaic and lacked inspiration. In the area of the print media, the *People's Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* played their routine roles with the *Graphic* getting better and more tolerant and accommodating and therefore

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more appealing, while the *Times* got more myopic, tolerant, unilateral, drab, uninteresting, dogmatic and almost fanatical" (Gadzekpo, Karkari, Yankah 1996: 117).

This pattern of news coverage by the SOM remained unchanged until the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) sued the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) at the Supreme Court (SC) in 1993 accusing the national broadcaster of denying it coverage of its forums and press conference. In the case of the NPP v GBC [1993-1994] GLR 254, the NPP regarded the GBC's denial as unfair, especially when the national broadcaster extensively reported the NDC government's activities. The SC ruled in favour of the NPP and reminded the SOM of its responsibility to ensure equal access to all the political parties (Boadu-Ayeboafoh 2001: 65).

The quality of the private-owned newspapers and their hostile coverage of the NDC government were also of great concern. Ansah attacked the work of the privately-owned media (POM):

> *The quality was uneven, presentation was poor, there was more gossip and speculation than straight reporting or analysis, the language continued to be inelegant and grammatically offensive, headlines and pictures bore no relation to the accompanying story…Logic was stood on its head and it looked as if the editors had declared war on journalistic ethics or decorum* (Gadzekpo, et al, 1996, p.118)

The alignment of the media into pro-and anti–government groups continued despite the establishment of many radio stations as a result of the liberalization of the airwaves (Asah-Asante 2004: 93). Hence from the beginning of the Fourth Republic, the NMC and the courts are inundated with cases against the media (Gadzekpo 2008: 4, 9, 10).

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5.2.2 Liberalization of the Airwaves

Before 1995 there was only one electronic organisation which operated the only radio and television station in the country. This was the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) which was state-owned. In 1992 there were calls on the PNDC government to liberalise the electronic media. The calls were in tune with Article 162 (3) of the 1992 Constitution which stipulates that:

> *There shall be no impediment to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment of private press or media; newspaper, radio or other media for mass communication of information.*

The positive response by the government to liberalise the airwaves served as impetus for the School of Communication Studies (SCS) to organise the first national conference on the matter in March 1993. Though there were a number of conferences held after this conference on the liberalisation of the airwaves, it must be pointed out that the one that was held in Namibia in April 1993 inspired the SCS to mobilise support for the enactment of necessary legislations for the commencement of a plural electronic media in the country. From this time onwards, the public became interested in the discussion of the matter and as a result put more pressure on the government to liberalise the airwaves (Doku 1997: 2-6).

In response to the calls, the PNDC government in 1994 drafted a Bill titled: “The National Communication Authority Bill”. This Bill was to provide, among others, the necessary legal and administrative framework for private broadcast in the country. But the Bill was however, opposed by a section of the people, particularly the SCS for allowing the government more

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freedom to control the issuance of broadcast licenses in the country. In 1994, the SCS organised another conference in November rejecting the proposed Bill, arguing it had not only the potential of undermining the right of broadcast operators in the country but also militating against the people's rights to divergent views and opinions as contained in Article 163 of the 1992 Constitution (Ibid). According to this Article, "All state-owned media shall afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinion"

A few days after this conference, the first private radio station, *Radio Eye*, was established. Due to lack of proper authorisation, the NDC government did not allow the station to operate. The equipment of the station were ceased and confiscated to the state. In addition, owners of the station was arrested and put before court for operating without license. So far nothing has come out of that case.

In January 1995, the government set up an ad hoc committee to undertake the drafting of regulations of private broadcasting in the country. The report of the committee which was presented to government in April, opened the floodgates for the establishment of private radio stations in the country. Some of the early stations included *Voice of Legon, Joy FM, Radio Gold* and Vibe *FM* (Yankah 2004: 6).

5.2.3 Nature of Political Communication

Political communication is not new in Ghanaian politics. From 1951 when the first election was held in the country to the current democratic dispensation, politicians have relied on political communication to get their messages across to the electorate. There is evidence that the media, namely, radio, television, newspapers, bill-boards and political rallies have been

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the main hub around which such interaction has occurred between politicians and the electorate.

Since 1995 when the electronic media was liberalised leading to the establishment of community radio and television stations throughout the country, coupled with the introduction of mobile phones and the internet, there has been tremendous expansion of the frontiers of political communication. This development has made political communication more effective than before.

Over the years, political parties have showed keen interest in the use of different forms of political communication, thus affecting its nature. Among the two main forms that political communication has assumed recently in Ghanaian politics are verbal and non-verbal. Some of the verbal forms of communication are speeches, statements and press releases. Other forms consist of songs, slogans and jingles. On the other hand, the non-verbal communication forms commonly used include gestures, dances and text messages, among others. It can be said that these various forms of political communication have been used in very many different ways by political parties and politicians to influence the choices of the electorate in recent elections. But besides the usage of these forms of political communication, their sophistication in terms of structure and the messages they carry have helped to promote it and hence encourage its usage in Ghanaian politics.

A major boost to political communication in the country has been the introduction of the internet and mobile phones as well as the establishment of community radio and television stations throughout the country. These have expanded the frontiers of communication in the country and these changes in the areas of political communication have made it more effective than before (Asah-Asante 2007: 158). In order to appreciate the magnitude of the

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changes that have occurred with regard to the channels of political communication, a few examples of the said channels are discussed below in detail.

5.3 CHANNELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, TELEVISION, BILL BOARDS AND POLITICAL RALLIES

5.3.1 Newspapers

Before 1995, there were a sizable number of newspapers in the country which educated and informed the people. In addition to this role, the newspapers served as a check on government by monitoring government's actions and inactions. Notable among those newspaper were The *Free Press, Echo, Ghanaian Chronicle*, the *Catholic Standard, Pioneer*, the *Ghanaian Voice* and so on (Amoakohene, 2006; Asante, 1996).

But the newspapers which were in existence, only a few managed to survive. The rest died off after one or two publications. This period coincided with the era of the "culture of silence". This was a period in which the PNDC government undertook ruthless activities of human rights violations, suppression of dissent and pursuit of the so-called "enemies of the revolution". In addition, there was lack of virile independent press and censorship practice by journalists themselves. The result of these developments led to the creation of a situation where the people could not air their views. The newspapers which survived the "culture of silence" included *The Statesman, Free Press, The Independent* and *The Voice* (Boahen 1989: 54-56, MFWA, 1992).

Like a catalyst, the liberalisation of the media landscape in 1995 created the enabling environment for the media to operate. Newspapers such as the *Ghanaian Chronicle* which emerged in the 1980s engaged in investigative reporting and publication of misconduct by prominent people in the state. Before this period, this aspect of journalism was rarely

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practised in the country. Later on, other newspapers took after the steps of the *Ghanaian Chronicle* and practised this type of journalism. This changed the face of journalism practice in the country (Karikari, 1998).

Despite media freedoms guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution including the establishment of the National Media Commission (NMC), the period between 1992 and 2000 saw the abuse of these media freedoms by the NDC government. A number of mechanisms were employed by the ruling NDC to cow pressmen. Notable among the mechanisms were arrests, detentions, prosecutions and smearing of offices of press houses with human excreta by people believed to be associated with the government (Asante, 1998; Asah-Asante, 2007; Tettey 2003:88-96). Notwithstanding such repressive measures, journalists continue to monitor the business of the government as well as the 1996 elections. For instance, the private media raised public awareness about some of the wrongs in government circles, particularly corruption, fraud and human rights abuses, among others (Karikari, 1998).

By 2000 the press had become very vibrant and sophisticated. A lot of newspapers had been established including *Ghanaian Chronicle, Daily Guide, Crusading Guide, Free Press, The Statesman, Independent,* among others. Newspapers such as the *Ghanaian Chronicle, Crusading Guide, Statesman and Independent* had become very critical of the government, exposing corruption and other wrongdoings. The press carried this level of vigilance into the 2000 general elections and beyond. Prior to the elections, the press provided education and information to the electorate. For instance, while the state-owned press provided more coverage for the government, the private press served as a platform for opposition parties. In addition, the media, particularly radio and television, engaged the public in education and discussion of party manifestoes, voting rights and responsibilities of the citizenry as well as general issues concerning the state (Ayee 1998: 41, Boadu-Ayeboafoh 2001: 73). On the day

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of the elections, most radio stations deployed staff throughout constituencies in the country. They monitored every aspect of the elections and carried stories to that effect. For instance, the radio stations reported cases of electoral lapses, attempted rigging, violence, misconduct on the part of security agents and electoral officers, among others (Electoral Commission 2001: 71).

The NPP government, which won the 2000 elections, repealed the criminal libel and sedition laws. This provided fresh impetus for journalists to carry out their duties up to date.

It must be stated that before the assumption of power by the NPP in 2001, there were little in terms of media freedom in the country. Though the 1992 Constitution provides for freedom of the media, the extensive use of the criminal and seditions laws by the NDC government undermined the very provision on free expression. For instance, in matters of legal breaches, journalists were not spared the rod as the NDC government did not hesitate to use the above-mentioned laws to prosecute them. This condition made it difficult for journalists to play their roles freely. All calls for the repeal of the laws fell on death ears. So, in 2000, the NPP made it part of its campaign promise to repeal such law. Upon winning the elections, the NPP government in 2002 repealed the criminal libel and sedition laws. This action by the government gave renewed impetus for the media to discharge their responsibilities freely.

But this freedom of the media was not enjoyed without problems. There have been public complaints against the media about unprofessional conduct resulting in ethical breaches (Asah-Asante 2007: 157-158).

5.3.2 Radio

After the newspapers, radio was the next medium that was officially introduced by the British colonial government. Established in Accra in 1935 under Governor Sir Arnold Hudson, the

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first radio station – *ZOY*, was initially aimed at educating, informing and entertaining the people, particularly those in Accra. In addition, the station provided an important political and cultural link between Europeans in Africa and the metropolitan countries of Europe. But later the focus of the station changed. Apart from broadcasting news produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the colonial radio was also used to curb the growing nationalist propaganda as well as broadcasting news of the Second World War in the Gold Coast. In order to perform the above functions well, the British colonial authorities in the 1940s expanded broadcasting by introducing three local languages namely Akan, Ga and Hausa (Asante 1996: 8; Yankah 2004: 6-7; Quaicoe 2009: 1; Ansah, 1985).

The management of the station was initially under the direct control of the British colonial administration, especially from 1935 and 1945 but later it became the responsibility of the newly established Information Services Department (ISD) from 1946 to 1953. Part of the mandate of the ISD was also to develop national communication policy to promote effective use of the media for the purposes of attaining economic and social development (Quaicoe 2009: 1-2).

In 1952, the colonial government in its bid to improve broadcasting services in the country as well as establishing a statutory corporation, set up one of the important commissions whose recommendation led to the creation of the Gold Coast Broadcasting System (GCBCS) in 1954. Following the attainment of independence in 1957 and the subsequent pursuit of the CPP. government's policy of 'Africanisation', the GCBCS was eventually changed to GBC to perhaps, reflect the current state of affairs (Quaicoe, 2009; Asante, 1996).

From this time onwards, GBC became an important political tool in the hands of the CPP administration. Its operations went beyond the continent of Africa, particularly in 1961 when it inaugurated an external service division, which linked the country to the rest of the world.

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Broadcasting in five international languages namely Arabic, French, Hausa, Swahili and Portuguese, GBC became an important medium for the fight against colonial rule by broadcasting anti-colonial news as well as providing support for the liberation forces. It was also used as a propaganda tool to spread Dr Nkrumah's Pan-African ideas on the continent (Asante 1996: 9: Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998: 5).

From 1960 onwards, the role of the media changed due to perhaps the philosophy of the CPP government. At this time the country had began adopting socialist planning techniques as a way of building the state. So, to Nkrumah and the CPP government, the only way to achieve the task of nation-building was to involve the media in the state's agenda. As part of its numerous strategies to achieve the above and other aims of promoting development at the grassroots, the CPP government embarked on rural broadcasting in the country. This made it possible for a large number of the masses to be reached in the rural areas (Quaicoe, 2009; Fitch & Oppenheimer 1966: 82; Petchenkine 1993: 8).

Though in 1986 GBC launched its first regional FM station, that is, the Greater Accra Radio, the national broadcaster was however, still a monopoly of the airwaves until 1995 when the airwaves were liberalised. Before this time, the return of the country to constitutional rule had led to the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution which guarantees freedom of expression and had "a hallowed place for the media which it enjoins to hold government accountable" (Asah-Asante, 2007). In addition, the National Media Commission (NMC) had been established by the Constitution in 1993 to insulate the state-owned media from governmental control (Quaicoe, 2009: Asah-Asante 2007: 157).

According to the National Communication Authority (NCA), there were about 123 radio stations dotted around the country with each of these stations running different programmes. Some of these programmes have phone-in segments, which allow for interaction and

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participation by listeners. In some cases, listeners are allowed to contribute to the programmes through text messages which in the course of the programmes are read to the public. All these have contributed to the sophistication and quality in the area of radio.

5.3.3 Television

Since its inauguration in 1965, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Television (GBC TV) remained the only television station in the country until 1997 when TV3, a private station was established. As a public service television, GBC TV was originally established by the government of the Convention People's Party (CPP) to promote education and literacy in the country (Asante 1996: 10). President Nkrumah had emphasised this point at the inauguration of GBC on July 31, 1965: "Ghana's television will be used to supplement our educational programme and foster a lively interest in the world around us. It will not cater for cheap entertainment or commercialism. Its paramount objective will be education in the broadest and purest sense. Television must assist in the socialist transformation of Ghana". (quoted in Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari,1998:5). The mandate of the station may be summarised as education, information and nation-building (Ansah 1991: 92).

However, since 2000, GBC TV has commercialised some of its programmes to generate revenue to supplement the subvention it receives from the state, and also to meet the increasing demands of its numerous customers (Amoakohene 2005: 72). As indicated above, GBC TV like radio remained the only electronic broadcaster until 1995 when its monopoly was broken with the liberalisation of the airwaves. Since then there has been considerable increase in the number of private television stations in the country. They include TV3, Metropolitan Television (Metro TV), Crystal TV, NET 2 Television, Fontonfrom TV, Skyy TV and TV Africa. Operating alongside these are "pay-per view" television stations such as MNET, Multi-TV and Cable Gold.

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Most of the private television stations have limited subscribers. At the moment, GBC TV is the only television station with a nationwide reach, transmitting across the length and breadth of the country (Amoakohene 2005: 72). Next to GBC TV are TV3 and Metro TV. These stations are currently transmitting in the following regions: Greater Accra, Central, Ashanti, Western and Volta. Notwithstanding their limited reach and subscribers, the place of television in Ghana's political life cannot be overemphasised.

5.3.4 Messages in Political Communication

Message is one of the important components of the communication process. It constitutes the main driving force behind the communication process. The communication process, which is a critical index of political communication, comprises four main components namely, the source, message, channel and the receiver. These components, work in tandem with one another to make the communication process complete. As indicated above, the communication process starts with the source, which is the communicator of the message. The source, which can be an individual, institution and so on in this case, represents the former, which is the politician.

The message, which is the idea or information the sender sends to the recipient, is often expressed through verbal and non-verbal means. It must be pointed out that though messages in themselves have no meanings, their meanings are assigned by those who send and receive them, which in this case represent the politician and voter respectively. To ensure completion of the communication process, message has to be conveyed from a source to a targeted recipient by way of a medium. Based on the content of the message, the recipient then selects what best suits his interest (Berlo, 1960; Muchinsky, 1993).

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It is this process of communication that politicians in Ghana have relied upon as a strategy to communicate their ideas, policies and programmes to the electorate with the view of soliciting votes. Through verbal and non-verbal means, which manifest themselves in words, songs, slogans, jingles, gestures, SMS text, among others. politicians are able to develop numerous messages including those of health, economy, employment, development, etc and passed them on through the appropriate channels to the voters. Based on the interest of the voter, a choice is made by way of voting.

5.4. STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

5.4.1 Media Ownership and Credibility

Modern democracies cannot survive with accurate information and fair representation of various shades of opinion (Deacon et al, 1999). To achieve this, the media in a democratic set up are expected to be neutral in the performance of their traditional role of educating and informing the people as well as monitoring and reporting the actions and inactions of the government. These professional roles notwithstanding, the influence of media contents and their effects on voter choices offer some explanations about the rationale behind some politicians and political parties depending on the media as a strategic tool for canvassing for votes.

5.4.2 Media Ownership

Media ownership in Ghana is divided along two main lines, namely, state and private-owned. While the control of the SOM is in the hands of the National Media Commission (NMC), the POM on the other hand, rest in private hands. But the control of the SOM by the NMC appears not to affect the content of the media the Commission controls. In most cases, the

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content of such media output are determined by the media themselves, who more often than not favour the government of the day. This explains some of the concerns expressed by some opposition political parties over unfair coverage by the SOM. The persistence of this problem has emboldened ruling parties to use their theoretical ownership to secure publication or broadcast their political messages. Hamilton (2004) has argued that in single owner media organisations, control over media content is always high compared to the public-owned ones. Perhaps, this explains the current drive of the country's political elite to establish their own media outlets.

In recent times, there are newspapers such as *The Palaver*, *The Daily Guide*, *The Statesman* and *The Heritage* owned respectively by Mr Totobi Quakyi of the NDC, Freddie Blay, of the CPP/NPP, Nana Akufo-Addo of the NPP, and Dr Kwabena Duffuor, former Minister for Finance, of the NDC/CPP. The Ahwoi brothers, leading members of the NDC own *Radio Gold*, while Kennedy Agyapong, a Member of Parliament (MP) of the NPP owns *Oman FM* and *NET 2 Television*. Because owners of these media outlets have high control over their contents, the politicians among them heavily rely on such outlets to get their messages to the people.

Sometimes, ideological reasons are the main factors driving the establishment of such single entity media organizations (Curan & Gurevitch, 2000). The Nkrumah example is very typical. For political and ideological purposes, Nkrumah, during his tenure established scores of newspapers including the *Evening News, The Spark*, *The Dawn*, *Morning Telegraph* and *Cape Coat Daily Mail*, among others (Asante 1996: 5-6, 27). For such political or ideological media outlets, the primary objective is to promote the interest of the owners. Any other consideration was secondary.

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Aside Nkrumah and Ghana, it was in the same vein that certain leaders in Africa including Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta and Julius Nyerere, among others, in the colonial era established their own newspapers, namely, the *West African Pilot, Muiguithanio, Santi ya TANU* respectively as an important weapon for the struggle against colonial rule in Africa (Amoakohene 2006: 20). It must be stated here, however, that sometimes it is the political setting which drives the owners of the media to influence their contents. As Karikari (Karikari 1992: 216) states that "The ownership and control of the press in Ghana throughout the colonial period, exempting brief moments of government participation, were characterised by individual private entrepreneurship, missionary sponsorship and ownership by nationalist movements or parties".

5.4.3 Credibility of the Media

Tied to media ownership is credibility. In situations where politicians do not have their own media outlets, they sell their messages through existing outlets which are credible. Smith and Temin (2001) and Ansu-Kyeremeh and Gadzekpo (1996: 16), have corroborated this position in their separate studies and concluded that credibility is the main consideration for readers, listeners of newspaper, television and radio contents respectively.

Examining the usefulness of the Ghanaian media in influencing vote choices in the 2000 elections, Smith and Temin found that about 28.3 per cent of Ghanaians relied on radio as the most trusted medium of political information followed by television, newspapers, etc. Part of these findings is shared by Ansu-Kyeremeh and Gadzekpo. In their studies, the two scholars found that despite professional challenges, a sizeable number of Ghanaians still believe in the credibility of newspapers, hence they use the medium to seek for information about certain subjects including politics.

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5.4.4 Market Condition

Notwithstanding the importance media ownership and credibility in influencing voter choices, the use of market condition also serves as an important strategy for politicians and political parties to woo voters during elections. Dunaway (2007) has stated that media organisations that operate in a low competitive market have more of their news contents on politics than organisations operating in high competitive markets. As an example of a low competitive market, mostly due to high cost of production, the prices of what the media produce are always high and this invariably affects patronage. Perhaps, as a way out of this problem, media contents in Ghana are mostly influenced by the dictates of the market which in the case of this country is politics as opposed to ownership, etc. In order to achieve their political ends, politicians and political parties rely on the media to communicate their messages to the electorate.

5.4.5 Social Commentators

Social commentators are individuals aligned to or sympathetic to political parties, and participate in radio and television programmes on behalf of such political parties. The phenomenon of social commentators emerged after the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1996 to propagate, project and defend their respective parties' position on topical economic, socio-political issues. In their determination to defend their parties, social commentators resort to insults and intemperate language which have the potential of inciting others (Abaka 2012: 68). However, there also exists some social commentators who do not belong to any political party. Neither are they sympathetic to any party. In most cases, it is this group of people who mostly tend to deal with matters dispassionately and objectively. Social commentators habitually hop from one radio station to the other to comment on issues whether they are knowledgeable about the issues for discussion or not.

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5.4.6 Phone-Ins

The introduction of phone-in segments on radio and television programmes for listeners and viewers to interact has made it possible for a large number of citizens to express their views, and participate in discussions, on national issues. The diversity of views expressed through radio and television has contributed to the creation of an important platform for both politicians and other political actors to communicate their messages to the electorate. It is due to the importance of phone-in sessions, especially political talk programmes, that people have called for the use of both English and local languages on radio to enable the bulk of the people to participate in such programmes (Acheampong, 2005: 36). One important attribute of phone-ins is the ability to promote the airing of dissenting views. Unlike the print media where it takes time to publish rejoinders, phone-ins provide one of the important platforms for quick rebuttals. Contributors to phone-in programmes, particularly politicians are able to robustly express views on issues. Thus, phone-in sessions have now become very popular platforms on which politicians communicate messages to the electorate.

5.4.7 Serial Callers

One of the most significant developments that has happened on the airwaves recently has been the emergence of groups of people referred to as **"**serial callers.**"** They are normally sponsored by political parties. Serial callers operate mostly under anonymity and often call into radio programmes and express opinions on various issues. The opinions are always favourable to the parties that sponsor them (Yankah 2004: 18-19). Also, serial callers are known to mould public opinions in favour of their political parties through selective use of facts and sometimes outright untruths.

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5.4.8 Interactive Events: Public Rallies

Considered as age-long practices, the organisation of press conferences, public rallies, interaction with households and identifiable groups, still remain one of the important strategies used by political parties to send their messages across to the electorate. This section will dwell on public rallies and press conference only.

5.4.9 Public Rallies

One of the interactive events relevant to politics is political rallies. There is hardly any election in Ghana when political parties do not organise rallies. Apart from being the fora at which politicians communicate with their supporters, they do some voter education and mobilise them to vote in their favour. Because of their importance, rallies have, since the introduction of multi-party elections in the country become platforms on which election campaigns are launched and the candidates formally introduced to party supporters and the general process. In fact, the carnival atmosphere at rallies whips up emotions, bonds supporters and strengthens the espirit de corps of party members. According to Butler and Ranmey (1992: 5-6), rallies have become part and parcel of electoral campaigns with the aim of influencing voter choices.

Press Conference

The use of press conference in Ghana is decades old as the introduction of the press itself. Since 1822 when the first newspaper was introduced, the press has been used in diverse ways to educate, entertain and inform the public. Besides, they have been used to monitor governments' actions.

In Ghana of late, press conferences are popular among individuals, groups, organisations and institutions including political parties. Part of this appeal is traceable to the promulgation of

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the 1992 Constitution, which for the first time in the history of the country, has a whole chapter dedicated to the Constitution to the media and their freedoms. That aside, the liberalization of the media landscape in 1995, coupled with the repeal of the criminal libel and sedition laws by the government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 2001, have not only made the media free, but also strengthened public confidence in the media. A recent survey by Wing shows that the media, especially the public owned, is mostly trusted in the dissemination of balanced information (gbcghana.com). To some extent, it can be explained that part of the public confidence in the media stems from this point.

Throughout the Fourth Republic, political parties and politicians have held press conferences to educate the public about their policies, especially the launching of party manifestos. As one of the tools for influencing voter choices, manifestoes launching at press conference facilitates probing questions by the press and publicising them ultimately. Based on this, the public can proceed to make the electoral choice. In certain instances, press conferences also provide opportunities for parties to clarify and rebut accusations against them. During the presidency of Mr Kufuor, a series of allegation of extra marital relations of the president with a certain lady –Gizel Yatzi were responded to prior to the 2004 elections at a press conference by the President. In spite of their usefulness as channels through which political parties reach the electorate both the NPP and NDC since 2000 have, at different times, held separate press conferences to announce their boycott of participation in the programmes of some media outlets on grounds of negative reporting.

Above all, parties have used press conferences to announce defections from one political party to their party as a propaganda tool to canvass for votes.

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5.4.10 Political Statements

Another medium through which political parties communicate with the electorate during elections is the statement that is issued from time to time. These statements are mostly information on party policies, responses, position on electoral issues, etc, that are usually carried by the media. Due to the importance of such statements in influencing voter choice during elections, politicians are careful in deciding which media should publicise such statements for maximum effect. Depending on the importance of the statement, political parties occasionally buy advertising space in newspapers and air time on radio and television for publication.

5.4.11 Newspaper Reviews

A major component of radio programming in the country today is Newspaper Review during which selected party members appear on radio and television to discuss stories of national interest that appear in newspapers. Through such discussions panelists and hosts are able to check the veracity of stories and also "radio presenters and journalists are able take the opportunity to crosscheck the veracity of allegations, by interviewing subjects of news stories, or their proxies" (Yankah 2004: 17). The programme which began in the 1990s by *Radio Univers*, one of the numerous local radio stations, has gained popularity in the country. It is now replicated in almost all radio stations in the country.

The interactive nature of Newspaper Review programmes creates an opportunity for popular participation as listeners phone into such programmes to contribute their opinions on the subject under discussion. One of the striking features of the Newspaper Review programme, particularly on radio, is the use of local vernacular. Due to the high illiteracy rate in the country, the use of vernaculars in newspaper reviews affords greater public participation as

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the barriers to the use of the English language are removed. Perhaps, the increasing effectiveness of the programme, may be measured from its use by politicians to champion the cause of their parties. As Glynn, Herbs, O'Keefe and Shapiro (1999) have pointed out, programmes such as Newspaper Reviews create a link between citizens and politics.

5.4.12 Text Messages

One of the benefits of modern technology is the use of mobile telephone for communication. With its capacity to relay messages instantly by way of text messages, mobile phones have become an important means of communication. Political actors use text messages to communicate with their supporters to invite them to meetings and give them information meant to influence their electoral choices.

Also, for most news and discussion programmes on the airwaves, whether radio or television, there is always a segment that elicits and receives text messages from listeners and viewers, which are read, as their contribution to the programmes. On some programmes, the discussants are given the opportunity to comment on the text messages. The last elections in 2008 saw the extensive use of text messages, especially during the run-off. Their sources were not always known, but they were used for both constructive and destructive purposes. Voters were urged via such messages to vote for particular candidates due to certain strengths they have and their achievements in their various fields; and not to stay at home but to go out to vote on election day. Some text messages carried religious quotations that preyed on religious sensibilities of the electorate. Others also impugned the character of candidates or incited voters to reject certain candidates based on ethnicity and by so doing turned one tribe against the other.

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5.4.13 Political Advertisement

Another strategy that has been used effectively by politicians and other political actors influence voter choices is political advertisement. As an important driver of elections, political advertisement is a means through which politicians publicize their public record, their position on issues as well as vision for the country (Areens & Bovee 1994). Kaid (2004) regards it as one of the most effective means by which political communication on elections is carried out.

In Ghana, the use of political advertisement predates the Fourth Republic. The elections of the 1950s, 1969 and 1979 provide ample evidence for the use of political advertisement.

Perhaps, what have so far changed in the field of political advertisement are the form, number and level of sophistication. These are due to factors such as the liberalisation and growth of the airwaves as well as continuous growth and development of information communication and technology (ICT), among others.

Political advertisements have taken centre stage in the electoral politics of the country since the inception of the Fourth Republic. The advertisements are either in print (newspapers and magazines) or electronic (radio and television), billboards and on vehicles. Even where radio and television had not been established in Ghana, politicians relied on signboards, symbols and so on to communicate messages (Oye 2009: 17).

Following the re-introduction of democratic elections in 1992, political advertisements have become a major feature in electoral campaigns. In 1992, a number of political parties could not advertise in the SOM, particularly due to their monopoly by the military government which was still in power. (Ayee 2001: 44). Additionally, there were still on the statute books repressive laws that militated against freedom of expression (Boafo-Arthur 2008: 20). In this

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connection, newspapers became the main source of information for a section of the voting public leading to the adoption of the private-owned newspaper (PON) by the opposition parties to communicate their messages (Karikari 1998: 173-179; Boateng 1993: 34).

Since the liberalisation of the media, especially from 1996 the use of various media for political advertisements by political parties and actors in communicating messages has been on the ascendency. This, according to Boateng (1993: 1), is due to their potency in influencing voter decisions especially advertisement in the form of songs, jingles, statements, billboards, inscription on vehicles and so on, which have become innovative and sophisticated.

One of the elections in which political advertisement featured prominently was in 2000. That year's elections witnessed various forms of advertisements, including jingles on radio and television, advertisers' announcement in the newspapers, posters and billboards, which gave added impetus to the elections. Unlike the election of 1996, where most of the political parties either did not have resources to advertise their messages or were denied the opportunity by the SOM, in the 2000 elections, a number of political parties, especially the NPP could place advertisements in the SOM. Indeed, the quality of the NPP advertisements was so high that they compelled the NDC to develop similar ones in order to counteract the effect of NPP advertisements. There were instances where due to the quality of the NPP advertisements, attempts were made, though unsuccessfully, by the ruling NDC government to have such advertisements withdrawn from the public media (Boadu-Ayeboafoh 2001: 72-73).

Political advertisements in the 2004 elections were on lower scale compared to that of the 2000 elections. Both the ruling NPP government and the opposition parties placed a number of advertisements. A lot of the advertisements were carried on radio, television and the

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newspapers (Gbeho 2007: 56-57). The advertisements in the 2004 elections were significant for a number of reasons. First, their content touched on important issues of development—the economy, corruption, politics and good governance. None of the advertisements touched on issues such as human rights and gender which are critical in this age and time. Second, some of the innovations associated with the advertisements, particularly in the area of themes and slogans, were professionally done. Finally, in the 2004 elections, television emerged as one of the important media used by political parties to communicate their messages.

In the 2004 elections, there was a large number of the political advertisements which sent negative messages. Most of such advertisements were sponsored by the opposition NDC. As Garramone (1980) and Garramone and Smith (1984) have observed, any party that relies on negative advertisements to persuade the electorate to vote for it is likely to be rejected by the electorate, it is trying to woo. Perhaps, this explains the party's defeat in 2004. Compared to the negative advertisements of the NDC, the content of the NPP advertisements were more civil and decorous. In other words, they were positive in tone and portrayed the ruling party in a positive light.

During the 2008 elections, political advertisements were in a class of their own due to their number, quality and sophistication. The major parties, notably the NDC, the NPP, the CPP and the PNC based their advertisements on issues as opposed to images (leadership qualities). Some of the advertisements focused on party manifestoes. Even the smaller parties such as the CPP and the PNC had more than 50 per cent of their advertisements devoted to issues. In terms of images, most of the advertisements focused on leadership abilities of the competing candidates. Notwithstanding those qualities of party advertisement, a number of the messages were negative in tone with most of them directed at either the NDC and or the NPP. The advertisements which portrayed other political parties in the negative light, centred mostly on

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past record of the target political parties. Such advertisements were either directed at individuals or their personal/leadership qualities (Oye 2009: 84- 89, 123-124).

5.4.14 Inflammatory Language

Since 2000, political discourse on radio and television has been characterised by inflammatory language, derogatory remarks and hate speech. The major culprits have been the politicians who use the interactive platform of the electronic media, especially radio to attack opponents and fan ethnic sentiments with the aim of scoring political points (Yankah 2004: 20). In the 2000 elections, for instance, the ethnic undercurrents were very complex. Several politicians were accused of making statements with ethnic undertones. In their effort to persuade the electorate they revived old ethnic rivalries, between the Ashantis and Ewes. Rawlings, for example, was reported to have cautioned Gas about the possibility of Ashantis taking over Accra if an Ashanti is voted as president (*The Ghanaian Chronicle*, 22-28 December 2000). Such statements almost marred the beauty of the 2000 electioneering campaign, particularly when it became apparent that politicians wanted to portray Ashantis in a negative light (Frempong 2001: 156). Normally, when inflammatory language dominates political discourse, the public tends to be divided along political party lines instead of condemning it. These tendencies have not only created impunity in the use of inflammatory language in the political discourse in the country, but has encouraged politicians to use such language as strategy to capture voters' attention.

The nature and type of political advertisements in the 2004 elections give credence to this trend. As Gheho (2007: 56) observes, heavy doses of intemperate language were contained in advertisements of the two leading parties, NPP and NDC. The electioneering campaign was characterised by hate speeches, ethnic diatribes, direct verbal attacks, war mongering, etc. It is against the backdrop of the rampant use of inflammatory language during the 2004

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electioneering campaign that Dr Kwesi Anning, a security analyst, urged the electorate to reject all those politicians who use intimidation, violence and threat as part of their political strategy to influence voter decisions (*The Heritage*, Wed., Sept. 8, 2004).

Part of the problem with intemperate language in elections stems from the use of local language in radio discussions. The use of the vernacular is useful in political communication. It enables the electorate to understand and appreciate the issues under discussion, and bring out all the differences in meaning associated with the idiomatic expressions that are used in the English language. However, the translation of the English to the vernacular sometimes results in the use of inflammatory language (Yankah 2004: 20).

5.5 SONGS, SLOGANS AND GESTURES

5.5.1 Slogans

Democratic elections are inconceivable without political information for the people. Because of its useful role in elections, information dissemination has become important to those who manage and contest elections. One sure way in which political information can get to the electorate is slogans and catch-phrases that identify particular parties or political tradition which party members can identify with, and capture the essence of a party's campaign message. Most often, because of low level of education in Ghana, written information for the education of the electorate during elections becomes ineffective. Slogans have therefore, become the best option. Apart from their catchy nature which makes it possible for the electorate to remember them easily, slogans are one of the effective ways to influence voter behaviour in elections. (Morse 1949: 507-510; Nianxi 2009: 2-3). Since 1992 when Ghana returned to constitutional rule, slogans have been part and parcel of electioneering campaigns. Slogans help propagate messages as well as mobilise the electorate for action. Some of the

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slogans that have come to the fore during this period include “positive change”, “so far so good”, “we are moving forward” etc, of the NPP. On the other hand, the NDC has also produced “change”, “yes, we can”, a “better Ghana agenda” etc. All of these slogans have contributed to influencing voter choices. Evidence of this was witnessed in the 2000 elections where the “asee ho”, slogan of the NPP meaning “bottom” in Akan, assisted the electorate guiding 40 per cent of them, especially supporters of the party with no formal education, but mostly living in rural areas of the country, in identifying the position of their flag bearer, which in that election, was the last on the list of names on the ballot paper (Mensah, 2011). Besides, Ayee (2011) has emphasized the important of slogans in elections. He argued that due to the fact that NDC won the 2008 elections on the basis of its campaign slogans of “change”, it follows therefore that political party manifestoes cannot be taken for granted when it comes to factors that influence voter choices.

5.5.2 Songs

Next to slogans are songs. Songs are basically messages which are communicated in the form of lyrics. Without songs, political communication cannot be complete. Political songs therefore constitute an important means through which communicators of political information reach their audience and influence their decisions. Considered as an important source of messages, songs have given a new dimension to political communication in recent times serving as a tool for influencing voter decision.

Songs are a form of political communication that are not entirely new in electoral politics in Ghana. Rather, the level of sophistication has changed considerably due to improvement in technology, as well as the liberalisation of the country’s media landscape. For instance, parties adopt popular songs with lyrics on which they put a spin for effect. In the same way, religious songs with Biblical quotations are re-interpreted to fit into socio-economic and

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political circumstances of the time and exploited to influence voters. Where the messages in the songs resonate with the people, there is a very high likelihood that the message would be accepted. It is perhaps the far reaching effects of songs, coupled with messages they carry and the credibility of the channels used to communicate them that go to make songs important in elections. It has been observed that in 2000, the "asee ho"— an Akan expression meaning "the bottom" song that was composed by one of the leading musicians, Daddy Lumber, in the country became a hit song that was adopted by the NPP. According to Mensah (2011), the song did only become a hit song that made it possible for the electoral to identify where the party's flag bearer was in terms of position on the ballot paper and be to identify and vote their preferred candidates into office.

Songs have been identified to be an important determinant of political action. In both mature and developing democracies, songs are used to educate and inform people on matters relating to political communication.

Agu, 1991: Cooke and Doornbos, 1982 have argued that songs have great educative and informative as well as influential roles among the electorate. Due to their emotional appeal, songs in general tend to affect the mood and character of people who listen to them. It is probably for this reason that in ancient Greek, Plato and Aristotle at a point in time recommended music for the education and development of young people (Mckay, et 1992).

5.5.3 Gestures

Even though verbal communication is critical in human interactions, non-verbal communication also has important role to play in communication within human society. In general, verbal communication has dominated political activities. Within the state, politicians and political actors have relied on verbal communication to interact with the electorate.

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Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that non-verbal communication has a role to play in politics as a supplement to verbal communication (Ababio 1988: 67).

Gestures, also known as body language are part of non-verbal communication. They deal with the movements of certain parts of the human body to communicate messages. Put differently, gestures are a means by which humans express non-verbal information (Gamble and Gamble 1996: 145-146). In the 2008 elections, the three leading parties, the NDC, NPP and CPP made extensive use of gestures variously signifying continuity and change. The NPP for instance, adopted what it called the 'kangaroo dance' which signifies continuity and development. The CPP's gesture was an adaptation of a dance movement which is performed mostly by chiefs as a symbol of authority. What the NDC did was to modify this type of gesture by rolling the two forefingers. Both the CPP and NDC gestures represented change. Both the NDC and NPP caught the attention of a large number of voters because they were easy to identify with. Even though the electoral success of the NDC could not be fully attributed to the use of the gesture of the party, it made it possible for the electorate, particularly, the illiterate voters, to easily understand the party's message.

Gestures are used in place of words or phrases. They stand alone or are used with words. In general, gestures are learned within a culture and may be specific to that culture and they are performed with intent and awareness. Gestures are also characterised by the fact that the electorate can easily recall and attach a general order of meaning to them. In other words, there is easy access to their form or meaning. Non-verbal communication is so important in Akan inter-personal communication that whenever there is a discrepancy between verbal and non-verbal message, the Akans tend to rely on the non-verbal (Ababio, 1988).

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5.5.4 Opinion Polls

Opinion polls play very crucial roles in elections. In advanced democracies such as the United States, Britain, France, etc. opinion polls have become an important benchmark for determining the outcome elections, that is, if they are conducted properly. In recent times, opinion polling has become fashionable among Ghanaian political parties to enable them to determine the possible direction of voters' choices and strategise on messages to influence them (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1999: 65). Certain individuals, groups and media houses with links to some political parties have been publishing what they described as the results of opinion polls. On the bases of such political results, they have made some predictions about direction of elections. Most of the polls were unscientific in methodology; there are others which are not standard, especially some of the polls that were conducted in 1996 (Ansu Kyeremeh, 1996).

5.5.5 Communication Teams

The importance of communication as a pivot on which modern elections revolve has compelled Ghanaian political parties to come out with strategy for making maximum use of it. Since 2000 political parties have adopted different strategies to manage communications during elections. Key among the strategies is the formation of "communications teams". These teams propagate achievements of their parties, and defend party positions on political party discussion programmes on radio and television.

Occasionally, they raise controversial issues such as possible rigging of the next election and ethnicity issues in the course of the discussions to set the agenda for political discourse in which they believe will inure to the electoral advantage of their political parties. The backgrounds of members of the communication teams ranges from law, accounting, media,

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economics, health etc. Over all, these communication teams are involved to continuously educate the electorate on their respective parties' position in preparation for elections.

5.5.6 Propaganda

Propaganda is important in politics. As a psychological tool, propaganda relies on a number of techniques to spread information that influences behaviour. The Cold War experience provides a classic example of the use of propaganda by the US and former Soviet Union in their ideological warfare. Since 1951, propaganda has assumed an important feature of Ghanaian politics. As Boahen (1975: 188) noted, one of the factors that accounted for the CPP's success in the 1954 election was its use of propaganda against the UGCC leaders whom it accused of taking bribes from the colonial government to delay independence. This information evoked a sharp response from the electorate, most of whom were illiterate and desirous of independence, to vote massively against the UGCC in the elections of that year.

The fact that some political parties since the 1992 elections have appointed officers to be responsible for propaganda underscores the usefulness to this tool in political communication in multi-party electoral competition. In almost all the elections in the Fourth Republic, political parties have effectively used different propaganda techniques to influence the behaviour of voters.

In the months leading to the 1992 elections, Dr Bilson, a Fanti and one of the leading members of the NPP dragged Rawlings to the High Court accusing him of possessing dual citizenship. According to Dr Bilson, Rawlings had made a statutory declaration to the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) that he was a citizen of Ghana contrary to the fact that he, Rawlings, has a Scottish father. He could therefore not contest the 1992 elections.

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The court dismissed the case due to the inability of Dr Bilson to prove the allegation (GLR 413).

NDC propagandists ignored the substance of the case and created the impression that it was the NPP which was contesting Rawlings' citizenship. They interpreted the suit as a plan by Dr Bilson, and the NPP, to prevent an Ewe from contesting for the highest office of the land. The NDC exploited that suit to create disaffection for the NPP, especially in the Volta Region. The action by the NDC leaders is what Filene (www.h4cblog.com) calls "name calling". Under this technique, evidence becomes unimportant. What matters most is the resultant prejudice that will be formed by voters as a result of it against the opponent. Other forms of propaganda were used in the subsequent elections.

In 1996, the NDC adopted the "card sticking" technique under which the propagandist puts up a solid defence of his party's position while condemning others (Ibid). In this instance, the NDC made use of its achievements in the economic, social and political areas. Notable were the provision of potable water and road networks to all parts of the country, connection of various parts of the country to the national electricity grid, improvement in communication networks, and returning of the country to democratic rule, etc. While engaging in self-glorification, the NDC described the opposition in the negative light and described the opposition alliance as a "bickering" and "nebulous" group.

The NDC urged the electorate to compare what it had achieved from the PNDC era to what the opposition was just promising them (Ayee 1998: 39). That strategy left the electorate with just one side of the story. The story about the PNDC's human rights violations, level of corruption among government officials, etc were shelved completely. The card sticking technique is regarded as "the most difficult technique to detect because it does not provide all the information necessary for the audience to make a decision" (www.h4cblog.com).

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In the 1996 elections both the NPP and NDC touted certain qualities of their flagbearers. They described them as God-fearing, honest, competent and trustworthy. This type of propaganda is what is called “plain folks”. According to Filene, plain folks propaganda only succeeds in casting people in a positive light without making it possible for the electorate to verify immediately the veracity or otherwise of what the propagandists say about the person they are projecting. This strategy was very popular in the 1996 electioneering campaign.

Most of the propaganda methods that were employed in 2000 were later repackaged and employed in subsequent elections. For instance, in 2000 there was an NDC propaganda purported to be NPP’s intention of repatriating aliens should the party win power. Even though the NPP denied the claim, the continuous reference to the issue created disaffection for the NPP not only in the 2000 elections but also both the 2004 and 2008 elections.

Another propaganda that has been used effectively since 2000 is “bandwagon”. All the parties, including the minor ones, such as the CPP, the PNC employed this strategy to communicate their messages to the electorate. They relied on pictures from party rallies which are published in newspapers and shown on television to portray a large support base for which reason the voters must join their party. This technique as Filene (ibid) notes creates false impression of widespread support for a particular party.

5.5.7 Manifesto

An important component of any democratic election is the manifesto that political parties develop and publish for the consideration of the voting public. This document constitutes an important aid to the electorate because it is a statement of intended principles, objectives, policies and programmes of the parties (Debrah 2005: 168). In democratic politics, there are as many manifestoes as there are political parties. The differences in the manifestoes of

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political parties, as pointed out by the *Dictionary of Politics* are mostly explained by factors such as length, style and political importance. Nevertheless, before the commencement of any electioneering campaign, at least, some of these factors are used to prepare the manifestoes. It is based on these manifestoes and other considerations that the electorate are able to gauge the feasibility or otherwise of the intended programmes, policies, principles and objectives of the political parties before voting for or against them.

In Ghana for instance, Ayee (2011) has stated that the clarity of the NPP manifesto of "Positive Change" which was introduced in the 2000 elections partly contributed to the success story of the party in the year's elections. On the other hand, the NDC's "I Care for You" manifesto launched during the 2008 elections added to the number of messages that moved voters into voting for the party. Indeed, the 2008 NDC manifesto was important to the electorate because it focused attention on poverty reduction. In addition, the manifesto focused on job creation, provision of transparent and accountable government as well the fixing of the economy. All these themes in the manifesto which were developed into campaign messages for the party's campaign made some impact on the choices of voters. The position of Ayee has been corroborated by Hinson and Tweneboah-Koduah (2010) who argued that part of the reason for the electorate voting against the NPP in the 2008 election was its inability to fulfil its 2000 manifesto promise.

Ideology

Tied to manifesto is ideology. It provides the basis upon which manifestoes are drawn. The ideas that handlers of the affairs of the state are oriented towards, define the focus and direction of the government of the state. Viewed as an important aspect of the life of a state, ideology as noted by Heywood (2007: 45) as "a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify

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or overthrow the existing system of power relationships". Apart from the state, ideology has a decisive role in party politics (Debrah, 2005: 73, 74).

From the 1950s when political party activities were introduced in the country, scores of political parties have emerged with different ideological persuasions. Notwithstanding the differences in ideologies the basic ideas upon which the country has been organised have mainly been two ideologies, that is, the liberal philosophy of the West pursued by the J. B. Danquah and K. A. Busia, which has since then developed into one of the formidable traditions – Danquah-Busia tradition on the one hand, and the socialist philosophy of the East adopted by Kwame Nkrumah and other parties of the Nkrumah's tradition (Chazan, 1983). These ideological notwithstanding, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have not them clearly. Both parties continue to orient their electorate towards the same policies and programmes, including protection of the poor and the vulnerable, distribution of justice, promotion of freedom and justice, rule of law and improving the well-being of the people (Ayee 2011: 372; Gyimah-Boadi & Debrah 2008: 151-152). Even parties besides the two leading parties have also not espoused different ideological positions, except to borrow from the two main orientations. In spite of the fact that none of the parties that has appeared in the Fourth Republic has so far not been able to espouse any clear-cut ideology nor mobilise people using any serious ideological platform, somehow they have, however, managed to campaign using some sort of ideological and populist rhetoric to garner votes during elections. In fact, since 1992, a number of factors including ideology has influenced the cause of voting among the electorate in the country (Ayee 2011: 375; Gyimah-Boadi & Debrah 2008: 151-152).

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5.5.8 Interviews

Interviews have become one of the means by which political parties advertise their policies and programmes. Either on air or in the newspapers, interviews have become an important part of communication by the political parties. In most cases, experts on various fields of academic and professional backgrounds are called upon by the media for an interview on various issues that confront the society. However, on matters of politics, it is political party leaders who are interviewed. Even though most of the interviews are at the instance of the media houses, political parties sometimes arrange for interviews and use such opportunities to communicate political messages on the issues under consideration for the information of the electorate. Sometimes the interviews tend to clear the air on certain issues. In 2000 for instance, prior to the elections, on the GTV breakfast show, Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor was quizzed about a statement he was alleged to have made regarding Fantis. According to the interview, the NPP candidate was accused of having described Fantis as jokers. My Kufuor took advantage of the platform to clear the air saying the allegation was false. He explained that as a person who is married to a Fanti, it was unthinkable for him to make any derogatory remarks about the group he was married from. On May 2000, the *Daily Graphic* in it Wednesday 24 May edition carried a story on its front page saying the Omanhene of Abeadze Traditional Dominase area, Daasebre Kwebu Ewusi VII had called on the NPP flag bearer to retract the statement he was said to have made about Fanti. The allegation was first published by *Palaver* newspaper; a pro-NDC newspaper. Even though the story was found to be false, the harm of some voters, especially Fanti sticking to the story cannot be overemphasized as some of the Fanti in the county would not forgive President Kufuor for describing them in such derogatory terms

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5.5.9 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the various strategies that have been employed by politicians since 1992 to communicate their messages to the electorate. Among the strategies that have been used so far include phone-ins, text messages, propaganda and newspaper reviews, among others. Even though the strategies have been numerous, their effects on the voter have been different. To ensure effective maximisation of results, politicians have over the years resorted to the use of various strategies to elicit the right voter responses in the elections.

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CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD OF DATA ANALSYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study will make use of a combination of different research approaches (data collection and analysis) to investigate the problem under consideration as such approaches tend to be appropriate in many research ventures, especially media impact studies. In addition to this the use of multiple analysis procedures in a research project makes it possible to determine which analytical procedure is likely to prove most effective in addressing the problem (Bryant 1990: 34; Grabber & Smith 2005: 493-494).

The study seeks to find out the factors that influence voter choices in elections since the re-introduction of democratic governance in the Fourth Republic, 1992-2008. The key variable to be studied in this research involves a message (economic, political, social, religious, etc.) as contained in both the print and electronic media as well as gestures, slogans, emblems and posters. The period 1992-2008 has been chosen for the study based on a number of considerations: first, the period 1992 was the year of the first election in the Fourth Republic. Though the elections were bedevilled with problems leading to the boycott by the opposition political parties, it provided the opportunity for the Electoral Commission (EC) to meet other stakeholders in elections to find solutions to the problems of the elections. This led to the establishment of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) which served as a platform for the various stakeholders to address electoral problems. Second, 1995 marked the period of liberalisation of the media landscape in the country by the government of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). During this time, the government's monopoly was broken as a number of private media houses were established (Karikari 1998: 14). The third elections in

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the Fourth Republic took place with the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) winning the election after a second round. The role of the media in the 2000 elections cannot be overemphasised as they contributed immensely towards the success of the elections. From thence, the NPP government which assumed the reign of government repealed some of the obnoxious laws militating against media practice in the country. This emboldened the media to ply their trade with much freedom. It is gradually emerging that since the 2000 elections, apart from the traditional face-to-face campaigns, political parties have made effective use of text messages, emblems, gestures, slogans and songs to communicate their message to the electorate. The 2008 election was selected for the study because it marked another turning point in the country's political history. Indeed, the successful completion of the two-term limit by the NPP following a similar experience by the NDC from 1992 to 1996 provided a positive reference point for the sustenance of democratic culture in Ghana. Besides, the period also saw intensive use of slogans, gestures, etc. in electoral campaigns.

6.2 SOURCES OF DATA

In this study, both primary and secondary sources of information was used to investigate the problem under consideration. The use of both primary and secondary data in this study is justified on the grounds that secondary sources may be manipulated by people thereby giving them the reliability of such data. Furthermore, secondary sources may be affected by the researcher's own biases. It is in this connection that the use of primary source is appropriate to address the problems associated with secondary sources (www. hubpages.com).

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6.2.1 Primary Sources

6.2.1.1 *Survey*

Survey is the primary source that was used in this study. It is one of the most commonly used methods of data collection in the social sciences. Babbie (1989: 237) notes that surveys are perhaps the best suitable methods for measuring attitudes and orientations of people in large societies. Surveys can be conducted in different ways including questionnaire administration, sampling and interviewing (www. hubpages.com). This study employed two of the survey methods—sampling and interviewing—techniques of data collection.

6.3. *Sampling: Sampling Design, Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

6.3.1 *Sampling Design*

Registered voters in the four constituencies of Fomena, South Dayi, Klottey Korley and Agona East constituted the population for the study. The constituencies above have been selected based on the following characteristics:

The Fomena constituency is one of the smallest constituencies in the Ashanti Region. It is inhabited mostly by the people of Asante. It is one of the strongholds of the NPP with the party winning the seat since 1996.

Like Fomena, South Dayi is one of the smallest constituencies in the Volta Region. The people in the constituency are predominantly Ewes. Apart from the NDC, no other party has ever won the South Dayi seat. Both constituencies are characterised by their homogeneity and vote along certain political lines: Fomena for NPP and South Dayi for NDC.

Klottey Korley and Agona East are constituencies with similar characteristics. They are not only populous constituencies but also cosmopolitan. Though dominated by Gas and Agonas

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respectively, they are known for their swing voting characteristic. Apart from the 1992 elections, which were boycotted by the opposition parties, so far, both the NDC and NPP have won in each of these constituencies two times since 1996.

As a means of representing all the three zones of the country (north, middle and south), the Tamale South Constituency was included in the survey. It began as Gukpegu-Sabonjida Constituency until 2004 when it was carved out of the latter. Indeed, the Constituency was one of the 30 constituencies which were created prior to the 2004 elections. Despite its cosmopolitan nature, the constituency is predominantly inhabited by Dagombas. It is one of the hot spots for political activity in the country. Though the NDC has won most of the elections in the Constituency, the solid tradition of the NPP in the area poses a great threat to its dominance.

6.3.2 *Sample size determination*

The total sample size was determined by the formula

$$n = \frac{pqz^2}{d^2}$$

Where "n" is the sample size

p is the proportion of the characteristic being studied

$q + p = 1$

d is the expected sampling error

We considered $p = 0.6$, $q = 0.4$, $z = 1.96$ *and* $d = 0.06$

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Then we had an estimated sample size of

$$n = \frac{pqz^2}{d^2} = \frac{(0.6)(0.4)(1.96)^2}{0.06^2} = 257$$

So, we settled on 250 as the total sample size with 50 per constituency of the five constituencies considered for the study.

6.3.3 Assumptions of Sample Size Determination

Our measurement of interest here is the proportion of voters who vote for a particular candidate. With reference to the 1992, 2000 and 2008 presidential elections, winning candidates have always won on approximately 50-60 per cent of the valid votes cast. We therefore settled on a proportion of p =0.6.

Also, we considered that voters are always drawn from a large population of Ghanaians aged 18 years and above. This informed the choice of the normal distribution. Thus with a 95 per cent confidence level our z then becomes 1.96.

In addition to this, we considered a margin of error at 6 per cent. Thus, our p=0.6, q=0.4, z=1.96 and d=0.06 which helped us to arrive at the sample size of 257.

6.3.4 *Sampling Technique*

In all 250 people were selected from the five constituencies using the stratified random sampling method. The use of this sampling technique is informed by the fact that the population to be studied have similar and many dissimilar elements. Also, this technique is useful as it helps to lower the variances in the population. Besides, the sampling technique becomes useful especially, where the selected constituencies have comprehensive lists of voters (i.e. voters' register) from which the sample size can be selected. Additionally,

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stratified sampling makes it possible to generalise based on the research findings (Twumasi 1986: 18-20).

In order to select the respondents for each of the four strata or constituencies, the simple random sampling method was applied to enable all the elements or individuals in the population get the chance of being selected (Twumasi, 1986).

6.3.5 Sampling Scheme

As already indicated above, 250 respondents were selected for the study from five constituencies, namely Agona East, Fomena, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South. Of the 250 respondents, 50 were selected from each of the constituencies, with each of them zoned into five non-overlapping strata representing the north, south, east, west and centre. In each stratum, 10 respondents were selected by systematic sampling method from every 10^{th} household. In each of the households, one respondent was selected taking into consideration distribution based on gender, age, among others.

6.4 Elite Interviews

In addition to the 250 respondents from the constituencies, one of the leaders (that is, any person holding key position in the party) of each of the four political parties—the National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP), Convention People's Party (CPP) and People's National Convention (PNC) —was interviewed. The selection of these persons was based on the strategic positions they occupy within their parties, wealth of knowledge on the subject under consideration and the roles they play in enforcing the political communication of their parties in their respective constituencies.

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6.5 Secondary Sources

Radio and television news bulletins, newspapers, internet archives, books, magazines, scholarly articles and other publications or journals were accessed and analysed. Similarly, the contents of written or symbolic materials such as party emblems, posters, advertisements and gestures by political parties were identified and analysed. These served as supplement to the primary sources. Apart from this, the content of these sources, particularly written or symbolic materials, posters, advertisements, gestures, etc. not only offered important insights into the subject under consideration but also facilitated critical examination and analyses of the messages contained in them.

6.6 DATA ANALYSIS

6.6.1 Primary sources

The data collected from the primary sources was analysed using simple frequency analysis. Each of the variables of the study, notably, messages (economic, health, education, corruption, religious, etc) was disaggregated by demographic characteristics such as education and constituency. The average and responses of the study sample were examined and analysed.

6.6.2 Secondary sources

Content and cross tabulation were employed to analyse the data obtained from the secondary sources.

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6.6.3 *Content analysis*

As indicated above, secondary sources including: radio and television news bulletins, newspapers, internet archives, books, magazines, scholarly articles and other publications, journals were accessed and analysed using content analysis.

Especially popular in media effects studies (Reinard, 1998), content analysis deals with the systematic procedure for examining contents of recorded information (Walize and Wiennir quoted in Reinard, 1998). However, Kerlinger (1986) believes that content analysis goes beyond examination of recorded information to include the systematic study and analysis of contents of communication materials in an objective and quantitative manner. This makes content analysis one means by which contents of political advertisements, especially those involving the use of language and symbols are studied and analysed (Meadow, 1985). The strength of this type of analysis lies in its ability to find empirical evidence about issues that really exist at any point in time and how such issues relate to human actions, attitudes and behaviours.

6.6.4 Cross Tabulation

After the data from the primary sources have been obtained, a cross-tabulation analysis of the variables of the study was performed to determine whether there exists a relationship between the demographic characteristics of the study sample and the responses of the respondents.

6.6.5 Conclusion

The study uses primary and secondary data collection methods. The five constituencies selected were for the study and they are Agona East, Fomena, Klottey Korle, South Dayi and Tamale South. The sample size for the study was 250 with 50 respondents interviewed from each of the constituencies using stratified random sampling method and elite interviews. Both

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the primary and secondary data collected were subjected to a number of analysis, including simple frequency analysis, for the primary data and content and cross tabulation analyses for the secondary source data.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA ANALYSIS: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND VOTER CHOICES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

7.1 INTRODUCTION

From 1992, when democratic rule was restored after a decade of military rule in Ghana, there have been consistent efforts by political stakeholders to deepen democratic culture in the country. This has resulted in improvement of the country's democratic practice. Although, various aspects of the country's democracy have attracted public interest, the conduct of free and fair elections and the freedom of the media, particularly have taken centre stage in the country's democratic agenda.

This chapter examines the impact of political communication on voter choices in the Fourth Republic, particularly during the 1992, 2000 and 2008 elections. The focus on these elections will enable us to understand the dynamics of voters' choices, especially in the light of the changes that have occurred in political communication recently and the effect they may have had on voter choices. Mixed research methodologies including tabulation survey of voters in selected constituencies across the country, and content analysis were used. This chapter is organised along the following themes: campaign message, slogan, gesture, text message, media and channels of communication. The selection of these themes is due to their place in the analysis of the study.

7.2 CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

One remarkable characteristic of electioneering campaign in the Fourth Republic is the changing form of campaign messages and how they influence voter choices. From the beginning of the Fourth Republic, political parties and candidates have relied on different

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campaign messages to influence voter choices. In all the five elections, campaign messages have generally centred on the economy (Eco), rule of law (Rol), accountability (Acc), transparency (Tra), ethnicity (Eth), health (Hea), corruption (Cor), development (Dev), education (Edu), human rights (Hmr), security (Sec), employment (Emp), improvement in democratic rule (Idr) and those related to personality of the political candidate and religious affiliation of the political candidate (Other). These messages have been ranked from 1 to 14, with the first and thirteenth positions representing the highest and the lowest points respectively. We examine how each of the messages has affected voter choices:

7.3 1992 ELECTION

The Table 1 measures the impact of thirteen (14) different categories of messages on the electorate. A total of 250 voters in the 1992 elections were asked to rank the messages according to their perceived influence on their choices at the polls. This aspect of the study answers the question: Which of the media contents or messages (economic, health, ethnic, gesture and slogan, among others) critically determined voter choices in elections?

To answer this and other questions of the study, we have provided a paraphrased version of each of the research questions on top of each table used for the analysis to introduce the subject matter for discussion.

Table 1: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for during the 1992 elections?

Message	Rank/Position	Average (%)
Economy	1st	12.0

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Rule of Law	10th	4.7
Accountability	13th	3.1
Transparency	14th	2.6
Ethnicity	11th	3.7
Health	5th	9.1
Corruption	3rd	9.9
Development	2nd	11.9
Education	8th	7.6
Human Rights	12th	3.5
Employment	6th	8.8
Security	7th	7.7
Improvement in Democracy	9th	6.1
Others	4th	9.3
Total		100

Source: Field data

Given the level of poverty in the country, it was not surprising that the economy with an average score of 12.0 per cent would be the most influential message for the electorate in the 1992 elections. It was obvious that the macroeconomic fundamentals were weak. Even the

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ratio of government revenue to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which hitherto had shown some improvement, began to decline from 15.1 in 1989 to 13.2 per cent in 1992. Also, the inflation rate of 11.6 per cent had its own effect on the lives of the people. Another problem which impacted negatively on the economy was the country's indebtedness. Both foreign and domestic debt stood at 89.7 and 10.3 per cent respectively (ISSER, 1993: 9, 20,). Many analysts had therefore concluded that the Ghanaian economy was headed "back to the intensive care unit" (Gyimah-Boadi, 1999: 411).

Next to the economy were messages on development. With an average score of 11.9 per cent, messages on development occupied the 2nd position on the voters' agenda. As a Third World country, it was without doubt that development issues, that is, infrastructural development, including the building of roads, schools, shelter, health and telecommunication facilities would engage the attention of the average voter. It must be pointed out that most of these facilities at the time of the elections were in a deplorable state (Ibid). The interest of voters lay in the improvement of such facilities, which the political parties including, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) promised to provide if the electorate voted them into power (Frempong, 2012: 48).

One of the problems that has bedevilled governance in this country is corruption. Responses from the electorate indicate that the third most important message that swayed voters' in the election was corruption which scored an average of 9.9 per cent. It must be stated that over the years, the fight against corruption has not been effective due to the lack of political will on the part of government to deal with the problem head on (chrajghana.com). Article 35(8) of the 1992 Constitution stipulates that the "state shall take steps to eradicate corruption". Voters therefore welcomed messages which aimed at addressing corruption related problems. Next to corruption are messages labelled as "other". Those messages had a total average

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score of 9.3 per cent. Campaign messages on health took the fourth position with an average score of 9.1.

Next to health was employment. This occupied the sixth position with an average score of 9.3 per cent. One of the issues that the political parties, especially those in opposition, made capital of during the 1992 election was the issue of employment. Despite the fact that there was a slight improvement in the employment situation in the country, the record during the period showed a steady rise in unemployment from the 1980s to the 1990s with the public sector being heavily affected. The main factor responsible for the general reduction in employment was the retrenchment of public sector workers (ISSER, 1993; Joseph: 1999: 411).

Security was the seventh most important message that occupied the attention of the electorate. In the period prior to the elections, concerns were expressed about the possible role of paramilitary elements such as members of the Association of Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (ACDRs) in the electoral process. There was widespread belief that since the paramilitary groups were created by J. J. Rawlings and were responsible to him alone, they would be used to interfere in the elections in favour of Rawlings. This, according to the Commonwealth Observer Group (1992), affected the psyche of the voters and heightened concerns for the security of the election process. According to Oquaye (1998: 93), the paramilitary elements of the PNDC government were indeed, used to intimidate scores of voters during the polls (Oquaye 1998: 93).

Education and improvement in democratic rule were ranked by the electorate, in eighth and ninth positions respectively. On the average, educational messages recorded only 7.6 per cent. Prior to the elections, education in general had started experiencing some improvement. The primary sector, for instance, had a net increase in enrolment of 7.4 per cent, and this

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occurred among poorer groups than among the rich (GSS, 1995). In the end, what the electioneering campaign succeeded in doing was to whet the appetite of the electorate into placing premium on the educational messages.

On the other hand, messages related to improvement in democratic rule received a low average score of 6.1 per cent. The government's conduct and policies affected voters' confidence in the democratic process. For instance, the activities of the paramilitary structures, especially the ACDRs, militias, etc limited the rights and freedoms of the other political parties to operate during the electioneering campaign. Worse of it was the government's use of some repressive laws to stifle free speech. In addition, neither the opposition nor civil society groups were allowed to participate in the selection of electoral officers; nor did they have a say in the election monitoring process (Boafo-Arthur, 2008: 20).

Meanwhile, messages on the rule of law came ninth with an average of 4.7. Some scholars rated the state of the rule of law high while others rated it low. Gyimah-Boadi, for instance, believed the PNDC government made conscious effort to allow for the full operation of rule of law. The U. S. Department of State's Country Report (1993) however, viewed the state of rule of law in the country as disturbing. This, no doubt, affected the ranking of this message by the electorate.

Ethnicity with an average of 3.7 was viewed by the respondents as the tenth most important message that affected their choices in the elections. This response is contrary to the general perception that the 1992 election was highly influenced by ethnicity (Country Report, 1992).

Human rights (3.5%), accountability (3.1%) and transparency (2.6%) occupied the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth positions respectively. Even though from the table, none of these messages influenced the choices of the respondents, there are good reasons why such

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responses should be surprising. In the case of human rights, for instance, it can be said that the low ranking of the message by the electorate comes as a surprise due to the human rights record of the PNDC government which, according to Oquaye (1998: 93), was poor.

With the continuous education of the electorate on the poor human rights record of the PNDC government by both the opposition parties and the media (Karikari 1998: 180-181), it was expected that respondents would rank this message very high. According to the US Department of State Country Report (1993), it is perhaps an indication of the fact that Ghanaians were still not sure of whether or not rule of law would continue to flourish after more than a decade of the PNDC and its baggage of human rights violations.

On the issues of accountability and transparency, it could be understood that the two concepts gained prominence in political discourse a few years before the elections of 1992. As a result not much was understood about them and this obviously affected voters' appreciation and ranking of the issue.

After dealing with the most critical message which influenced voter choices, the next important question is: Does the constituency or residence of a voter influence his or her choices of message in elections? The discussion of Table 1A below provides an answer to the question above.

Table 1A: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 1992 elections?

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Table 1A: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 1992 elections? (In Percentage)

	CONSTITUENCY														
	Agona East			Fomena			Klottey Korley			South Dayi			Tamale South		
Issue	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F
Eco	69.4	71.1	64.8	45.5	45.7	41.5	50.0	49.7	57.9	52.5	55.2	50.7	64.4	64.4	74.8
Rol	12.5	17.0	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.4	25.4	17.7	3.0	3.0	2.8	4.4	3.4	4.0
Acc	2.1	2.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.9	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	8.9	9.9	8.9
Tra	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Eth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.2	3.0	2.2	3.6	2.1
Hea	2.1	1.9	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.9	3.3	12.1	10.1	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cor	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	28.9	22.6	5.3	8.2	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dev	4.2	4.0	10.1	22.6	22.2	24.3	2.6	2.9	4.9	18.2	18.0	15.8	4.4	3.0	4.5
Edu	2.1	1.4	3.0	2.3	2.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.1	4.1	4.4	5.4	3.4
Hmr	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	2.2	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emp	2.1	2.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sec	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	6.5	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Idr	4.6	6.4	1.5	2.3	3.2	2.9	2.6	4.4	2.9	5.2	8.9	2.9	11.1	10.1	2.1
Other	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

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This part of the study examined the relationship between political messages and selected demographic characteristics using cross tabulation. Two of such demographic characteristics particularly, constituency and educational backgrounds of respondents, were correlated with all the 14 messages listed above as well as slogans, text messages and gestures.

Responses to the question: "Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency?" shows that the majority (69.4%) of the respondents in the Agona East Constituency, who voted in the 1992 elections, were influenced largely by economic messages. Clearly, the level of poverty in the constituency could be an important factor responsible for their responses. Even though there was considerable decrease in poverty levels in the country before the elections, some regions including the Central Region where this constituency is located, were still experiencing high levels of poverty. The level of poverty in the region was 52.0 per cent—a figure which was higher than the national average – 44.0 per cent (GSS, 2000). Out of the 250 respondents who claimed they were influenced by economic messages, males were 71.1 per cent while females were 64.8 per cent.

Apart from the economy, the next important message that swayed voters in the constituency was the rule of law. 12.5 per cent of those who were sampled said those messages persuaded them to vote the way they did. This was followed by the message on improving democratic rule. 4.6 per cent of the 250 respondents whose views were sought on the various campaign issues, regarded messages on improvements in the country's nascent democracy as the third most important factor that influenced the choices of the voters.

One of the major challenges facing rural areas in Ghana is the lack of good infrastructure to support economic activities. Agona East Constituency lacks a good road network, electricity in most parts of the constituency, solid waste management system, among others

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(ghanadistrict.com). It was not surprising therefore that respondents considered development issues as the fourth most important message which influenced their choices in the election. Almost all the political parties which campaigned in the constituency promised to address the infrastructural challenge there. As far as this messages on development is concerned, more females were interested in such issues that men (See Table 1A).

Respondents viewed accountability, health, education and employment as the fifth most important message that influenced their electoral choices. A total of 2.1 per cent of the respondents said they were influenced by these messages. These responses, particularly those on education came at a time when education was making some progress with over 70 per cent of children enrolled in schools in the Central Region where this constituency is located (GLSS, 2000). Meanwhile, the average score of responses from respondents who claimed to have been influenced by "other" messages stood at 0.9 per cent, and therefore those messages were less influential among voters in this constituency. Similarly, messages on transparency, ethnicity, corruption, human rights and security did not influence the choices of any respondent. They scored zero per cent each (see Table 1A).

Though respondents in the Fomena Constituency were also influenced by economic messages, only 45.0 per cent of them based their choices on this message. But messages on corruption had a different effect on the voters compared with the scores in the Agona East Constituency. The survey indicates that while 25.0 per cent of the respondents were influenced by corruption messages in the Fomena Constituency, the voters in the Agona East Constituency were not swayed by this message. Similarly, more females and males favoured corruption messages in the Fomena Constituency than Agona East. The rest of the respondents based their choices on other messages.

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As can be seen from Table 1A, apart from corruption, development also played an important role in the choices of respondents. Even though messages on development appeared to be important for respondents in that election as it emerged as the third most important message, only 22.6 per cent of those who took part in the survey said they were influenced by development issues. The 13 messages apart, "other" messages appealed to 0.9 per cent of the respondents in the Agona East Constituency. However, unlike the Agona East Constituency, voters' interests in the Fomena Constituency were influenced by issues on education, human rights and improvement in democratic rule to the same degree: each of them scored 2.3 per cent and was ranked fourth. Meanwhile, messages on the rule of law, accountability, transparency, ethnicity, health, employment and security appeared to have had little effect on voters. Each of them had an average score of 0.0 per cent.

Economic messages engaged the attention of voters more in the other constituencies. In the Klottey Korley Constituency, for instance, 50.0 per cent of the respondents maintained that economic messages of the parties helped them to decide on whom to vote for in the elections. Meanwhile the number of female and male voters who were moved by the said messages in the constituency were 57.9 and 49.7 per cent respectively. Rule of law was another important factor for voters. 18.4 per cent indicated that messages on the rule of law impacted on their choices. This figure, which contrasts sharply with the ones obtained in the Agona East and Fomena constituencies, shows that there were more people in the Klottey Korley Constituency who were influenced by messages on the rule of law than there were in the other two constituencies.

Respondents who were swayed by "other" messages gave them a ranking of three with an average score of 10.0 per cent. The next important message after the rule of law is accountability. It was the fourth most important issue in the Klottey Korley Constituency.

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Messages on accountability attracted a number of voters during the election, but in general, only 7.9 per cent of the respondents claimed to have been influenced by this issue. At the same time, three of the messages, namely transparency, corruption and security emerged as the fifth most important group of messages that influenced voters.

Only 5.3 per cent of them claimed to have been swayed by these messages during the elections. Messages, which failed to affect the choices of the voters significantly, were health, development and improvement in democratic rule. Only 2.6 % of the respondents based their voting decisions on such messages. Ethnicity, education, human rights and employment scored zero.

South Dayi was another constituency where economic messages heavily influenced the choices of the respondents. Table 1A shows that 52.5% of the respondents based their voting decisions on economic messages in the 1992 election. But the survey found that though in this constituency, development issues appeared to be important for the respondents due to the deplorable state of infrastructure in the area, only 18.2 per cent of the voters claimed to have been swayed by the messages on development. Out of the 250 respondents who claimed to have been influenced by development messages, 18.0 and 15.8 per cent of males and females were said to have been influenced by those issues. Messages on health also had an influence on voter choices: only 12.1 per cent of the respondents based their voting choices on health messages.

The survey also shows that only 6.1 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the message on improvement in democratic rule. On the other hand, messages on the rule of law, accountability, ethnicity and education exerted scant influence on the choices voters made. Only 3.0 per cent of the respondents were moved by these messages. It is interesting that respondents in this constituency placed little premium on the ethnicity of the candidates at

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time when the nationality of J. J. Rawlings, who belongs to the same ethnic group as the majority of people of the constituency, was being challenged in court by a member of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Furthermore, in the South Dayi Constituency, some messages had no effect on voters even though they were harped on by the political parties. Among such messages are transparency, corruption, human rights, employment and security. These messages attracted zero responses.

Out of the five constituencies surveyed, only Tamale South recorded the highest score in four of the 14 campaign messages used in the elections. The four messages are the economy, "other", improvement in democratic rule and accountability. Perhaps, the most important consideration given to economic messages by voters occurred in the Tamale South Constituency. The majority (64.4%) of the respondents claimed to have considered such messages churned out by the political parties in deciding who to vote for. It is not surprising that voters in this Constituency would respond in the manner they did because of the higher incidence of poverty (73.0%) in the area, particularly among the rural communities in the constituency (GLSS, 2000). In view of the high levels of poverty in the area with its attendant effect on the people, it is not surprising that an equal percentage of both male and female respondents, that is 64.4 per cent claimed to have been influenced by messages on the economy.

Meanwhile, messages on improving democratic rule also had little impact on the choices of the electorate. Out of the 250 people who took part in the survey, 11.1 per cent said they were influenced by these messages in their choices. Among the five constituencies, it was only in the Tamale South Constituency where messages on accountability attracted some responses. Even in this case, only 8.9 per cent of the respondents depended on it for their electoral decisions. Apart from accountability issues, messages on rule of law, development and

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education influenced a number of respondents in the Tamale South Constituency to vote for the candidate of their choice. Just 4.4 per cent of the respondents said they were influenced by those messages.

Ethnicity, one of the delicate issues in Ghanaian politics, which had been exploited frequently by politicians and the media for political advantage, scored only 2.2 per cent. As can be seen from Table 1A, respondents in this constituency were not influenced by messages on transparency, health, corruption, human rights, employment and security in spite of public perceptions on these issues. Each of these messages in addition to "other" messages scored zero per cent response.

One of the questions that underpin this study relates to whether educational background of voters is a factor in their choices of messages/channels during elections. To attempt an answer, it is important to consider the following tables and the discussions that follow them. It must be pointed out that while Table 1B represents all the responses of illiterate voters, those of 1C and 1D relate to voters with senior high school and tertiary educational backgrounds respectively.

Table 1B: Illiterate respondents and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 1992 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South

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	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Economy	79.0	70.4	85.7	61.5	71.6
Rule of Law	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1
Accountability	–	–	–	–	–
Transparency	–	–	–	–	–
Ethnicity	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	7.1
Health	10.5	0.0	5.7	15.4	0.0
Corruption	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0
Development	10.5	27.3	5.7	15.4	7.1
Education	0.0	22.0	0.0	0.0	7.1
Human Rights	–	0.0	–	–	–
Employment	–	–	–	–	–
Security	–	–	–	–	–
Improvement in Democratic Rule	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

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Asked which of the messages communicated by the political parties in the 1992 elections influenced their choices most, respondents with no formal education identified the economy as the single most important message. It influenced 79.0, 70.4, 85.5, 61.5 and 71.6 per cent of the respondents in Agona East, Fomena, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South respectively. Development attracted low responses from all the constituencies. Health swayed 10.5, 5.7, and 15.4 per cent of the voters in Agona East, Klottey Korley and South Dayi respectively. The rest of the messages attracted no response. Notwithstanding its prominence in the campaign, corruption attracted the attention of 2.0 per cent of the respondents in Klottey Korley. Responses to education were insignificant. With exception of Fomena and Tamale South where messages on education influenced 22.0 and 7.1 per cent of the electorate respectively, none of the respondents in other constituencies had their choice at the polls influenced by that message.

Another message that affected voter choices but insignificantly was ethnicity. It influenced only 4.6 and 7.1 per cent of the illiterate respondents in South Dayi and Tamale South respectively. Messages on rule of law appealed to 7.1 per cent of voters in Tamale South and improvement in democratic rule affected the choices of 3.1 per cent of constituents in South Dayi with the remaining constituencies attracting zero per cent responses. There were messages which attracted zero responses from the electorate. These include accountability, transparency, employment, and security (See Table 1B).

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Table 1C: Respondents with up to senior high school education and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 1992 elections.

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena %)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	81.6	30.9	41.6	41.4	33.3
Rule of Law	8.2	0.0	33.3	3.4	16.7
Accountability	0.0	0.0	4.2	6.9	50.0
Transparency	_	_	_	_	_
Ethnicity	_	_	_	_	_
Health	0.0	0.0	4.2	6.9	0.0
Corruption	0.0	19.2	4.2	0.0	0.0
Development	4.1	38.5	4.2	27.6	0.0
Education	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Rights	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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Security	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
Improvement in Democratic Rule	4.1	3.8	0.0	13.8	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

Unlike the illiterate respondents, those with up to senior high school education were not affected by economic messages as much as it did for illiterate voters. With the exception of Agona East, where economy appealed to 81.6 per cent of the respondents, the rest of the responses did not go beyond 42.0 per cent. The second highest response of 41.6 per cent was recorded in Klottey Korley. Messages on rule of law influenced 33.3, 16.7, 8.2 and 3.4 per cent of respondents in Klottey Korley, Tamale South, Agona East and 3.4 per cent in South Dayi constituencies respectively. Accountability, which constitutes an important part of the preamble of the 1992 Constitution, affected people's vote in only Tamale South, South Dayi and Klottey Korley with percentage responses of 50.0, 6.9 and 4.2 per cent respectively. The responses for the rest of the messages were zero per cent.

Development swayed 38.5, 27.6, 4.2, and 4.1 per cent of voters in Fomena, South Dayi, Klottey Korley and Agona East respectively. None of the respondents who voted in the Tamale South Constituency were affected by development messages. According to Table 1C, health message accounted for the choices of 6.9 and 4.9 per cent of respondents in South Dayi and Klottey Korley. Fomena and Klottey Korley constituencies had 19.2 and 4.2 per cent of their respondents were affected by messages on corruption, with other messages recording no responses. Improvement in democratic rule is another message which appealed

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to just a small section of voters in Agona East, Fomena and South Dayi. They influenced the vote of 4.1, 3.8 and 13.8 per cent of the respondents in the three constituencies respectively. Out of the five constituencies, it was only Klottey Korley that messages on security gain some attention, but even here the effect of the influence was little. Only of 8.3 per cent response was obtained. Messages relating to education and human rights had the same influence on voters. Each received 3.8 per cent responses in the Fomena Constituency. Messages on employment had no appeal except to only 2.0 per cent of respondents in Agona East. Messages regarding transparency and ethnicity had negligible responses, hence they did not feature in the analysis.

Table 1D: Respondents with tertiary education and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 1992 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	22.7	23.4	2.4	0.0	0.0
Rule of Law	40.9	0.0	2.4	3.6	0.0
Accountability	9.1	0.0	1.1	1.8	0.0

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Transparency	0.0	0.0	6.5	0.0	5.5
Ethnicity	_	_	_	_	_
Health	_	_	_	_	_
Corruption	0.0	66.7	73.0	0.0	16.7
Development	0.0	3.3	0.0	5.4	16.7
Education	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Rights	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Employment	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Security	0.0	0.0	7.3	0.0	0.0
Improvement in Democratic Rule	13.7	3.3	7.3	89.2	61.1
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

Messages on democratic rule attracted more attention than the rest. However, it influenced more voters in South Dayi and Tamale South, where 89.2 and 61.1 per cent of the respondents in the two constituencies respectively were influenced by this message. Table 1D shows that Agona East 13.7 per cent, Klottey Korley 7.3 per cent, and in Fomena Constituency, 3.3 per cent of the electorate were influenced by the messages on democratic

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rule. In Klottey Korley and Fomena, issues relating to corruption swayed 73.0 and 66.7 per cent respectively of respondents.

In Tamale South Constituency, messages on corruption swayed 16.7 per cent of the respondents and none from Agona East and South Dayi. Unlike those without formal education, the economy was not a factor for those with tertiary education. None of the respondents in the five constituencies were influenced significantly by messages on the economy. In Fomena, messages on the economy swayed 23.4 per cent of the respondents. In Agona East and Klottey Korley messages on the economy influenced 22.7 and 2.4 per cent of respondents respectively. For South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies, no voter had his or her decisions influenced by economic messages.

An important message such as those on education appealed to only 9.1 per cent of the respondents. The effect of accountability on choices of the respondents were minimal, polling less than 10.0 per cent of the voters in Agona East, Klottey Korley and Tamale South constituencies. Voters in Fomena and Tamale South constituencies did not believe in accountability messages. Messages on security accounted for 7.3 per cent of the decisions of the electorate in Klottey Korley. The other 12 messages influenced no respondent in the remaining four constituencies. On employment, for instance, only 4.5 per cent of the electorate in the Agona East Constituency relied on that message to vote. Despite the education on human rights by the private newspapers, its effect on voters was limited: it influenced only 3.3 per cent of the voters in Fomena. Issues that had negligible effect on voter choices are ethnicity and health.

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SLOGANS

Apart from messages on specific issues in an election, there are other means through which political parties seek to influence voters. These are slogans, gestures and text messages. In this study, we attempted to assess which party slogan influenced respondents most during the 1992 elections. It is interesting to note that during the 1992 elections, a few political slogans emerged on the political scene. They were developed and used by the political parties as a means of advertising or communicating their electoral messages. While the NDC had "continuity" as its slogans for the elections, that of NPP was "development in freedom". Essentially, the NDC slogan was meant to urge the electorate to consider Rawlings' development record and give him another mandate. Unlike NDC, the NPP slogan was not only nebulous but also did not communicate any specific messages to the electorate (Oquaye 1993: 270; C:\Users\Obibini\Videos\Desktop\Ghana - Presidential Elections.htm).

Like the NPP, the other political parties namely, PNC, NIP and PHP did not have meaningful slogans that could garner them some votes. The PNC, for instance, had "Service with honesty" as its advertising catch-phrase. In an interview with Dr Edward Mahama the leader of the PNC in 2000 and 2008, he conceded that it was the lack of appeal of the PNC's slogan at the time that he developed the "two direct" slogan, which the party used in the subsequent elections. Apart from the 14 messages mentioned above, slogan and gesture were other forms of message that influenced voters in the 1992 elections. In the case of slogan, the relevant question to deal with is: Which party's slogan influenced you most during elections?

Table 1E: Which party's slogan influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 1992 elections?

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	NPP	NDC	Other	Don't Remember	Total
Agona East	0.0	6.7	0.0	94.3	100.0
Fomena	52.5	32.5	0.0	15.0	100.0
Klottey Korley	20.0	51.4	5.8	22.0	100.0
South Dayi	4.0	58.0	0.0	38.0	100.0
Tamale South	27.3	22.7	2.3	47.7	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 1E shows that in 1992, none of the political party slogans influenced voters significantly in the Agona East Constituency. Even the NDC slogan which attracted the highest response, influenced only 6.7 per cent of the respondents. The rest of the slogans had zero responses. Meanwhile, 94.3 per cent of the respondents in the survey said they did not remember that a party slogan influenced their electoral decisions at the time. For respondents in the Fomena Constituency, the NPP slogan was the main motivating factor behind their electoral choices. More than half (52.5%) of the respondents expressed confidence in the NPP slogan saying it influenced them most during the election.

Even though other slogans had some influence, their effect on the electorate's choices was insignificant. The slogans with the least influence in this constituency were those of other

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political parties. They influenced 2.9 per cent of the voters. On the whole, only 12.5 per cent of the respondents in Fomena claimed they did not remember any party's slogan during the elections. In the Klottey Korley Constituency, it was the NDC slogan which swayed more voters: 51.4 and 20.0 per cent of respondents said they were influenced by the slogans of NDC and NPP respectively. The slogans of the other political parties influenced only 5.8 per cent of the electorate.

The number of respondents who did not remember being influenced by the party slogans was 22.9 per cent. In South Dayi, 58.0 per cent of the electorate were affected by the NDC slogan. The NPP slogan influenced only 4.0 per cent of the electorate in the Constituency. The slogans of the other political parties had no influence at all on the electoral choices of the respondents. Those slogans recorded zero per cent response from the electorate. Meanwhile, 38.0 per cent of the respondents "Don't Remember" the effect that party slogans had on them. The pattern of responses was different in Tamale South Constituency. Slogans of both NDC and NPP appeared to have almost the same weight of influence. While the NPP slogans recorded the highest response of 27.3 per cent, the NDC came second with just 22.7 per cent response. In this constituency, 47.7 per cent of the electorate said they "Don't Remember" being influenced by any party slogan. The slogan of the "other" party had the least response. In all, only 2.3 per cent of the people were influenced by it.

Though in terms of figures not much was attained by way of responses to the slogans of the political parties' slogans, it is evident from this brief analysis that out of the five constituencies surveyed, the NDC slogan was the most influential. It recorded 58.0 per cent responses in South Dayi Constituency. In an interview held with the Deputy General Secretary of the NDC, Mr Doe Lawson said the party choose the said slogan upon careful consideration. According to him, the NDC believed J. J. Rawlings had done a lot from the

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PNDC era that the party felt the people should give him the opportunity to continue his policies and programmes. The next important slogan for the electorate was that of the NPP. The effect of the slogan was felt more in the Fomena Constituency where it influenced 52.5 per cent of the respondents. Among the slogans, those of the "other" political parties were the least. In Agona East and South Dayi, those slogans recorded zero per cent responses.

These responses mirror certain aspects of Ghanaian politics where irrespective of campaign messages, the electorate vote en mass in certain regions and constituencies for a particular political party. Part of this nature of Ghanaian politics is a carry-over from pre and immediate post-independence eras into, especially the Fourth Republic, where certain constituencies and regions have as a result of certain long traditional and historical antecedents, developed affinities towards certain political parties resulting in the mobilisation of loyal voters who continue to voter for the same party during elections (Lindberg and Morrison 2005:583-584). Both Ashanti and Volta regions have been typical in this regard. Electoral results since 1992 indicate that more than 60 per cent of the electorate have always given their votes to the NPP and NDC in the two regions respectively. So, the situation where the slogans of NPP and NDC were the most influential in Fomena and South Dayi respectively, each of which is a constituency in the said regions, did not come as a surprise. Rather, it confirms the assertion that people in the two constituencies depend on other factors other than campaign messages to vote. The least response of the slogans of the "other" political parties reflects the weak political support of such parties in the constituencies.

Is educational background of voters, a factor in their choices of messages during elections? This aspect of the study is devoted to answering this question.

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Table 1F: Illiterate respondents and party slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 1992 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	0.0	66.7	_	22.2	22.5
NDC	0.0	33.3	50.0	11.1	9.4
Other	100.0	0.0	50.0	66.7	78.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The slogans of political parties other than the NPP and NDC caught on in Agona East Constituency than the other constituencies. They influenced all the respondents with no formal education. In Fomena Constituency, for instance, the NPP slogan was the most influential. It influenced 66.7 per cent of the electorate. The strengths of both NDC and NPP slogans in the Klottey Korley constituencies were the same. Each of the slogans recorded 50.0 per cent responses. The NPP slogan received zero per cent responses. The situation was different in South Dayi. The slogans of other political parties were very influential, accounting for the decisions of 66.7 per cent of the electorate. Ironically, the NDC slogan was the least influential in a constituency where the party was most popular. The massive victory of the NDC in this constituency shows that other factors apart from slogans influenced the respondents. In the Tamale South Constituency, the slogans of other parties were very influential, swaying 78.1 per cent of the respondents (See Table 1F).

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Table 1G: Respondents with up to senior high school education and party slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 1992 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
NPP	0.0	41.9	16.2	2.5	30.8
NDC	10.7	23.1	44.5	39.0	25.0
Other	89.3	34.9	39.3	58.5	44.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 1G shows the most interesting responses among senior secondary school graduates in the five constituencies during the 1992 elections. In the case of the Agona East Constituency, it is the constituency with the highest and the least responses among the five constituencies. For the highest responses, it is interesting to note that the most influential slogans were those of the political parties other than both the NPP and NDC. The study shows that 89.3 per cent of the electorate based their choices on these "other" slogans. However, in case of the lowest responses, the study shows that the Agona East Constituency recorded the least response in terms of slogan appeal and the victim is the NPP slogan. It attracted zero per cent response. The next constituency where the slogans of "other" parties were influential was South Dayi.

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More than half (58.5%) of the electorate claimed to have been influenced by those slogans. Like Agona East Constituency, the NPP slogan in South Dayi Constituency was the least effective. It attracted only 2.5 per cent responses. Apart from Agona East and South Dayi, the slogans of the "other" parties made impact in the Tamale South Constituency. A quarter (25.0%) of the respondents noted the effect of the parties' slogans on their electoral choices. In the Fomena and Klottey Korley constituencies, the slogans of NPP and NDC were the most appealing influencing 41.9 and 44.5 per cent voters respectively. Interestingly, in both Fomena and Klottey Korley constituencies, the NDC and NPP slogans were the least influential in the two constituencies respectively.

Of the five constituencies, the slogans of the "other" political parties were the most important for senior high school leavers. The influences of those slogans on the choices of those respondents were highest in three of the five constituencies including Agona East, South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies. The NDC slogan emerged the second most important slogan for the electorate. The slogan with the least appeal was the NPP's. The slogans poorest performance was seen in the Agona East Constituency, where it swayed none of the respondents interviewed for in the constituency.

Table 1H: Respondents with tertiary education and party slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 1992 elections

Slogan	Constitution				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)

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NPP	0.0	25.0	11.8	0.0	29.4
NDC	0.0	50.0	17.6	71.4	17.6
Other	100.0	25.0	70.6	28.6	53.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

The most influential slogans for respondents with tertiary education during the 1992 elections were those of the "other" political parties. More than half of the electorate in Agona East, Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies voted based on the slogans of the "other" political parties. The slogans influenced 100.0, 53.0 and 70.0 per cent of respondents in the three constituencies respectively. The next influential slogan was the NDC's. In South Dayi and Fomena, the NDC slogan affected the choices of 71.4 and 50.0 per cent of voters respectively. That of the NPP was least appealing. It swayed voters in Agona East and South Dayi constituencies. In fact, the two constituencies recorded zero per cent responses (See Table 1H).

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Respondents were asked which channels of communication they relied upon mostly in deciding who to vote for during the 1992 elections. This particular question will be used to deal with all the various channels of communication used in this study. The following are the analyses of the responses of the electorate:

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Table 1J: Which of the following channels of communication did you rely upon in 1992 elections?

Channel	Constituency					Total
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South	
Radio	23.1	32.3	17.7	10.8	16.1	100.0
Television	20.9	0.0	34.9	16.3	27.9	100.0
Newspaper	0.9	7.8	30.8	61.5	0.0	100.0
Political Rally	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 1J shows that radio was the most popular medium in the Fomena Constituency. Respondents depended mostly on this medium to make their political choices. The number of respondents who relied on radio was 32.3 per cent, followed by the Agona East Constituency, with 23.1 per cent, Klottey Korley Constituency 17.1 per cent and Tamale South constituency 16.2 per cent. The constituency with the least number of respondents who depended on radio for their political choices was South Dayi. Only 10.8 per cent of the respondents claimed to have relied on this channel for their electoral decisions.

On the other hand, the table above shows that the electorate in the Klottey Korley Constituency relied on television which influenced more than a quarter (34.9%) of the voters. It was followed by Tamale South and Agona East constituencies with 27.9 and 20.9 per cent

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respectively, while South Dayi was the fourth constituency in terms of voter reliance, on television, with 16.3 per cent of respondents. Compared to radio which was the most popular medium on which respondents in the Fomena Constituency relied on for their political decisions, television was the least important medium for the respondents. No respondent depended on this medium for their electoral decision.

Newspaper, which is another medium of communication, was an important influence on voters. In South Dayi 61.5 per cent of the respondents relied on newspapers for their political decisions. Next was Klottey Korley, with 30.8 per cent of the respondents relying on newspapers. Agona East and Tamale South followed with third and least positions influencing merely 0.9 and 00 per cent of voters respectively.

Another question worth considering is whether educational background of voters was a factor in the choices of channels by illiterates, senior high school leavers and those with tertiary education. In order to ensure logical discussion and coherence, the following tables are considered and analysed by and conclusions reached**.**

Table 1K: Respondents' educational background and the influence of state-owned radio on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 1992 elections.

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	35.7	53.6	10.7	100.0
Fomena	8,0	84.0	8.0	100.0

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Klottey Korley	0.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	92.3	7.7	100.0
Tamale South	14.8	55.6	29.6	100.0

Source: Field data.

It must be noted that in 1992, there were no electronic media in the country. All the radio and television stations in the country belonged to the state. Private radio and television stations came into being after 1995 when the airwaves were liberalised.

In the 1992 elections, the state-owned radio stations played an important role in shaping the decisions of voters in the five constituencies under consideration; namely, Agona East, Fomena, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South. This medium accounted for the decisions of at least half (50.0%) of respondents with up to senior high school education. South Dayi emerged as the constituency with the highest response. The state-owned radio stations influenced 92.3 per cent of the voters. Illiterate voters, particularly those in Klottey Korley and Agona East constituencies did not rely on the state-owned radio stations for their political decisions. It can be seen from Table 1K that apart from Klottey Korley where 50.0 per cent of the respondents were swayed by this medium, an insignificant number were influenced by radio in the remaining four constituencies. The rest of the responses were not significant.

Table 1L: Respondents' educational backgrounds and the influence of state-owned television on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 1992 elections

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Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	58.3	33.3	8.4	100.0
Fomena	14.3	71.4	14.3	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	85.7	14.3	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
Tamale South	12.5	38.5	46.1	100.0

Source: Field data

Television is another medium that influenced voter choices in 1992. Unlike radio, the influence of state-owned television on electoral decisions produced mixed results among the various educational categories. Each of the three categories of educational attainment generated some significant number of responses. In the Agona East Constituency, for instance, while 58.3 per cent of the respondents with no formal education had their choices influenced by the state-owned television, responses from voters with up to senior high school and tertiary education were only 33.3 and 8.4 per cent respectively. In the three constituencies, 85.7, 75.0 and 71.4 per cent of the electorate with up to senior high school education had their choices determined by this medium respectively. However, in Tamale South Constituency, no responses from each of the three educational categories was more than 50.0 per cent (See Table 1L).

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Like the state-owned radio, television also influenced more voters with senior high school and tertiary education backgrounds than illiterate voters.

Table 1M: Respondents' educational backgrounds and the influence of state-owned newspapers on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 1992 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Klottey Korley	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	87.5	12.5	100.0

Source: Field data

As it can be seen from the table above, though five constituencies were surveyed for this study, only two, that is Klottey Korley and South Dayi, finally ended up in the data that is used for this analysis. The remaining three constituencies, that is, Agona East, Fomena and South Dayi had negligible figures after they were cross tabbed with voters educational backgrounds. Table 1M shows that newspapers were very influential in the electoral decisions of respondents with tertiary and senior high school education: the responses were 100.0 and 87.5 per cent of the electorate in the Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies respectively (See Table 1M).

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Table 1N: Respondents' educational backgrounds and the influence of private-owned newspapers on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 1992 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	-	-	-	-
Fomena	-	-	-	-
Klottey Korley	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
South Day	-	-	-	-
Tamale South	-	-	-	-

Private newspapers influenced the choices of voters during the 1992 elections. Though the media landscape had not been liberalised during this period, a few new private newspapers existed. They included *Free Press, Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Pioneer*, and they contributed effectively towards the choices of the respondents in this election. The only constituency that reported responses to this question is the Klottey Korley Constituency where 100.0 per cent of the respondents with tertiary education claimed to have relied on the private newspapers for their decisions. The rest of the respondents, both illiterates and those with up to senior high school education, did not rely on newspapers for their political choices (See Table 1N).

The responses of the study show that voters with only tertiary education were influenced by the private-owned newspapers. According to Karikari (1998), because the state-owned

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newspapers are perceived as supporting the government of the day, the private newspapers became an alternative to some of the information for those opposed to the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC).

Another area the study touched is political rallies. A cross tabulation analysis between political rally and voters educational background shows a strong relationship between the two variables. Table 1P shows that it is only in South Dayi and Tamale South that significant responses emerged with respect to the effect of the medium of political rallies.

Table 1P: Respondents' educational backgrounds and the influence of political rally on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 1992 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No Education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	–	–	–	–
Fomena	–	–	–	–
Klottey Korley	–	–	–	–
South Dayi	50.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
Tamale South	66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0

In the South Dayi Constituency, 50 per cent of illiterates and those with tertiary educational backgrounds were influenced by messages at political rallies. Those with education up to senior high school claimed there was no influence of the medium on their electoral decisions.

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In Tamale South Constituency, 66.7 and 33.0 of voters respectively for illiterate respondents and those with up to senior high school education relied on political rallies to decide who to vote for.

7.4 2000 ELECTIONS

The 2000 election was significant. Due to improvement in the electoral system, people showed a lot of interest. The discussions below seek to ask the question: Which of the messages (economic, health, ethnic, gesture and slogan, among other) critically determine voter choices in Ghana. We will begin with the ranking of political messages:

Table 2: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for during the 2000 elections?

Message	Rank/Position	Average %
Economy	1st	12.2
Rule of Law	8th	4.5
Accountability	11th	2.9
Transparency	12th	2.4
Ethnicity	10th	3.5
Health	4th	9.2

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Corruption	3rd	9.9
Development	2nd	11.7
Education	5th	7.8
Human Rights	9th	3.7
Employment	4th	9.2
Security	6th	7.5
Improvement in Democracy	7th	6.3
Other	4th	9.2
Total		100

Source: Field data

Similar to previous elections, in the 2000 elections, messages on the economy attracted voters' attention. It was ranked first by the respondents with an average score of 12.2 per cent. In spite of the high cost of living caused by increased fuel prices, coupled with poor macroeconomic fundamentals, there were improvements in other sectors of the economy particularly, the service sector, which increased the confidence people had in the economy (ISSER 2000: 2). At the same time, however, the promise by the political parties to improve the economy as outlined in their manifestoes influenced the way respondents voted. To buttress this point, the Deputy Minority Leader in Parliament, Mr Dominic Nitiwul said in an interview that it was the economic hardship at the time that his party made sure the development of messages on the economy was given the topmost priority. Messages on

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development issues also attracted the attention of the respondents, scoring an average of 11.7 per cent.

Development issues ranked second to economic issues in the 1992 elections. There was ample evidence to suggest that the government was serious about tackling the infrastructural needs of the country. Prior to the elections, this commitment was manifested in the construction of roads, provision of electricity, water, schools and housing, etc. (Nugent 297: 99; ISSER 2000: 113-114). The next important message after development is corruption. As an age-old problem, the perception of existing corruption also dogged the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government. With an average score of 9.9, corruption, which had become the third most important issue for the voters, reached its apogee during this period. There were reports of high level corruption in the government, which civil society groups and opposition political parties and the media capitalised on to campaign against the ruling NDC government (CDD 2000: ii).

The study also found that employment, health and "other" messages were important to the electorate in deciding who to vote for during the 2000 elections. Table 2 shows that, employment, health and "other" messages attracted an average of 9.2 per cent each. That these three were ranked fourth is not difficult to understand. For instance, regarding employment, a cursory look at the statistics reveals that while the private sector recorded higher rates of employment, the public sector, which is the largest employer in the country, failed to grow.

Instead, the sale of state-owned enterprises had led to retrenchment and therefore increased unemployment. On the other hand, despite government's efforts at expanding health coverage and improving the quality of healthcare delivery, there were still problems of accessibility associated with the "Cash and Carry" system. This is why the NPP and PNC promised the

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abolition of that health policy during the electioneering campaign of 2000 (NPP Manifesto 2000: 18-19, 31; ISSER 2001: 124-125). According to Dr Mahama, the poor health of Ghanaians formed the basis of his promise to establish the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) should he be voted into power.

Linked to employment and health issues was education. Out of the 14 messages that were the core of the 2000 electioneering campaigns, education was ranked fifth by the electorate as the most influential which attests to the importance voters attached to messages on education, especially at the time when there were still problems with this sector. In the period 1998-1999 for instance, though the net enrolment at the primary school level had somehow improved from 50.0 per cent to 83.4 per cent, at the secondary school level, enrolment was only 40.7 per cent (GSS, 2000).

Security and improvement in democratic rule, which had become important election issue during this period came sixth, especially to the electorate, were placed at sixth and seventh respectively in ranking. The average scores recorded were 7.5 and 6.3 per cent respectively. There were credible concerns about security—for example, reports of intimidation and harassment of the electorate by NDC party agents and security officials. Also, there were fears that the elections could result in chaos and violence, especially after the polls. Added to these was the NDC's strategy of instilling fear in the electorate. As part of its propaganda, the party had alleged that, the country risked being plunged into warfare if the electorate refused to vote for Rawlings' party. Above all, there were doubts whether or not J. J. Rawlings would abide by the two-term limit as stipulated by the 1992 Constitution. On the whole, the election campaigns at certain periods were characterised by tension, intimidation and violence (Gyimah-Boadi 2001:57; Boafo-Arthur, 2008; GLLRF 2001: 15).

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Even though rule of law scored 4.5 per cent human rights scored 3.7 per cent and ethnicity 3.5 per cent, respectively they were ranked eighth, ninth and tenth respectively by the respondents. In a democracy, rule of law is anchored in the effective performance of the judiciary. This way, issues that affect the performance of the judiciary have direct impact on the principle of rule of law. Following from the negative view of the public that the judiciary was not as independent as it should (CDD, 2000: vi), it was not surprising that a low rating of 4.5 per cent was recorded in respect of rule of law.

Like rule of law, messages on human rights did not have much influence on voters' choices. Between 1992 and 2000, the ranking of human rights messages was between nine and eleventh positions, which shows that voters were still not interested in human rights issues in spite of the continued poor human rights record of the government. One of the issues that the electorate has been consistent with is that of ethnicity. For three elections running, respondents placed ethnic issues tenth on the list of messages that influenced their choice at the polls.

Indeed, the 3.5 score given to ethnic messages by the respondents in the 2000 elections shows that despite the ethnic sentiments that were hyped in the elections, voters relied on other messages to make their choices at the polls (Frempong 2001**:** 158). Furthermore, similar to the 1992 and 1996 elections, the two tenets of good governance accountability and transparency continued to receive a low rating of 2.9 and 2.4 per cent, placing them at eleventh and twelve positions respectively.

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We now turn our attention to understanding whether the constituency or residence of a voter influences his or her choices of message in the 2000 elections. The table below and the discussion that follows provide the needed blocks for building a solid answer:

Table 2A: Which issue in the campaign message of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for during the 2000 elections?

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Table 2A: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 2000 elections? (In Percentage)

	CONSTITUENCY														
	Agona East			Fomena			Klottey Korley			South Dayi			Tamale South		
Issue	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F
Eco	72.1	70.7	73.0	55.6	54.8	53.9	63.6	61.9	68.4	50.0	50.7	50.0	66.7	66.4	67.4
Rol	11.6	13.5	10.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	11.2	8.9	10.5	12.1	9.2	14.3	14.4	13.9
Acc	4.7	4.3	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	5.8	0.0	5.3	6.7	5.1	2.1	1.9	2.3
Tra	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	2.0	2.2
Eth	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hea	4.7	4.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.9	3.2	0.4	0.0	0.0
Cor	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	22.8	20.4	3.0	3.9	3.5	2.6	1.2	2.3	4.2	4.5	4.6
Dev	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.4	22.4	25.7	9.1	9.0	10.6	15.8	14.3	16.0	6.0	6.4	5.6
Edu	4.7	4.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.9	7.1	8.2	4.2	4.4	4.0
Hmr	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Emp	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sec	2.2	3.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.8	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Idr	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	4.4	3.1	2.6	3.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

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Table 2A shows that 72.1 per cent of respondents in the Agona East Constituency said the electoral choices they made during the 2000 elections, were informed by the economic messages they received from the political parties. In this connection, I should refer to the rising cost of living and poverty levels between 1991-1992 and 1998-1999 (Ministry of Finance, 2000). Apart from the economy, the rule of law was the next important message for the respondents in the constituency. Of the 250 respondents, 11.6 per cent of the voters indicated that rule of law influenced their choice. Like economic messages, that on rule of law moved more female (13.5%) voters than it did to their male (10.8%) counterparts. Accountability, health and education, which voters said had generated interest in the campaign, also attained their attention.

Notwithstanding the interest in these messages, only 4.7 per cent of respondents believed accountability, health and educational messages about which the political parties communicated during the campaign influenced their choices. Furthermore, the fourth most important message that swayed voters into deciding on which way to vote during the 2000 election was security; but only 2.2 per cent of the respondents viewed messages on security as important in influencing their vote. Other messages such as transparency, ethnicity, corruption, development, human rights, employment, and improvement in democratic rule and "other messages", which were given the lowest ranking, also became the least important messages for the respondents and as a result attracted no response.

A number of factors are responsible for some of these responses, particularly concerning ethnicity and development. In the case of ethnicity, it is clear that despite the hyping of ethnic issues by the political parties, especially in the Central Region where the NDC urged respondents to vote for John Mills because he was a native of the land (Frempong 2001: 157-

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158), it is very difficult to explain responses in, for example, this constituency on purely ethnic terms.

Table 2A shows clearly that respondents depended on other messages – economy, improvement in democratic rule, etc, in making their electoral choices. In addition, voters in the Constituency did not like the PNDC/NDC baggage that Mills carried (Ibid). With regard to development, notwithstanding the poor state of it in the constituency, messages on development fell on deaf ears as they apparently did not influence any of the respondents.

With the exception of economic messages which scored 55.6 per cent, responses in the Fomena Constituency—most of the responses were not different from those in Agona East Constituency. Development in the Fomena Constituency was at its lowest ebb: the area lacked basic socio-economic infrastructure such as health centres, motorable roads, potable water, among others. Only 24.4 per cent of respondents claimed to have been influenced by messages on development. A study by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) shows that during this period, the level of development in the region where this constituency is located were: water (14.8%), school (25.3%), hospitals or health centres (11.4%) and roads (36.3%) (IEA,2000). Next to development is corruption which, according to Table 2A, influenced the vote of 20.0 per cent of respondents. Out of the 250 respondents who were interviewed for the survey, male voters who claimed to have been influenced by messages on corruption were 22.8 per cent compared with 20.4 per cent females**.** Messages relating to rule of law, accountability, transparency, ethnicity, health, education, human rights, employment, security, improvement in democratic rule and "other messages" did not mean much to respondents in the Fomena Constituency. They scored zero per cent responses.

In Klottey Korley Constituency, the most important message for voters was the economy. 63.6 per cent of respondents indicated that this particular message affected their electoral

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choices. Respondents also placed premium on messages such as rule of law and development. They gave the two messages a rating of two, which translates into 9.1 per cent. However, in terms of responses by both male and female voters, Table 2A shows that male respondents (11.2%) in the constituency were more in favour of messages on rule of law than females (8.9%). But in the case of development, the percentage of female and male voters whose electoral decisions were based on messages on the development were 10.6 and 9.0 per cent respectively. Messages on accountability occupied the attention of respondents in the Klottey Korley Constituency though in percentage terms, the score was insignificant. Only 6.1 per cent claimed to have been influenced by such messages.

Messages on transparency, corruption, security and improvement in democratic rule received scant attention from the respondents. Out of the 250 people surveyed, only 3.0 per cent of the electorate were influenced by these messages. Issues such as security and corruption did not have significant impact. In the run up to the 2000 elections, there were security concerns due to the spate of armed robbery and murders in the country, particularly in Accra. The NDC government was accused of paying lip-service to this problem.

The opposition parties, including the NPP, made the problem a campaign issue and succeeded in arousing the interest of voters. Notwithstanding the general security concerns, the electorate gave little attention to the problem. In the case of corruption, not even a day passed without the media discussing this canker on radio and television in both English and the local languages. It is therefore, surprising that messages on corruption did not influence voters on voting. “other” messages also swayed an insignificant number of 0.1 per cent despite the fact that it was ranked fifth by the respondents.

Another message that brought surprises was ethnicity. One would have thought that given the heightened ethnic tension in the country voters would vote on ethnic basis. For example,

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when Rawlings had a meeting with the Ga chiefs prior to the 2000 elections, he was reported to have asked the people not to vote for an Ashanti, arguing that Kufuor's victory would enable Ashantis to take over Accra (*The Ghanaian Chronicle*, 22-28 December, 2000 p.6). On the contrary, they did not. In fact, the messages that influenced the electorate least in their vote included ethnicity, health, education, human rights, employment and "other messages" which scored no points. In South Dayi, the only message that influenced the choices of the respondents significantly was the economy: 50.0 per cent of the respondents were influenced by the economy. Responses for the rest of the messages ranged between an average of 15.8 per cent and 0.0 per cent. Table 2A above shows that only 15.8 of the respondents were influenced by the messages on development.

The household survey conducted by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), suggests, among other things, that respondents from Volta Region, including South Dayi Constituency, had no confidence in the judiciary in general and rule of law in particular (CDD 2000: 19). In contrast, South Dayi respondents in this survey regarded the matter of the rule of law as important and ranked it third in terms of its influence on voters. The average score of this message is 10.5 per cent. Meanwhile, male respondents who based their electoral decisions on message on rule of law was 12.1 per cent while their the female respondents were just 9.2 per cent. Next to the rule of law were the messages on education and accountability. Table 3A shows that education and accountability attracted 7.9 and 5.3 per cent responses, coming fourth and fifth in the ranking. Accountability was another message which was ranked high but had a low percentage score of only 5.3 per cent.

Meanwhile, about 2.6 per cent of the respondents relied on messages such as ethnicity, corruption, improvement in democratic rule and health to make their choices in the elections. Obviously, the low level of health care delivery, limited access of vulnerable groups to basic

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healthcare services and lack of health resources (GHS, 2000), in the region, might have contributed to the low responses on this message during the survey. However, messages on transparency, employment, security and "other" messages had the least influence on the choices of the respondents. They attracted percentage of zero.

Tamale South also presents an array of responses to the messages with the most influential being the economy (66.7%), followed by rule of law (14.5%) and development (6.0%). Both corruption and education which scored 4.2 per cent respectively were fourth in terms of influence on voters' choices. They were followed by messages on accountability and transparency each of which influenced 2.1 per cent of the voters. Ironically the poor health condition in the constituency did not affect the decision of the voters. Respondents did not put much weight on health issues. Only 0.4 per cent of the voters were wheedled by health messages. The situation was not different with both male and female voters. None of them also did not believe messages on health was a factor in the electoral choices they made in 2000. The responses from both male and female respondents were zero. In this Constituency, respondents were not influenced by messages on ethnicity, human rights, employment, security, improvement in democratic rule and "other" messages.

There is a growing debate about the relationship between education and the messages used in electioneering campaigns. This study wades into the debate by focusing on the educational background of voters in relation to their choice of messages during the 2000 elections. Discussions and analysis of Tables 2B, 2C and 2D provide answers.

Table 2B: Illiterate respondents and messages that influence their electoral choices in the 2000 elections

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Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klotty Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	90.9	81.0	89.1	69.0	86.2
Rule of Law	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Accountability	_	_	_	_	_
Transparency	_	_	_	_	_
Ethnicity	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0
Health	3.9	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.0
Corruption	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Development	0.0	19.0	10.9	17.3	5.2
Education	5.2	0.0	0.0	6.9	5.2
Human Rights	_	_	_	_	_
Employment	_	_	_	_	_
Security	_	_	_	_	_
Improvement in	_	_	_	_	_

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Democratic Rule					
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Field data

The 2000 elections present an interesting relationship between respondents' level of education and the political message that influenced their choices. Among the illiterate voters, the economic message was the most influential in the decisions of voters in Agona East, Fomena, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies. Responses from the constituencies were 90.9, 81.0, 89.1, 69.0 and 86.2 per cent respectively. Message on development was least appealing and in Fomena, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies, 19.0, 10.9, 17.3 and 5.2 of the electorate in these constituencies respectively relied on it to vote.

The rest of the messages particularly education, health, economy and rule of law had less effect on the choices of the electorate. For instance, on education, 6.9 per cent of the electorate in South Dayi, 5.2 per cent in Agona East and 5.2 per cent of the voters in Tamale South regarded it as important to base their decisions on. Only 3.9 and 3.4 per cent of respondents in the Agona East and South Dayi were influenced by the message on health. The appeal for messages on rule of law and corruption was felt in only Tamale South (see Table 2B).

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Table 2C: Respondents with up to senior high school education and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 2000 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	20.0	22.7	75.0	50.0	50.0
Rule of Law	30.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	20.0
Accountability	20	0.0	5.0	10.0	5.0
Transparency	-	_	_	_	_
Ethnicity	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Health	20.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Corruption	0.0	22.7	0.0	0.0	5.0
Development	0.0	54.6	15.0	5.0	15.0
Education	10.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	5.0
Human Rights	_	_	_	_	_
Employment	_	_	_	_	_

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Security	_	_	_	_	_
Improvement in Democratic Rule	_	_	_	_	_
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

Voters with up to senior high school education were swayed by economic messages. Such voters in Klotttey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South Constituencies based choices on the economic messages of the political parties with the responses being 75.0, 50.0 and 50.0 per cent respectively while Fomena and Agona East recorded lower responses. Issues relating to development influenced 54.6 per cent of respondents in Fomena while 15.0 per cent each in Klottey Korley and Tamale South and 5.0 per cent in South Dayi were influenced by messages on development. Responses to rule of law were measured. Agona East and Tamale South recorded 30.0 and 20.0 per cent respectively. And the electorate were swayed by messages on rule of law. Voters in Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies scored scant responses of 5.0 per cent each. No voter in the Fomena Constituency was influenced by messages on rule of law. Table 2C shows that messages on accountability, health and corruption had little influence on voters. Less than a quarter of the respondents were influenced by them. Negligible responses were recorded for issues relating to transparency, human rights, employment, security and improvement in democratic rule.

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Table 2D: Respondents with tertiary education and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 2000 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	0.0	0.0	22.7	0.0	28.6
Rule of Law	64.3	0.0	22.9	52.6	47.6
Accountability	21.4	0.0	17.3	15.8	4.8
Transparency	0.0	0.0	8.6	0.0	9.5
Ethnicity	–	–	–	–	–
Health	–	–	–	–	–
Corruption	0.0	100.0	8.6	15.8	9.5
Development	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0
Education	–	–	–	–	–
Human Rights	14.3	0.0	8.6	0.0	0.0
Employment	0.0	0.0	8.6	15.8	0.0
Security	–	–	–	–	–

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Improvement in Democratic Rule	_	_	_	_	_
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Filed Data

Another category of respondents whose opinions were sought in this survey are those with tertiary education. Table 2D shows that respondents with tertiary educational backgrounds viewed messages on rule of law as the most important. Hence they rated it first in constituencies such as Agona East, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South where the responses were 64.3, 22.9, 52.6 and 47.6 per cent respectively. Beside the economy, none of the remaining 12 messages influenced the choices of respondents significantly. However, messages on corruption which swayed all the respondents in Fomena, produced low responses in South Dayi (15.8%), Tamale South (9.5%) and Klottey Korley (8.6%). The appeal for accountability was expressed in 21.4, 15.8, 14.3 and 4.8 per cent responses in Agona East, South Dayi, Klottey Korley and Tamale South constituencies respectively.

Messages on such issues as transparency, human rights and employment attracted 8.6 per cent response each in the Klottey Korley Constituency. On the other hand, among the messages which influenced respondents in one or two constituencies included the economy and development. In the case of the economy, responses on the subject attracted 22.7 and 28.6 per cent in the Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies respectively. In Klottey Korley Constituency, messages on development influenced 2.7 per cent of voters. The rest of the messages were either scored insignificant or had zero per cent responses.

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7.4.2 SLOGANS

Another aspect of political communication is political slogan. Since the re-introduction of democratic rule in the country, slogan has been re-introduced into Ghanaian politics. Instead of developing elaborate messages, politicians have resorted to the use of slogans to get their messages across to the electorate without much cost. Like other forms of messages, slogans will be looked at in the light of the following question: Which party's slogan influenced you most during elections? In effect, we will look at political slogans of the political parties during the 2000 elections and their effect on choices of voters in the five constituencies.

Table 2E: Which party's slogan influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 2000 elections?

	NPP	NDC	Other	Total
Agona East	13.3	2.2	84.5	100.0
Fomena	53.3	42.2	4.5	100.0
Klottey Korley	26.7	51.1	22.2	100.0
South Dayi	6.1	90.9	3.0	100.0
Tamale South	61.7	23.4	14.9	100.0

Source: Field data

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Like 1992, the 2000 elections were fought with slogans. The NDC started with "continuity" slogans urging the electorate to retain the party in power. The NPP on the other hand, relied on "Positive change" slogans which appealed to a lot of voters. In explaining why the NPP adopted the said slogans, Mr Nitiwul said the message contained in the slogan was straightforward, urging Ghanaians to undertake a critical examination of their economic conditions and maintain or change the government accordingly. The GCPP leader Mr Dan Lartey, who was a new entrant in the political game said, if he was voted into office, he would encourage the citizenry to depend on made in Ghana products as a way of encouraging local production. It was this idea that led to the party's slogan of "domestication".

Table 2E shows that the slogans of the "other" political parties were the most attractive in Agona East Constituency swaying 84.4 per cent of the respondents in the 2000 elections. Both NPP and NDC slogans had very poor effect on the choices of the electorate, with responses ranging from 13.3 to 0.0 per cent. The NDC slogans emerged as those with the least influence. In the Fomena Constituency, the impact of NPP slogans on the respondents was the highest. More than half (53.3%) of the respondents were enticed by this party's slogan. The second and the least appealing slogans were those of the NDC and the other political parties which had 42.2 and 4.4 per cent responses respectively. In the Klottey Korley Constituency, 51.1 per cent of the electorate claimed to have been influenced by NDC slogans followed by NPP's (26.7%) and by the slogans of the "other" political parties (22.2%). With a percentage point of 3.0, the slogans of the other political parties influenced just a small fraction of respondents in South Dayi. As expected, the NDC slogan influenced nearly all the respondents (90.9%) in their electoral decisions in the South Dayi Constituency.

The slogans of NPP and those of the other political parties influenced only 6.1 and 3.0 per cent of the respondents. In Tamale South Constituency, the NPP slogan influenced the

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choices of 61.7 per cent of the respondents. Both NDC and those of the other political parties influenced only 23.4 and 14.9 per cent of the respondents respectively. This shows that the least influential slogans in the constituency were those of the other political parties. It is surprising that the slogan of the "other" political parties, especially the PNC's, did not influence many people, because as explained by Dr Edward Mahama, the Presidential candidate of the party at the time, even though his party slogan of "two sure, two direct" was very popular with the electorate, it did not attract votes.

Another question this study seeks to explore is whether the educational background of voters is a factor in their choices of messages during elections. As we have done above, the same question will guide the discussions in Tables 2F, 2G and 2H.

Table 2F: Illiterate respondents and party slogans that influence their electoral choices in the 2000 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
NPP	0.0	33.3	_	0.0	55.6
NDC	0.0	66.7	_	100.0	11.1
Other	100.0	0.0	_	0.0	33.3

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Total	100.0	100.0	_	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 2F shows mixed responses with regard to the influence of party slogans on the choice of voters in the 2000 elections. With the exception of Klottey Korley, where the responses were negligible, illiterate respondents in the other constituencies reacted differently to the various slogans on their choices. In the Agona East Constituency for instance, while the slogan of other political parties was the most influential, the NDC slogan was most appealing for voters in Fomena and South Dayi. The slogan with the most effect in Tamale South was the NPP's. It swayed 66.7 and 100.0 per cent of the respondents in the two constituencies—Fomena and South Dayi respectively. That notwithstanding, the NPP slogan had very little influence on the choices of respondents in Agona East and South Dayi constituencies. Zero per cent responses were recorded in the two constituencies. The NDC slogan, which had produced positive responses in both Fomena and South Dayi, had a paltry influence in Agona East. The slogans of other parties scored zero per cent responses in the Fomena and South Dayi constituencies.

Table 2G: Respondents with up to senior high school education and party slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 2000 elections

Slogan	Constituency			
	Agona East Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South

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NPP	21.4	48.8	27.3	2.4	50.0
NDC	3.6	34.9	42.4	58.5	29.2
Other	75.0	16.3	30.3	49.1	20.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

For those whose educational background was up to senior high school, the slogans of the political parties were most appealing in three of the constituencies. Among the constituencies influenced most are Agona East, South Dayi and Tamale South with 75.0, 58.5 and 50.0 per cent of the respondents respectively. The effect of the slogans on Fomena and Klottey Korley constituencies was minimal. None of the three slogans was able to move at least 50.0 per cent of the respondents. Even the NPP and NDC slogans which were the most influential in the two constituencies, succeeded in influencing only 48.8 and 42.4 per cent respectively of voters in the two constituencies (See Table 2G).

Table 2H: Respondents with tertiary education and slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 2000 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	0.0	50.0	17.6	14.3	70.6

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NDC	0.0	50.0	52.9	57.1	17.6
Other	100.0	0.0	H30.5	28.6	11.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

Respondents with tertiary education had different views about the party slogans. For example, in the Agona East Constituency, respondents claimed the slogans of the other political parties were instrumental in defining their choices at the polls. The slogans of NDC and NPP influenced nobody. The two slogans attracted zero per cent responses from the voters. This left the slogans of the other political parties with 100.0 per cent responses. The NDC slogan influenced more than half of the respondents in both Klottey Korley and South Dayi Constituencies with the least responses produced by the NPP slogan in the two constituencies. However, the slogan of the NPP was the most influential in choices of respondents in the Tamale South. It attracted 70.6 per cent responses from respondents in the said constituency. The slogan of the other constituencies influenced the least number of the electorate. Out of the 250 people interviewed for the study, only 11.8 claimed they were swayed by the said slogan (See Table 2H).

7.5 2000 Election

Channels constitute an important part of the study. In the 2000 elections, a number of channels were used by political parties to communicate their messages to the electorate. While the whole study is on political communication and its effects on voter choices, the following discussion focuses on whether the constituency of residence of a voter has any influence on his or her choices of channel for the 2000 elections. We will do this by looking at Tables 2J, 2K, 2L below and the discussions that accompany them:

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Table 2J: Which of the following channels of communication did you rely upon in deciding who to vote for during the 2000 elections in your constituency?

	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South	Total
Radio	17.6	31.0	18.3	19.0	14.1	100.0
Television	29.4	0.0	27.5	15.7	27.4	100.0
Newspaper	0.0	12.5	50.0	12.5	25.0	100.0
Billboard	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
Political Rally	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

In the 2000 elections, radio emerged as the most influential medium on the electoral choices of voters, especially for 31.0 per cent of respondents in the Fomena Constituency. This result partly corroborates the findings by Smith and Temin (2001: 168-169) which suggest that 61.0 per cent of the electorate in Ashanti Region (where this constituency is located) found radio to be the most useful medium for decision-making during the 2000 elections. But, Table 2J indicates that less than a quarter of the electorate in the other four constituencies relied on radio in deciding who to vote for. The responses in the other constituencies were South Dayi (19.0%), Klottey Korley (18.3%), Agona East (17.6%) and Tamale South (14.1%).

According to Table 2J, of the five constituencies surveyed, it was only in the Agona East Constituency that more respondents relied on television for their electoral decisions: a little

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over a quarter (29.4%) depended on television for information on candidates. In both Klottey Korley and Tamale South constituencies, 27.5 of respondents relied on television for information to vote. This contrasts with Smith and Temin's finding that television was the medium that was least relied upon by the people of Greater Accra (where the Klottey Korley Constituency is located).

According to them, 9.0 per cent of the electorate based their electoral decisions on this medium. It has been observed in this study that in South Dayi, where television was the third important medium of the respondents, only 5.7 per cent of them were influenced by it. In the Fomena Constituency, no voter depended on television for his electoral decisions. In contrast, 50.0 per cent of the respondents in the Klottey Korley Constituency based their election choices on information from newspapers. In Tamale South Constituency, 25.0 per cent of the respondents relied on newspapers.

Table 2K: Respondents' educational backgrounds and the influence of state-owned radio on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2000 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	41.7	50.0	8.3	100.0
Fomena	5.0	90.0	5.0	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	57.1	42.9	100.0

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South Dayi	9.1	81.8	9.1	100.0
Tamale South	15.4	53.8	30.8	100.0

The state-owned radio was the main medium for voters with tertiary education in the Klottey Kortley Constituency. It influenced 42.9 per cent of the electorate. Smith and Temin (2001: 173) have noted that the trust that people have in radio decreases with higher education. In the Fomena, South Dayi, Klottey Korley, Tamale South and Agona East constituencies however, the percentage of influence were 90.0, 81.8, 57.0, 53.8 and 50.0 per cent respectively. The influence of state-owned radio on voters in South Dayi, and Tamale South constituencies should come as no surprise because of the fact that that state-owned radio is the most trusted medium for the people living in the regions of the two constituencies (Ibid, p. 172). None of the illiterate voters in Klottey Korley Constituency relied upon the medium in determining who to vote for. The Agona East Constituency recorded the highest level of responses (that is 41.7%) from respondents with no education (See Table 2K).

Table 2L: Respondents educational backgrounds and the influence of private-owned radio on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2000 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	0.0	100.0	0	100.0

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Fomena	5.6	83.3	11.1	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	61.5	38.5	100.0
South Dayi	-	-	-	-
Tamale South	-	-	-	-

Table 2L shows that in the 2000 elections, despite the proliferation of private radio stations in the country, only respondents with up to senior high school education in the Agona East, Fomena and Klottey Korley constituencies depended on private radio for their electoral choices, recording 100.0, 83.3 and 61.5 per cent of the responses respectively. This portion of the findings of this study is somehow in line with the position by Smith and Temin that private radio is the most useful source of information for the Ghanaian electorate in general and Greater Accra and Ashanti regions where two of these constituencies are located (Ibid p. 171).

Responses from the other educational categories were minimal. Both illiterates and those with tertiary education did not consider private radio as influential. In Agona East, for instance, the two levels of educational attainment recorded 0.0 per cent responses. Even in Fomena, only 5.6 per cent of the electorate with no education had their choices determined by private owned-radio. No responses were recorded for both South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies.

Table 2M: Respondents educational background and the influence of state-owned television on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2000 elections

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Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	43.8	43.8	12.4	100.0
Fomena	14.3	71.4	14.3	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	86.7	13.3	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
Tamale South	15.4	38.5	46.1	100.0

According to Table 2M, in 2000, the level of influence of public television on voters had declined slightly compared with 1992. In the Agona East Constituency, for instance, respondents with no education and those with up to senior high school education showed high interest for the state-owned television. Respondents with these two educational backgrounds relied on the medium for their electoral choices with 43.0 per cent and each of them influenced by the medium. The least of the responses came from those with tertiary education where 12.4 per cent of the people based their electoral decisions on public television. Like Agona East Constituency, respondents in the remaining three constituencies, that is, Fomena, Klottey Korley and South Dayi trusted the public television in deciding who to vote for in the elections. The responses associated with the three constituencies were 71.4, 86.7 and 75.0 per cent respectively. The least of the responses occurred among voters with other educational backgrounds.

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In the Fomena Constituency, for instance, while 14.3 per cent each of the respondents with tertiary said they were swayed by public television, those with no education said the medium had no effect on their choices. Similarly, in the Klottey Korley Constituency however, the second most important response (13.3%) came from those with tertiary education. Responses from illiterate voters were the least (0.0 per cent). Like Klottey Korley, responses from holders of senior high school education were second in the South Dayi Constituency.

In this connection, a quarter (25.0%) of the people had their choices influenced by the state-owned television. There was however no response from illiterate voters in this particular constituency. Responses in the Tamale South Constituency were also interesting in the sense that they almost followed the same pattern as South Dayi. The only difference was that in this constituency, while the highest responses came from those with tertiary education, the second and the least responses were from respondents with senior high school education (38.5%) and illiterate (15.4%) voters respectively.

Table 2N: Respondents educational background and the influence of private-owned television on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2000 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	-	-	-	-
Fomena	-	-	-	-

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Klottey Korley	0.0	33.3	66.7	100.0
South Dayi	-	-	-	-
Tamale South	0.0	50.00	50.0	100.0

The survey obtained significant responses from only Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies. In the Klottey Korley, 66.7 per cent of respondents with tertiary education and 33.3 per cent of those with up to senior high school education were influenced in their electoral choices by private television. Private television stations had little effect on illiterate voters in the country despite their large number. In Tamale South, responses from holders of senior high and tertiary education were the same. Private television swayed the choices of 50.0 per cent of the respondents in each constituency. None of the illiterate respondents based their decision on messages from private television stations. It must be stated that responses from Agona East, Fomena and South Dayi constituencies were insignificant (See Table 2N).

Table 2P: Respondents educational backgrounds and the influence of state-owned newspapers on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2000 elections

	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	-	-	-	-

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Fomena	-	-	-	-
Klottey Korley	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	-	-	-	-

The pattern of responses in 1992 was similar to that of 2000 elections in which none of the illiterate voters relied on state-owned newspapers in both Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies. Table 2P shows that 100.0 per cent of people with tertiary education in the Klottey Korley Constituency relied on state-owned newspapers to decide whom to vote for. Similarly, 100.0 per cent of respondents with up to senior high school education in South Dayi used information from the state-owned newspapers in deciding who to vote for. The finding that voters with higher education (that is, those with up to tertiary education level) relied on state-owned newspapers for the electoral decision resonates with Smith and Temin's finding that people with high educational backgrounds tend to trust the state-owned newspapers more than illiterate voters (p. 173).

Table 2Q: Respondents educational background and the influence of private-owned newspapers on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2000 elections

Constituency	Educational Background of Respondents			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	

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Agona East	-	-	-	-
Fomena	-	-	-	-
Klottey Korley	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	-	-	-	-

In 2000, all the respondents in Klottey Korley and South Dayi with up to senior high school education qualification relied on private newspapers for their electoral decisions So did respondents with tertiary education qualification.

Table 2R: Respondents' educational background and the influence of political rally on their electoral choices in their constituencies in the 2000 elections

Constituency	Educational Background of Respondents			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	--	--	--	--
Fomena	--	--	--	--
Klottey Korley	--	--	--	--

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South Dayi	60.0	40.0	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	60.0	40.0	0.0	100.0

A number of respondents showed interest in political rallies during the 2000 elections: 60.0 per cent of the respondents, with no education in South Day based their decisions on messages they had at political rallies they attended. So were respondents with up to senior high school education. No respondent with tertiary education relied on this medium for their electoral decisions. Similar responses were recorded in the Tamale South Constituency. Agona East, Fomena and Klottey Korley recorded no responses for the three educational categories (See Table 2R).

7.6 2008 ELECTIONS

In analysing the elections of 2008, the following question is useful in undertaking the exercises. Which of the media contents or messages critically determined voter choices?

Table 3: Which issue in the campaign message of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for during the 2008 elections?

Message	Rank/Position	Average
Economy	1st	12.1
Rule of Law	8th	4.7
Accountability	11th	2.8
Transparency	12th	2.6

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Ethnicity	9th	3.6
Health	4th	9.1
Corruption	3rd	9.8
Development	2nd	11.7
Education	6th	7.7
Human Rights	10th	3.5
Employment	5th	8.9
Security	6th	7.7
Improvement in Democratic Rule	7th	6.2
Other		9.6
Total		100.0

Source: Field Data

The pattern of responses for the 2008 elections was similar to that of the 1992 elections. While the economy came first with an average score of 12.1 per cent, development placed second with an average score of 11.7. The prominence of economic issues in the elections was a reflection of the economic situation in the country. Even though there was improvement in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), some of the macroeconomic fundamentals were weak. Inflation, for instance, had hit 16.2 per cent, the highest since 2001.

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Worst of all was the high prices of food and fuel. Prices of other consumer items were also high. The cost of living in general was high. Instability in the global economy had contributed to the country's economic crisis (ISSER 2009: 1-2; Gyimah-Boadi 2009:140; Frempong 2012: 124-125). Apart from the economy, respondents were also influenced by development messages. Before the elections, government had undertaken several development projects, particularly in areas such as transport, education, health and communication. Yet very low responses were recorded for messages on development (ISSER, 2009).

The third and fourth most important messages, according to respondents, were corruption (9.8%) and health (9.1%). Contrary to its improved world ranking of 67 by Transparency International (ghanaweb.com), there were widespread media reports which revealed corrupt practices among ministers of state (US State Department, 2008) and extravagant expenditures by the government (Gyimah-Boadi 2009: 140). These issues fuelled public anger against the government and provided the opposition with ammunition for their electoral campaigns.

By rating health messages as fourth, Ghanaian voters were suggesting that good health was important to them for a number of reasons. First, there was a lot of problems in the health sector. Diseases such as malaria, cardiovascular disorders, diabetes and cancer continued to claim lives. Second, a significant number of poor people had not been registered under the National Health Insurance Scheme (ISSER, 2009: 170-172; GSS, 2000). Voters were clearly concerned, compelling the political parties, especially NPP and NDC to announce their intention to improve health delivery in the country. While the NPP campaigned to offer free health care (gna.com), the NDC promised the electorate one-time premium for the National Health Insurance (myjoyonline.com).

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Another message that attracted the attention of the electorate is employment. Though the average score for messages on employment showed a decline from 9.2 per cent in 2000 to 8.9 per cent in 2008, because of the severity of the problem, the electorate ranked it the fifth most influential message. The 2008 elections, especially in the run-off to the second round was characterised by widespread violence. Nevertheless, respondents did not put much weight on security and education issues, placing then at sixth and seventh positions respectively. Rule of law was the next most important message. It was ranked eighth, with an average score of 4.7 per cent. Table 5 shows that unlike 1992 when interest in the rule of law was high (IEA, 1996), in 2008, concerns about it declined. From an average of 6.3 per cent in 2000, rule of law scored 4.7 per cent which was lower than the score of 4.5 per cent recorded in 1992.

There was much expectation that ethnic messages would attract greater voter attention given the polarized nature of the country's politics. On the contrary, ethnic messages scored an average of 3.6 per cent and occupied the ninth position. Clearly, the response by the electorate demonstrated that despite the strategies employed by the leading political parties to stoke ethnic tensions to gain votes (Gyimah-Boadi 2009: 143; Frempong 2012: 140), very little was achieved. Indeed, this response corroborates the findings of the Commonwealth Observer Group (2008) that ethnicity was not "a notable feature of the 2008 elections". There were occurrences of human rights violations in the country. Some of the abuses which existed at the time included excessive use of force by the police, resulting in a number of deaths; appalling prison conditions; prolonged detention of crime suspects and violence against women and children (US Department of State, 2008). However, respondents rated human rights issues tenth, indicating their lack of interest in this message. As was the case in previous elections, issues related to accountability and transparency were of least concern.

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Out of the 14 messages employed in the 2008 electioneering campaign, a great number of respondents rated economic messages higher and based electoral choices on it. The next five important messages based on which respondents paid attention were development, corruption, health, employment and security, with their level of influence following the same order in which they have been arranged. Table 5 shows that messages on improvement in democratic rule, rule of law and ethnicity had very little influence on the choices respondents made in the 2008 election. The remaining three messages—human rights, accountability and transparency were of no significance to the electorate.

For the purposes of analysing the effect of the location of constituency on voter choices of messages, the following question appears to be useful: Does the constituency or residence of a voter influence his or her choices of message in elections?

Table 3A: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 2008 elections?

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Table 3A: Which issue in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 2008 elections? (In Percentage)

	CONSTITUENCY														
	Agona East			Fomena			Klottey Korley			South Dayi			Tamale South		
Issue	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F	All	M	F
Eco	63.6	85.0	90.0	53.1	70.0	75.0	60.0	80.0	85.0	58.0	90.0	80.0	83.7	82.0	90.0
Rol	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	6.0	0.0
Acc	0.0	0,0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.2	10.0	11	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Tra	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Eth	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hea	6.8	6.0	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Cor	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.2	10.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dev	4.5	0.0	0.0	26.5	20.0	25.0	8.6	8.0	4.0	18.0	10.0	16.0	4.1	2.0	0.0
Edu	20.5	9.0	10.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hmr	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
Emp	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sec	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0
Idr	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

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In the Agona East constituency, respondents rated economic messages as the most influential in their choices in the 2008 elections. Table 3A shows that 63.6 per cent said they were influenced by economic messages. Male and female respondents who depended on the economic messages to vote in the elections were 85.0 and 90.0 per cent respectively**.** The survey also found that messages on education, health and development did not play any significant role in the choices of the respondents, though they were rated second with average score of 20.5 per cent, third (6.8%) and fourth (4.4%) respectively. Table 3A shows that while 10.0 per cent of the female electorate based their choices on education, only 9.0 per cent of the males maintained messages on education influenced them. A few of the respondents voted based on the messages on ethnicity and employment. An insignificant number (2.3%) of respondents based their choices on these two issues. The rest of the messages—rule of law, accountability, transparency, corruption, human rights, security and improvement in democratic rule had no effect on the choices of the respondents. In fact, each of these category of messages scored zero per cent.

Just like the Agona East constituency, the most important message for the respondents in the Fomena Constituency was the economy. This is a constituency situated in the forest zone, with increasing levels of poverty (GSS 2007). It was therefore natural that messages on the economy would significantly affect the choices of respondents. The survey shows that 53.1 per cent of the respondents in the 2008 elections were influenced by this message in their electoral decision. Table 3A shows that in the constituency, most female voters showed great interest in messages on the economy. Their total percentage is 75.0 per cent. This is obviously higher than the 70.0 per cent responses of the male respondents. But percentage scores for development, corruption and health were low, accounting for 26.5, 12.2 and 4.1 per cent respectively. Though more than a quarter of the respondents ranked development

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second in the order of importance, its average score of 26.5 per cent is puzzling. A 2006 Report about Adansi North District where Fomena is located mentioned development as their top priority.

The Report identified poor road networks, absence of health post, poor educational infrastructure and lack of accommodation for public workers as some of the "most pressing issues which must be handled to put the district on the path of development" (adansinorthghanadistricts.gov.gh). Also the constituency did not show interest in messages on health, especially when it had recorded the highest cases of HIV/AIDS in the country. Of the 111,985 cases in the country, the constituency alone accounted for 25,975 cases (adansinorth.gov.gh). Messages on rule of law and education influenced the votes of only 2.0 per cent of the electorate. According to the respondents, issues on accountability, transparency, ethnicity, human rights, employment, security and improvement in democracy played no role in their choices.

Another constituency where issues on the economy mattered most was the Klottey Korley Constituency. Messages on the economy swayed 60.0 per cent of the voters to make their electoral choice. This explains why respondents placed messages on the economy at the first position. In this constituency, the number of females who based their electoral decisions on messages of the economy was 85.0 per cent with responses from their male counterparts totalling 85.0 per cent. The second most important message was on accountability. Though significant in terms of position in the order of importance, only 11.4 of the electorate viewed it as important in making electoral decisions. Development messages swayed a small section of the respondents; only 8.6 per cent of them were influenced by such messages. The fourth position was occupied by rule of law to vote for the candidate of their choice. Out of the 250 respondents in the constituency, just 5.7 were moved by messages on rule of law; and 2.9 per

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cent of the respondents said messages such as transparency, corruption, education, security and improvement in democratic rule influenced their various choices in the elections. The remaining voters were not influenced by any of the following messages – ethnicity, health, human rights and employment.

In South Dayi, responses for the various messages were: economy—58.0 per cent, development—18.0 per cent, health and education—8.0 per cent and rule of law—4.0 per cent. These five issues occupied the first, second, third and fourth positions respectively. It must be noted that in the constituency the percentage of male responses in respect of the said message was 90.0 while that of the female respondent was 80.0 per cent. According to the respondents, issues related to ethnicity and corruption influenced only 2.0 per cent of them while messages on accountability, transparency, human rights, employment, security and improvement in democratic rule recorded zero per cent each.

In the Tamale South Constituency, issues on the economy continued to influence voter choices significantly. Data from the survey indicate that an overwhelming majority of 83.7 per cent voted on the basis of economic messages during the election campaigns. Compared to the other four constituencies, responses in respect of economic issues were the highest. It will be recalled that the level of poverty in the constituency at the time of the election was still very high. Besides, the period had witnessed high food prices, which had had negative consequences on poorer communities, including this constituency, where people spent 50 per cent-70 per cent of their income on food (GSS 2007). In this constituency, both male and female respondents showed great interest in economic messages and hence voted based on the messages. It must be pointed out that while 82.0 per cent of the male respondents based their electoral choices on these messages, the percentage of females who depended on such messages was 90.0 per cent.

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Issues related to the rule of law, which was the second most important message that got the attention of respondents had very little influence on the choices. It was expected that the inability of the Kufuor-led NPP government to find the killers of the Paramount Chief of Dagbon Traditional Area, Yaa Na Yakubu Andani II in 2001, and the subsequent manifesto promise by the NDC to bring the perpetrators of that crime to book if voted into power (2008 NDC Manifesto; Gyimah-Boadi 2009: 141), rule of law would have had a very big impact on the electorate, especially in the Tamale South Constituency; but that did not happen. Only 6.1 per cent of the respondents said they were influenced by messages on rule of law.

As it is evident from Table 3A**,** issues on development had little impact on the choices of respondents. It scored 4.1 per cent. Few respondents view issues of accountability, human rights and security as important. Throughout the election period only 2.0 per cent of the respondents were influenced by those three messages to make their electoral decisions. The messages that related to transparency, ethnicity, health, corruption, education, employment and improvement in democratic rule had no effect on voter choices.

Given the low literacy rate in the constituency, it is understandable that some of the messages, including transparency, might not appeal to the electorate. However, issues of health and corruption did not attract the attention of the electorate in the constituency, contrary to the fact that corruption, for instance, had become a major campaign issue during the 2008 elections.

Another area where changes were seen was the area of health. Several policies were aimed at improving health delivery in the country. One of such policies was the expansion of the National Health Insurance Scheme to cover more people. There was also a marked improvement in the management of the guinea worm disease, which had hitherto been on the increase in 2008. Available figures indicate that the number of cases in all the three northern

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regions (including this constituency) fell from 3,021 cases in June 2007 to 501 by the close of the year (ISSER 2009: 170-174). Also important was the policy of government to upgrade the Tamale Hospital into a teaching facility to deliver quality and affordable healthcare (GHS, 2008). Apart from these improvements, the constituency was one of those in the Northern Region with higher maternal mortality rate—76.9 per cent (savannah news).

For the purposes of ensuring logical discussion of issues, this portion of the study will be guided by the following question: Is the educational background of voters a factor in their choices of messages during elections as will be found in Tables 3B, 3C and 3D?

Table 3B: Illiterate respondents and messages that influence their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	70.0	74.6	83.3	65.5	94.5
Rule of Law	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Accountability	–	–	–	–	–
Transparency	–	–	–	–	–
Ethnicity	2.3	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0

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Health	5.7	4.5	0.0	8.2	0.0
Corruption	–	–	–	–	–
Development	4.6	17.9	12.5	16.4	4.1
Education	15.1	3.0	4.2	6.6	0.0
Human Rights	–	–	–	–	–
Employment	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Security	–	–	–	–	–
Improvement in Democratic Rule	–	–	–	–	–
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

As in 2000, illiterate respondents showed great interest in economic messages during the 2000 elections. More than half of the respondents in each of the constituencies depended on those messages to vote. Tamale South and South Dayi constituencies recorded the highest and lowest responses of 94.5 and 65.5 per cent respectively. Responses to development were recorded in all the constituencies and the percentage responses were 17.9, 16.4, 12.5, 4.6 and 4.1 respectively in Fomena, South Dayi, Klottey Korley, Agona East and Tamale South constituencies.

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The message on education swayed 15.1 per cent of the voters in the Agona East Constituency. This response was the highest among the five constituencies. The least of the responses was recorded in Fomena. Only South Dayi, Agona East and Fomena constituencies based their choices on health messages with responses of 8.2, 5.7 and 4.5 per cent respectively. Messages with ethnic undertones influenced only 2.3 and 3.3 per cent of the electorate in Agona East and South Dayi respectively. Regarding rule of law and employment, messages thereon influenced only 1.4 and 2.3 per cent of respondents in the two constituencies. Responses to messages on accountability, transparency, human rights, security and employment were negligible.

Table 3C: Respondents with up to senior high school education and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	33.3	11.5	68.2	38.5	76.9
Rule of Law	0.0	0.0	9.1	3.8	7.7
Accountability	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	7.7
Transparency	–	–	–	–	–

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Ethnicity	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Health	16.7	4.2	0.0	11.5	0.0
Corruption	0.0	20.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Development	8.3	63.5	13.6	30.8	7.7
Education	41.7	0.0	4.6	15.4	0.0
Human Rights	_	_	_	_	_
Employment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Security	_	_	_	_	_
Improvement in Democratic Rule	_	_	_	_	-
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

For respondents with up to senior high school education, the economy was still influential in a number of the constituencies. One such constituency was Tamale South where out of the 250 voters who were interviewed for the study, 76.9 per cent voted, based on economic messages. Apart from Tamale South, respondents in Klottey Korley were also influenced by those messages and 68.2 per cent of the electorate voted on this basis. The same message in Agona East, Fomena and South Dayi swayed only 33.3, 11.5 and 38.5 per cent of the electorate respectively. In the Fomena Constituency, 63.5 per cent of the electorate voted

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under the influence of messages on development, while the rest of the messages received low responses. Apart from development, rule of law, accountability, health and corruption attracted low responses. Ethnicity and employment which had gained interest in the previous elections swayed nobody in this election as were issues relating to transparency, human rights, security and improvement in democratic rule proved insignificant to voters (Table 3C).

Table 3D: Respondents with tertiary education and messages that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Message	Constituency				
	Agona East (%)	Fomena (%)	Klottey Korley (%)	South Dayi (%)	Tamale South (%)
Economy	0.0	0.0	16.1	61.5	25.0
Rule of Law	0.0	22.2	12.9	23.1	33.3
Accountability	0.0	0.0	32.2	0.0	8.3
Transparency	0.0	0.0	9.7	0.0	0.0
Ethnicity	–	–	–	–	–
Health	–	–	–	–	–

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Corruption	0.0	77.8	9.7	15.4	0.0
Development	_	_	_	_	_
Education	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Rights	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
Employment	_	_	_	_	_
Security	0.0	0.0	9.7	0.0	16.7
Improvement in Democratic Rule	0.0	0.0	9.7	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	1.00.0	100.0

Source: Field Data

Among respondents with tertiary education, messages which influenced their choices significantly included the economy, corruption and education. But those messages were influential only in a few constituencies. Table 3D shows that for the economy, only South Dayi had more people swayed by messages on the economy. In percentage terms, 61.5 of the electorate attributed their choices to these messages. 77.8 per cent of respondents in the Fomena Constituency were influenced by messages on corruption.

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SLOGAN

7.6.2 INTRODUCTION

The question guiding the discussion here is: Does the constituency or residence of a voter influence his or her choices of messages in elections?

Table 3E: Which party's slogan influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 2008 elections?

	NPP	NDC	Don't Remember	Total
Agona East	27.7	25.5	46.8	100.0
Fomena	56.2	43.8	0.0	100.0
Klottey Korley	30.6	46.9	22.4	100.0
South Dayi	14.3	85.7	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	54.0	44.0	2.0	100.0

Source: Field data

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According to Table 3E, only two political party slogans appealed to the electorate in the 2008 elections. This was partly because all the opposition parties, including the NDC, PNC and CPP based their slogans on "change" as opposed to "we are moving forward" slogan of the NPP. While the NDC urged the electorate to change the status quo citing abuse of power, corruption, and ostentatious lifestyles as being the hallmark of the NPP, the CPP General Secretary, Mr Ivor Greenstreet, said his party's decision to go along with the "change" slogan was based on his party's belief that Ghana had had a better time before and as a result there was the need for the country to return to the former status. This belief was also shared by the PNC leader. The NPP, by its slogan, promised to improve the economy and turned it into an industrial one if voted into power (Gyimah-Boadi 2001: 106-107).

Having said this, it is important to note that in the Agona East Constituency the NDC slogans were more influential than the NPP's. While 25.5 per cent of the respondents believed the NDC slogans informed their voting behaviour, 7.7 per cent of the respondents believed their electoral choices were influenced by the NPP slogans. However, in the Fomena Constituency, while NPP slogans influenced 56.2 per cent of the respondents, the NDC slogan swayed 43.8 per cent. No respondents in this constituency remembered the influence of any party's slogan on his or her electoral decisions. For respondents in Klottey Korley Constitution, the NDC slogan was the most appealing influencing 46.9% of them. NPP slogans on the other hand, influenced 30.6 per cent of the respondents. In the meantime, the number of respondents who said they did not remember ever being influenced by any slogan was 22.4 per cent. As an NDC-stronghold, South Dayi recorded the highest level of responses in favour of the party's slogan. More than three quarters (85.7%) were influenced by NDC slogans. The impact of NPP slogans was obviously weaker. Only 14.3 per cent of the respondents claimed to have been influenced by them. Like the Fomena Constituency, every respondent claimed to recall

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the slogans that were used by the two political parties. Tamale South, on the other hand, presents a pattern of responses which were somehow similar to that of the previous elections: 54.0 per cent of voters were influenced by NPP slogans, with NDC slogans attracting 44.0 per cent. Only 2.0 per cent of the respondents did not remember that slogans were used in the 2008 elections.

Constituency

Of the five constituencies, the NDC slogan influenced respondents in more constituencies than the NPP. The party's slogan influenced respondents in Agona East, South Dayi and Klottey Korley constituencies. The NPP slogans on the other hand, were influential in Fomena and Tamale South constituencies. These pattern of responses attested to the fact that the NDC slogan was more popular in southern Ghana than in the North while the popularity of NPP slogans was evident in both southern and northern Ghana.

Does the educational background of voters have any relationship with their choices of messages during elections? This is the question to inform the discussion of the issues here under. We intend to guide the discussion involved in Tables 6A, 6B and 6C with the question stated above.

Table 3F: Illiterate respondents and party slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey	South Dayi	Tamale

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			Korley		South
NPP	11.1	33.3	_	0.0	55.0
NDC	33.3	66.7	_	100.0	33.3
Other	55.6	0.0	_	0.0	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	-	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

South Dayi emerged as the constituency with the highest level of responses. The NDC slogan affected the choices of 100.0 of the illiterate voters. Slogans of the NPP and other political parties influenced no voter in the constituency. As a stronghold of the NPP, it was expected that NPP slogans would be most appealing in the Fomena Constituency. Rather, it was the NDC slogan which had the upper hand recording 66.7 per cent of the responses. The slogans of other political parties were ineffective. They influenced no respondent in the Fomena Constituency. However, in the Agona East Constituency, these slogans were instrumental in the choices of respondents. Of the number surveyed for the study, NPP and NDC slogans were most appealing, accounting for the political choices of 55.0 per cent of the electorate in Tamale South and South Dayi constituencies, respectively.

Table 3G: Respondents with up to senior high school education and slogan that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey	South Dayi	Tamale

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			Korley		South
NPP	35.7	55.8	27.3	12.2	45.8
NDC	17.9	35.5	48.5	85.4	54.2
Other	46.4	8.7	24.2	2.4	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The NDC slogan was the most effective in respect of respondents with up to senior high school education. More than three quarters (85.4%) of the respondents in this constituency said their decision was occasioned by the slogan of the NDC. As usual, the slogan of the NPP affected most of the respondents in the Fomena Constituency. They influenced 55.8 per cent of the respondents in their electoral decisions. In the Tamale South Constituency, the NDC slogan affected the choices of 54.2 per cent of the electorate. There was no effect of the slogans of the other political parties in the choices of the respondents. The influence of both NDC and other party slogans was almost the same in both Klottey Korley and Agona East constituencies. The two slogans attracted 48.5 and 46.4 per cent respectively.

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Table 3H: Respondents with tertiary education and party slogans that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Slogan	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	25.0	50.0	35.3	28.6	64.7
NDC	25.0	50.0	41.2	71.4	35.3
Other	50.0	0.0	23.5	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

To respondents with tertiary education, slogans of other political parties determined the electoral choices of equal proportions of voters in Agona East Constituency: the two parties recorded 25.0 per cent responses each. Table 3G shows that NPP and NDC slogans in the Fomena Constituency affected 50.0 per cent of the vote of respondents respectively, while those of the other political parties had zero per cent. For respondents in Klottey Korley Constituency, 41.2 per cent of the people were swayed by the NDC slogan. In South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies, the responses for the two parties were 71.4 and 64.7 per cent respectively. Slogans of the other parties produced no response in the two constituencies.

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GESTURES

The study also looked at the relationship between constituencies and the use of gesture by political parties. The use of gesture as a non-verbal form of communication in the Ghanaian society is not new. Notable among these forms are emblems or symbols, photographs and movements of certain parts of the human body including arms, legs, hands and feet (Gamble and Gamble 1996: 145-146; Knapp 1980: 4-6; Ellis and Beattie: 1986: 47-48; Rosenberg, Boham, McCafferty and Harris 1986: 108-112, 119-124). What appears to be uncommon is its usage in politics; but increasingly politicians are using gestures to communicate messages to the electorate. In the 2008 elections, three of the political parties, namely, the NPP, NDC and the CPP relied partly on gestures to communicate political messages. The parties adopted hand and dance movements as means of communicating a message to the electorate. The gestures of both NPP and CPP signified "change", while that of the NDC represented "continuity".

The main question for consideration here is: Which party's gesture influenced you most during the elections?

Table 3J: Which party's gesture influenced you most in deciding who to vote for in your constituency during the 2008 elections?

Gesture	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	28.2	19.0	14.1	28.2	35.2

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NDC	16.8	21.9	27.0	21.2	13.1
Other	30.0	30.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
Don't Remember	25.0	28.4	38.9	50.6	31.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 3J shows that in 2008, the gestures of the other political parties became the most popular in the Agona East Constituency: 30.0 per cent of the respondents claimed to have knowledge of the parties' gesture, and had been influenced by them. The gesture of the NPP followed with 28.2 per cent. According to the responses, the NDC's gesture was the least popular mode of communication in the Agona East Constituency: 16.0 per cent of the respondents attested to this fact. Like Agona East Constituency, the gestures of the other political parties were the highest in the Fomena Constituency, accounting for 30.0 per cent of the responses. The NDC gesture was the second most popular gesture. The gesture of the NPP had the least appeal. However, in the Klottey Korley Constituency, it was the NDC gestures that had the greatest appeal and influence. A significant number of respondents (27.0%) were attracted to it compared to the NPP's 20.0 per cent. Other party gestures had the least appeal. Only 14.1 per cent of the respondents said other parties' gestures were popular.

But the tide of popularity was to change later. Other parties' gestures of "change" became the least attractive to the respondents of South Dayi producing 0.0 per cent response. The gesture of NPP attracted the highest response. As it can be seen from the table above, 28.2 per cent of

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the electorate viewed the NPP gesture as more attractive than that of the NDC which influenced 21.2 per cent of the respondents. It was not popular among the respondents.

In Tamale South Constituency, gestures of the other political parties were again popular. With a percentage value of 35.2, the parties' gestures were the most popular throughout the five constituencies. The second most popular gesture was the NPP's with 20.0 per cent of the respondents. Like the Agona East Constituency, only 13.1 per cent of the respondents claimed the popularity of the NDC gestures influenced them. The above responses notwithstanding, it is interesting to note that in all the five constituencies, a significant number of respondents did not remember anything about the popularity of any of the parties' gestures.

Tables 3K, 3L and 3M will discuss whether educational background of voters influenced their choices of messages during the elections?

Table 3K: Illiterate respondents and parties gestures that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Gesture	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	16.7	33.3	_	0.0	22.2
NDC	38.9	66.7	_	100.0	66.7
Other	44.4	0.0	_	0.0	11.1

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Total	100.0	100.0	_	100.0	100.0

Among respondents with no education, the most popular gesture used in the 2008 elections was the NDC's. Apart from Klottey Korley, the NDC gesture influenced most of the respondents in the remaining four constituencies with 100.0 per cent recorded in South Dayi. In Fomena and Tamale South constituencies, NDC gestures influenced 66.7 per cent of the respondents. In general terms, responses in Agona East Constituency were the least. Only 44.4 per cent of the electorate had their choices influenced by the gestures of other political parties. In Agona East, the gesture with the least influence was that of the NPP. It influenced insignificant number of respondents in the constituencies. In South Dayi, for instance, the appeal of the gesture was nil. The NPP gesture influenced no respondent in this particular constituency. Similarly, in the case of other political parties, the response was zero, especially in Fomena and South Dayi (See Table 3K).

Table 3L: Respondents with up to senior high school education and parties' gestures that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Gesture	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	3.6	32.6	24.3	39.0	58.3
NDC	50.0	65.1	72.7	61.0	37.5

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Other	46.4	2.3	3.0	0.0	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The pattern of responses was different in the case of respondents educated up to senior high school. NDC gestures dominated all the five constituencies of Agona East, Fomena, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South. The responses in the five constituencies were 50.0, 65.1, 72.7, 61.0 and 58.3 respectively. That effect of NPP gestures was insignificant. In the Fomena Constituency for instance, only 3.6 per cent of the respondents were swayed by NPP gestures. The gestures of other parties attracted zero per cent response in South Dayi (See Table 3L).

Table 3M: Respondents with tertiary education and party gestures that influenced their electoral choices in the 2008 elections

Gesture	Constituency				
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South
NPP	0.0	25.0	17.6	57.1	64.7
NDC	75.0	75.0	82.4	42.9	35.3
Other	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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Responses among voters with tertiary education qualification were mixed. Apart from NDC gestures, the other parties' gestures recorded zero response in, at least, one of the constituencies. Table 3M shows that the NPP and other parties' gestures influenced no voter in Agona East and Fomena constituencies. For respondents in Klottey Korley and South Dayi, the NDC and NPP slogans affected the choices of 82.4 and 57.1 per cent of voters while other parties' performances were nil. Responses in the Tamale South Constituency with regard of NDC gestures were 64.7 per cent and zero for the other parties.

7.6.4 CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Under channels, the study is guided by the following question: Which channel of communication do Ghanaians rely upon mostly in making political choices?

Table 3N: Which of the following channels of communication did you rely upon in deciding who to vote for during the 2008 elections in your constituency?

Channel	Constituency					Total
	Agona East	Fomena	Klottey Korley	South Dayi	Tamale South	
Radio	21.9	32.3	10.3	16.8	18.7	100.0
Television	18.8	0.0	39.1	27.5	14.6	100.0
Newspaper	0.0	0.0	30.0	50.0	20.0	100.0

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Political Rally	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.7	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 3N shows that the Fomena Constituency had the highest number of respondents (32.2%) whose decisions were affected by messages from radio. It was followed by the Agona East Constituency, with about 22.0 per cent, Tamale South with only 18.7 per cent, South Dayi, !6.8 per cent and Klottey Korley 10.3 per cent—as they did in previous elections. Nearly 40.0 per cent of the respondents in the Klottey Korley Constituency said messages from television influenced them. South Dayi was the next constituency with 27.5 per cent of respondents who depended on television for their electoral decisions. Only 18.8 per cent of the voters were swayed by television campaign messages in the Agona East Constituency. The responses for both Tamale South and Fomena constituencies were 14.5 and 0.0 per cent respectively.

The newspaper as a channel of communication continued to be the least influential medium for voters in both the Agona East and Fomena constituencies, where respondents recorded zero per cent for this medium. Responses for the three remaining constituencies were South Dayi - 50.0 per cent, Klottey Korley - 30.0 per cent, and Tamale South - 20.0 per cent.

Table 3P: Respondents educational backgrounds and the influence of state-owned radio on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

Constituency	Educational Background	Total

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	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	31.3	56.3	12.5	100.0
Fomena	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	42.9	57.1	100.0
South Dayi	6.9	82.8	10.3	100.0
Tamale South	15.4	53.8	30.8	100.0

Source: Field data

In 2008, 57.1 per cent of the electorate with tertiary educational background in the Klotttey Korley Constituency said they made their political decision based on information they received from state-owned radio compared with 42.9 per cent of the respondents it influenced in 2000. There was no significant influence on illiterate voters. Even the highest response from this category of voters was only 31.3 per cent which came from Agona East Constituency. The least responses from the three levels of education came from illiterate voters and those with tertiary education. Voters with senior high school education constituted the group which depended most on state-owned radio.. In Fomena, South Dayi, Agona East and Tamale South, the effect of state-owned radio on voters with senior high school education was phenomenal. It accounted for 100.0, 82.8,56.3 and 53.8 per cent of the electorate from these constituencies respectively (See Table 3P).

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Table 3Q: Respondents educational backgrounds and the influence of private-owned radio on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Fomena	7.9	84.2	7.9	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	60.0	40.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	00.0	50.0	50.0	100.0

Source: Field data

Apart from Fomena, illiterate voters in the 2008 elections had very little regard for private radio stations. Responses from them were zero for the remaining four constituencies; namely, Agona East, Klottey Korley, South Dayi and Tamale South constituencies. It was only in the Fomena Constituency where 7.9 per cent of the people relied on this medium. This pattern of responses was similar to that of voters with tertiary education.

With the exception of Tamale South where 50.0 per cent of the respondents with both senior high and tertiary education used information from private radio stations for their decisions at the polls, the rest of the responses were insignificant. Even at Agona East and South Dayi, constituencies, none of the respondents was influenced by private radio stations. Responses from each of the constituencies were zero for those in this educational category. It is evident

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from Table 3Q that only respondents with up to senior high school education relied to a large extent on private radio stations for the electoral decisions.

Table 3R: Respondents educational backgrounds and the influence of state-owned television on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	46.2	46.2	7.6	100.0
Fomena	0.0	87.5	12.5	100.0
Klottey Korley	0.0	86.7	13.3	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	75.0	25.0	100.0
Tamale South	14.3	35.7	50.0	100.0

Source: Field data

In 2008, 4.2 per cent of the electorate with up to senior high school education and illiterates in the Agona East Constituency depended on the state-owned television stations to make their political decisions. Voters with tertiary educational backgrounds showed least dependence on state-owned television stations for their electoral decisions; and so did illiterate voters in Fomena, Klottey Korley and South Dayi. Responses in these constituencies amounted to zero per cent. But in the Tamale South Constituency, public television influenced 50.0 per cent respondents with tertiary education category. Of the three categories of respondents, public

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television influenced the greatest number of people with up to senior high school education, recording 87.5, 86.7 and 75.0 per cent in the Fomena, Klottey Korley and South Dayi constituencies, respectively.

Table 3S: Respondents educational backgrounds and the influence of private-owned television on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

Constituency	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High	Tertiary	
Agona East	0.0	100.0	0.0	
Klottey Korley	0.0	33.3	66.7	
Tamale South	0.0	100.0	0.0	

Source: Field data

Before proceeding to 2000, it must be stated that during the 1992 elections, only the state-owned television existed and was under the thumb of the government of the day. Private stations emerged after 1995 when the media landscape was liberalised (See Table 3S).

Of voters in the three educational categories sampled in this study, it was respondents with up to senior high school education who believed in private television as the most important factor in their electoral choices. In both Agona East and Tamale South constituencies, 100.0 per cent of respondents in this educational category were influenced by private television stations. In Klottey Korley, 66.7 per cent of the respondents with tertiary educational

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background were swayed by private television stations. Respondents in other categories scored zero response. None of the illiterate respondents was influenced by private television stations the Agona East, Klottey Korley and Tamale South Constituencies.

Table 3T: Respondents educational background and the influence of state-owned newspapers on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

	Educational Background			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	-	-	-	-
Fomena	-	-	-	-
Klottey Korley	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	-	-	-	-

Source: Field data

In that 2000 elections, only respondents with tertiary and up to senior high school education qualification claimed to have been influenced by the state-owned papers. Table 3S shows that in the Klottey Korley Constituency, 100.0 per cent of respondents with tertiary education were influenced by the state-owned newspapers. Similarly, in South Dayi, 100.0 per cent of the respondents with senior high school education indicated that state-owned newspapers impacted on them. As can be seen from Table 3S, none of the illiterate respondents was

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moved by state-owned newspapers in the two constituencies. Respondents with up to senior high and tertiary education in both Agona East and South Dayi constituencies gave zero responses to the influence of state-owned newspapers on their electoral choices. The other three constituencies produced insignificant responses.

Table 3U: Respondents educational background and the influence of private-owned newspapers on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

Constituency	Educational Background of Respondents			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
Agona East	-	-	-	-
Fomena	-	-	-	-
Klottey Korley	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
South Dayi	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
Tamale South	-	-	-	-

Source: Field data

Respondents who possessed up to senior high school and tertiary education certificates claimed their decisions at the polls were influenced by private newspapers in the 2008 elections. In the Klottey Korley Constituency, 100.0 per cent of the respondents with tertiary education and 100.0 per cent of respondents with senior high school in South Dayi based their electoral choices on private newspapers (See Table 3U).

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Table 3V: Respondents' educational background and the influence of political rally on their electoral choices in their constituencies during the 2008 elections

Constituency	Educational Background of Respondents			Total
	No education	Up to Senior High School	Tertiary	
South Dayi	50.0	33.3	16.7	100.0
Tamale South	50.0	33.7	16.3	100.0

Source: Field data

Responses in South Dayi and Tamale South during the 2008 elections were the same. While 50.0 per cent of the respondents with no education said they depended on political rallies; 33.3 per cent of those with up to senior high school education claimed political rallies informed their decisions. Only 16.7 per cent of the respondents with tertiary education claimed to have based their electoral choices on information at rallies (See Table 3V).

7.6.5 Conclusion

The survey clearly shows that in the 1992, 2000 and 2008 elections, three sets of findings were produced in relation to messages and channels. While some messages were most influential, others were least influential with the rest being neither most nor least influential. Out of the 14 messages examined, the economy was the most important message which

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influenced the choice of voters, at least in four constituencies followed by development and corruption. Messages that were neither most nor least influential were employment, health, education and those referred to in this study as "others". The least influential messages included those relating to ethnicity and good governance, that is, human rights, accountability and transparency. Others messages in this category were rule of law, security and improvement in democratic rule.

Not only did the study showed messages and their effects on the choices of the electorate, but also the relationship between messages and constituencies of voters. The study established that influences of messages on voter choices in the constituencies were mixed. Indeed, messages used in the campaigns had the same or different effect on the choices of respondents. The reason for the mixed responses was based on the parties' inability to develop constituency-specific messages instead of general ones.

The study also established a relationship between messages and the educational backgrounds of voters. Different messages had different effects on the choices of voters with different educational backgrounds. For instance, while economic messages swayed most of the illiterate voters and those with senior high school education in all the constituencies, a mixture of messages influenced the choices of those with tertiary education. Other forms of messages the study investigated were slogans and gestures, which revealed interesting dynamics in elections of Ghana. Notwithstanding the fact that the impact of slogans and gestures was specific to certain constituencies, the study noted that the two messages were yet to have impact on the choices of voters in Ghana.

In the case of the effect of slogans on the choices of voters, the study noted that the NDC's slogan was most influential, followed by NPP's with other parties being the least. Throughout the elections, the NDC slogans were more influential in constituencies such as South Dayi

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and Klottey Korley constituencies. The slogans of the NPP swayed a large number of voters, particularly in Fomena and Tamale South. On the relationship between slogan and educational background of voters, the NDC slogan was most influential for respondents with no formal education. Though there were mixed responses for those with senior high school education, the NPP slogan however influenced most respondents with tertiary education.

As regards gestures and voter choices, the study revealed that of the five constituencies studied, gestures of "other" parties and those of the NPP influenced more voters with the NDC gesture being less influential. Voters with no formal education, senior high school leavers and those with tertiary education were swayed by the NDC gesture. It is interesting to note that while NPP gestures influenced respondents with tertiary education, gestures of the "other" political parties had the least effect on the choices voters made during the three elections.

Part of the study was on channels and their influence on the choices of the electorate. Out of the four channels of communication assessed, political rally was found to be the most influential channel, followed by newspapers, television and radio, especially in 1992 and 2008. This was evident in Tamale South and Agona East, where political rally was mostly depended on. Tied to this was the relationship between channels and educational backgrounds of the electorate. It emerged that the state-owned radio was the most popular medium for illiterate respondents and those with up to senior high school and tertiary education. In 1992 for instance, the state-owned radio influenced most voters with up to senior high school education. However, in 2000, both the private and state-owned newspapers were important in influencing respondents with different educational backgrounds. In 2008, state-owned newspapers swayed respondents with up to senior high school education.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSISON

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters, we tried to look at the different aspects of the study including Introduction, Literature Review, The Media and Elections in Ghana: An Overview, Theoretical Framework and Research Questions, The Changing Forms of Political Communication, Methodology and Method of Data Analysis and Data Analysis: Political Communication and Voter Choices in the Fourth Republic. In this chapter, we discuss the research questions and findings. This study draws attention to a number of important questions about the relationship between political communication and voter choices in Ghana. Some of the questions are: Which message (economic, health, ethnic, gesture and slogan among others) determines voter choices in Ghana and why? How and why does the constituency or residence of a voter influence his or her choices of messages or channels in elections? How does the educational background of voters influence the choices of messages or channels of communication during elections? How and why does party gesture or slogan influence voters during elections? Which channel of communication do Ghanaian voters rely upon most in making political choices and why? How and why did change in the form of political communication in Ghana occurred since 1995 and why? In depth discussion and logical conclusions from this exercise are important in setting the stage for the summary and conclusion of this study.

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Communication is important in elections. It facilitates the electoral process and helps the electorate in making decisions. Though communication is key to elections, its promotion of direct electoral benefit depends on its effective management. The success or otherwise of how communication is managed, is a function of the components of the communication process. Generally speaking, there are five major components of the communication process. These are the source, message, channel, receiver and feedback. The means by which the component parts of the communication process interact with one another determine the effect that will be produced at the end of such process.

In Ghana, the politician has been the main source of communicating political messages in the 1992, 2000 and 2008 elections. Through consultation, interaction and research, the agenda of the election is set by the source. The more attention the media give to a particular message, media effect studies show that the greater the importance that the media attach to that message. And since issues that the media consider important are what they expose electorate to during elections, this determines which part the politician wishes to share with the electorate. After the message has been determined, a channel is chosen for effect and finally the message is sent to the recipient who then decides which of the messages will suit the recipient interest.

After touching on the communication process, we shall now proceed to discuss the details of the findings of the study. The discussions here will be centred along the following lines: messages, slogans, gestures, channels of communication and conclusion**.**

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Messages

So far, a number of findings have emerged from our study, which may be summarily restated here. Out of the 14 messages analysed, the responses from the electorate indicate that not all the messages had the same strength. While some messages had more influence on the electorate, others had little or no influence at all. Messages such as the economy, development and corruption were the most influential. Others like health, education and employment had little influence. Interestingly, messages which related to ethnicity and good governance had the least or no influence at all. Despite the fact that the Ghanaian society is stratified in terms of education, constituency and income, among others, the study revealed that out of the three messages (that is economy, development and corruption) those related to the economy were most influential than those on development and corruption.

Even though the influence of economic messages was not limited to only constituencies but cut across respondents with diverse educational backgrounds. Thus, economic message became identified as the single most important message that influenced the choice of voters in the three elections. Accounting for this was that the economy of the Fourth Republic has suffered a lot of challenges and exposed the average voter to the hash economic difficulties from which he needed redemption. Survival instincts were at play. This particular voting behaviour of the electorate in recent times, is not peculiar to Ghana. Even in the advanced democracies such as the United States, the influence of economic messages is a reality. Scholars like Alvarez and Nagler (1998) and Szporluk have underscored this point. In addition, Kinder (1979, 1981) and Kiewet (1981) have even established a correlation between voting behaviour of voters and microeconomic conditions of a state. But the million dollar question is whether one message (economic) alone is enough to sway voters during elections.

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So far, our study has shown that economic message appears to have been the most critical factor that has influence voter choices. If this statement is anything at all, then all the political parties have no choice than to concentrate on developing only one (economic) message for their political campaigns. But that is certainly not feasible. In fact, what this actually means is that other messages are equally important in influencing voter choices, except that the influence such messages exert on voters may be limited. As it can be seen in this study, though messages on development and corruption were also influential, their effects on the choices of the electorate were not as phenomenal as those on the economy. Even among the two, messages on development were more influential than those on corruption. Evidence of this is not difficult to find.

The study shows that while some constituencies have amenities like roads, health facilities, markets, schools, electricity and potable water, there are others without them at all. Even where these amenities existed, their state was suspect. Giving the fact that governments as a matter of electoral strategy, timed the completion of developments projects to coincide with electoral polls in order to sway voters (Nugent 2001: 408) and the fact that human beings cannot live without these facilities, it is very rational that voters would prefer development messages to issues on corruption, which up to date has remained daunting for governments to surmount despite tonnes of evidence from the media and other anti-corruption institutions. The study found that in all the election years, the average ranking for corruption was third. This evidence from the study shows the preponderance of corruption in the country. Indeed, publications by Transparency International in relation to the three election years as well as the Ghana's Fourth Afrobarometer Survey conducted by the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) reveal the preponderance of corruption in the country. According to the survey, the perception of corruption in the country in 2000 was 77.0 per cent. The problem

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has so far been lack of political will on the part of government. Even some of the anti-corruption institutions, especially the judiciary and the police, whose duty it is to fight the menace are themselves engulfed in the problem. Further to this, the media, which is constitutionally enjoined to fight the menace, seems handicapped and incapacitated, regrettably, through compromises with suspected corrupt officials. This notwithstanding, the few exposures made by the media with regard to acts of corruption did not receive any action by the state (Asah-Asante, 2014). This has greatly affected the fight to reduce the menace in this Republic and consequently provided the ammunitions for the opposition political parties to use them in their campaigns.

Messages on the economy, development and corruption were not the only ones which influenced the choices of voters in the elections. Others like employment, health, education and those referred to in this study as "others" had a minimal part to play. No doubt, employment, health and education are necessary for human development, the responses from the electorate on them are not commensurate with the attention received from the respondents. In the case of educational messages for instance, it is a little surprising that before the 1992 elections, the standard of education had begun to improve with the primary sector receiving a net enrolment of 7.4 per cent (GSS, 1975), though, voters did not pay attention to messages on education. A similar behaviour was exhibited in the area of health. In spite of the existence of the cash and carry system which had made it impossible for people to access healthcare, voters continued to show less interest in health messages.

With regard to messages on rule of law, security and improvement in democratic rule, the study revealed that voter consideration of these issues throughout the three election years was very low. In the case of security for instance, prior to any of the three elections, there were apprehensions that the elections could be rigged or manipulated by the incumbent

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government and this created fear and anxiety among the electorate. It was due to those apprehensions that anytime there was election, voters had the feeling that the process could result in violence or chaos and this feature permeated through the three elections. Scholars have noted that in 1992, for instance, the NDC campaigned was intended to cause fear and panic among members of the public. The focus of the NDC campaign was to the extent that if Rawlings did not win the elections, there would be chaos and destruction in the country (Adejumobi 2000: 170). Similarly in 2000, doubts were expressed as to the willingness of the ruling NDC to accept the verdict of the people if the elections did not go in their favour (Nugent 2001: 405; Gyimah-Boadi 2001: 104). In 2008, there were similar threats from the NDC quarters that if the NDC did not win the elections the country would follow the lines of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, among others. The results of the study rejected those security concerns. In all the elections, as noticed by the study and Nugent "none of the bleakest scenarios came to pass". This is evidenced in the insignificant number of electorate who based their electoral choices on security. Perhaps, the real issue is not the insignificant effects messages on security, rule of law, improvement in democratic rule and education had on the choices of electorate. Rather, the focus should be on the effect of those issues neglected by the electorate and which were part of the important factors which strengthen the frontiers of democratic rule.

Message with least influence on voter choices were ethnicity, human rights, accountability and transparency. In the case of ethnicity for instance, the 1992 Constitution frowns on the formation of political parties based on ethnic groups. Article 55 of the Constitution stipulates that: "every political party shall have a national character, a membership shall not be based on ethnic, religious, regional or other sectional division". In addition, "… the party's name, emblem, colour motto, or any other symbol has no ethnic, religious or other sectional

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connotation that gives the appearance that its activities are confined only to a part of Ghana". By extension and inference, this means that direct or indirect references to ethnicity as a means of mobilising political support is also prohibited under the law. However, there are covet and overt means through which the phenomenon is used and these include innuendoes, direct instigations, hate speeches and political discourses, among others (Takyi, Opoku-Agyeman & Kutin-Mensah 2010: 65). Available studies show that while some scholars believe the phenomenon of ethnicity has some effects of voter choices, others have contrary views. To them, there is nothing influential about ethnicity in voter choices. It can be deduced that the average voter in Ghana is becoming aware of the dangers associated with ethnicity, particularly in politics, and for that matter, has seen the need to downplay it in politics.

Governance issues of human rights and accountability continue to be a mere academic exercise. Since the 1990s not only have these issues gained currency but also become important criteria for assessing the quality of governance in the country. Our study revealed that voter consideration of these issues throughout the three election years was very low. Most of the electorate had very little idea about them. Besides, they were not able to internalise those messages. It has been observed in all the five messages under discussion here that, nearly all the respondents, irrespective of their educational backgrounds, had virtually no regard for these messages.

Slogans and Gestures

Other forms of message used in elections are slogans and gestures. They have become important message forms in elections in recent times.

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Slogans

Slogans have been used in pre and post- independent elections have featured the use of slogans in electoral politics. Mention can be made of the Convention People's Party (CPP) slogan of "self-government now" as against "self-government within the shortest possible time" of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in the 1951 elections. Though no indepth study has been made in this regard, it is generally believed that the CPP's slogan was one of the factors that contributed to the party's success of the CPP in that election (Boahen, 1975). A lot of examples exist in the post-independence era where slogans became critical. Though in all the three elections, illiterate voters were those mostly swayed by party slogans, the study generally shows that the NDC slogans were the most influential among all the voters in the three educational categories. The slogan made serious inroads in Klottey Korley and South Dayi. It can be argued that both the NPP and NDC slogans were easily remembered, that of the NDC was more comprehensible than those of the NPP's. In essence, while the meaning of NDC's slogans was easily understood by voters irrespective of their educational background, NPP slogans were not easily identified with.

For instance, the NDC slogans of "continuity" and "change" were more easily understood on its face value than NPP's "positive" and "we are moving forward" which requires some bit of interpretation. Following from the findings of the study that the slogans of both NPP and NDC influential in the parties' strongholds, there is no doubt that the popularity of the NDC slogan in South Dayi could be traced to the massive support the NDC has in the Constituency. As already indicated, since 1992, South Dayi has been one of the strongholds of the NDC with no other party ever winning either in the presidential and parliamentary elections. In fact, results from the constituency show that no NDC has ever won with less that 70 per cent of the total votes. There is no doubt that this overwhelming support of the NDC in

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the constituency has contributed to the situation where messages of other parties, including slogans, have fallen on deaf ears. The only surprise is the Klottey Korley Constituency where the NPP slogan failed to sway voters. As one of the swing constituencies in the country, the expectation was that both the NDC and NPP slogans would have the same effect, especially where before 2012, apart from 1992 where the opposition parties boycotted the parliamentary elections, both NDC and NPP had all won the parliamentary seats two times. Again, in 2000, though the NPP slogan of "positive change" was very attractive (especially with regard to that portion of the slogan which urged Ghanaians to assess their living standards and vote accordingly) and gained more attention in the year's elections, its influence was very minimal compared with the NDC's. Some political pundits even believe the NPP victory in 2000 was mainly caused by the message in that slogan. Of course, such claims are questionable as there cannot be any one single factor that can determine an outcome of an election. Be that as it may, the slogans of the "other" political parties had the influence on voter choices.

It could be seen from the study that political parties which were strong on the ground tended to have voters being attracted to them, including their slogans. What we can deduced from this is that parties which were naturally weak failed to have their slogans influencing the electorate. Even where voters appeared to show interest in such slogans, the motivation was largely comical. A case in point was the slogan of Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP) whose message of "domestication" became the only panacea for the plethora of the country's problems the country was facing. This rendered the slogan valueless and was reduced to a mere comic relief.

Gesture

Another form of message is gesture. It is part of the Kinesic behaviour or body motion (Knapp, 1980). As a non-verbal cue, gesture use is gradually becoming an important part in

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the country's electoral campaigns. Though gestures were somehow used in the 2000 elections, it became popular in 2008. From that time onwards, voters have been exposed to a number of them succinctly capturing the messages of politicians. In 2008, for instance, the use of gestures by the political parties was prominent. The NPP, NDC and "other" political parties made use of gestures in their campaigns. While the gestures of both the NDC and "other" political parties signified "change", the NPP gesture aimed at "continuity". Both the NPP and NDC gestures were popular, but that of "other" political parties were most influential. Though the gesture of "other" political parties swayed a large number of the electorate, its effect on voters, in relation to the three educational categories was the least. It is interesting to note that the two constituencies where the slogans of the "other" political parties made inroads were Agona East and Fomena, which are incidentally Akan constituencies. Ababio (1988) has noted that though the use of gesture cuts across all ethnic groups, among the Akans, heavy reliance is placed on non-verbal communication, such as gestures, to express themselves. To the Akans, non-verbal communication is very important in interpersonal communication as a supplement to verbal communication.

So, it was not surprising that the use of gestures gained influence in the Akan constituencies. What was surprising though was why the NPP's gesture did not sway many voters in the said areas though the party has been tagged as an Akan party. Perhaps this underscores the position of some scholars that ethnic explanation of politics is Ghana is decidedly mixed. Despite the poor showing of the NDC gesture in the constituencies, it was the single most influential gesture among the illiterate, senior high school leavers and those in tertiary education. This aspect of the finding is also interesting in the sense that it dispels a certain notion in the country that most people with tertiary education do not support the NDC.

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Channels of Communication

Messages alone do not mean anything to its recipient unless they are communicated through a channel. This means that a successful completion of message development depends on the media channel used to transmit the message across to the receiver. The channel is as important as its effect. For communication purposes, any medium that is used in this direction is assessed on the basis of its strengths and weaknesses. This means that in information dissemination, a channel is chosen for effect—(DeFleur & Dennis, 1998). In Africa, despite the growing popularity of the internet, the importance people attach to media channel particularly radio, television and newspapers cannot be overemphasised. This situation was not entirely different from Ghana (Smith & Temin 2009: 597). Smith and Temin (2001: 168-169) have argued that in 2000, radio was the most influential channel of communication. Aside the high illiteracy rate in Ghana, the increasing reliance on radio by most of the electorate, especially in making electoral decisions is explained by the fact that most radio stations in the country broadcast in local languages, which makes it easier for the populace to appreciate and understand the issues under consideration and ultimately make informed choices. This study contradicts this conclusion. We found in our study that the political rally was the most important channel used by the politicians. Other channels such as newspaper, radio and television which emerged as equally important media made little impact on the choices of the electorate. It was observed that though throughout the three elections the influence of channels of communication on illiterate, senior high school leavers and those with tertiary education was mixed, the political rally and newspapers were the most influential means through which the political parties communicated with the former being the most influential and the latter, the second influential medium. It was only in 2000 that radio

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became the third most influential medium of communication. But in both 1992 and 2008 elections, television emerged as the third most important channel of communication.

We can attribute the popularity of political rally to certain developments in Ghanaian politics. Since time immemorial, political rally has become important means for politicians to reach their audience during political campaigns. This means of communication makes it possible for party faithful and sympathizers to have access to their politicians and interact with them in a face-to-face manner. As Defleur and Dennis (1998) have noted, though the use of channel is generally associated with a number of consequences, the practice continue to linger on in politics. One of the most important consequences identified by media scholars is lack of immediate feedback after a message has been communicated. A substantial corpus of research has revealed that any communication that occurs between two persons with an intervening medium between them makes it impossible for the sender to detect certain visual and non-verbal cues necessary to make deductions. Perhaps, it is on the basis of this that in Ghana the use of public rally is important. It affords politicians the opportunity to engage with the recipients of their messages on the face-to-face basis as well as gauge the reception of their message. Also, it is the only occasion when voters get close to politicians and make known their concerns. More importantly, political rallies have propaganda purposes. In Ghana where voters are bussed to rally grounds to swell up the numbers on such occasions, pictures of the multitudes of people broadcast on television and shown in newspapers are a testimony to their large following and for which reason, others must come on board. This was referred to as a "bandwagon" (Filene, 1980). Besides, rallies have opportunities for politicians to dole out money, food and party paraphernalia to voters. It may be true that political rally was very effective in the elections, it only influenced the illiterate voters mostly. The study shows that at least more than half of the respondents in both South Dayi

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and Tamale South constituencies were influenced by this medium of communication in all the three elections. As already indicated, voters in these constituencies are not only poor, but have low levels of education. It must be noted that in the Tamale South Constituency for instance, where poverty level is very high, it is easy for voters to be lured to such political rallies. No doubt political rallies have an attraction for voters, especially in poor communities. The private media has become a modicum for political communication.

As an alternative to state-owned newspapers, the private media has, in the Fourth Republic something importance as a tool for politicians to battle for the minds of voters. Before 1995 when the media landscape was liberalised, the size of this industry was small. It was understandable due to the culture of silence prevalent before constitutional rule. They assumed the watchdog role thereafter and played a significant contribution in both the 2000 and the 2008 elections by monitoring the whole electioneering process (Karikari, 1998). People have even argued that the private-owned, were instrumental in the victory of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the 2000 elections. Though the role of the private media in the election cannot be overemphasised, such assumption about their power of this particular medium can lead to an exaggeration of its influence. The truth is that the role of newspapers in influencing voters choice is negligible as the study reveals in the three elections, were illiterates in English who could not read newspapers. Even the few who could read the newspapers were deprived of access to content due to prices. It is worth pointing out that in 2000, the price of newspaper was more than one dollar. (Smith & Temin, 2001).

Other media studies show that radio and television had influence on voter choices (Smith and Temin, 2001), this study proves they were the least influential. While radio was the third most important channel, television was the least. But in their study Smith and Temin noted that radio was the most influential medium which helped voters to make electoral choices.

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The popularity of the medium was also echoed in the *New York Times*. In that publication, columnist, Thomas Friedman wrote:

> "*For Ghana's poor, illiterate masses, being able to call the radio or be interviewed in the market by a radio reporter with a tape recorder, has given them a chance to participate in politics as never before*".

Though before 2008, the number of radio and television stations had increased, the truth of the matter is that, not all the places had access to these networks. This made it impossible for voters to have constant access to the two media.

In the communication process, the receiver of the message and feedback are separate but somehow linked together in the long run. For a discussion of the study results, the two components have been tied together. As already noted in the earlier discussions, the receiver or audience in every piece of communication is the person for whom the message is intended (Wilson, 1992). On the other hand, the reaction of the receiver to the message received, is the feedback. Voters who receive messages from politicians assign different meanings to such messages (DeFleur & Dennis, 1998). It is said that though in communication feedback comes too late to do much good to messages already communicated (Wilson, 1992), in the case of elections, the reverse is the case. The receiver of messages from politician reflects his or her feedback in the choices he or she makes at the polls. This basically answers the question why people vote in elections. The debate about why people vote in elections is a long raging one.

Scholars such as Shi (1999), Brunk (1980) and Blais and Young (1999), among others, have expressed diverse views in this debate. In his study *The Impact of Rational Participation Model*, Brunk explained that one of the reasons people take part in elections is because of the

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numerous positive messages that politicians share with the electorate regarding the essence of their franchise in democratic processes. He also argues that sometimes the participation in elections is nothing but a call to duty. The latter view of Brunk is in line with some of the responses by the electorate. Similarly, Shi, on his part, believes that the basic objective of voters in elections is not only to pursue their interest, but also to remove from office people they regard as corrupt. Sharing similar views with Brunk on voting being a call to duty, Blais and Young (1999) believe citizens participation in elections is purely dependent on the cost and benefit that they expect to derive from such actions. There is no doubt that most of the respondents who took part in the survey were interested in the expected benefit to be derived from their constitutional right to vote. Though all the 14 messages that were used in the study sought to address the needs of the electorate, their ranking in terms of the economy as the highest need of the electorate throughout the country to have their livelihoods improved. Irrespective of the constituency and how they voted, the electorate found the messages on the economy as the most important determinant of their choice. On the other hand, messages the electorate considered less important, especially those on ethnicity, accountability, transparency and human rights were given less attention.

8.2 Conclusion

Every election has its own logic that defines it. From the planning stage to the time of execution, elections provide opportunity for politicians to offer themselves for consideration and possible acceptance by the electorate. But this cannot be achieved without the use of the communication process. So far, the discussion has shown that messages and channels are generally important in elections, in Ghana, however, the most important message and channel that influence the choices of voters most are the economy and political rally respectively. Though other messages such as those relating to development, corruption, slogans and

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gestures, have some degree of effect on the choices of the electorate, they are yet to be fully accepted by them.

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CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

We set out in this study to determine the extent to which changes in forms and sophistication of political communication have affected voter choices. Our primary goal in this chapter is to summarise our key findings and draw relevant conclusions from the discussions in the preceding chapters. This chapter focuses attention on the following questions: (a) What are the key findings of the study? and (b) What are the necessary recommendations to enhance political communication in the country?

9.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The thesis of this study is to find out the extent to which changes in forms and sophistication of political communication have affected voter choices compared to other traditional factors in Ghana. In order to deal with the thesis above effectively, a number of questions were relied upon: (i) Which message (economic, health, ethnic, gesture and slogan among others) determines voter choices in Ghana and why? (ii) How and why does the constituency or residence of a voter influence his or her choices of messages or channels in elections? (iii) How does the educational background of voters influence the choices of messages or channels of communication during elections? (iv) How and why does party gesture or slogan influence voters during elections? (v) Which channel of communication do Ghanaian voters rely upon most in making political choices and why? (vi) How and why did change in the form of political communication in Ghana occurred since 1995 and why? In the light of the above questions, the following findings emerged:

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First, we found out that throughout the 1992, 2000 and 2008 elections, out of the 14 messages used in the study, three influenced the choices of most voters in all the five constituencies where the study was conducted. The three messages were those on the economy, development and corruption.

Alvarez and Nagler (1998) and Jackson and Jackson (2003: 376) have underscored the important role economic messages play in influencing voter choices. Our study confirms this position. So, in the face of continuous deterioration in the economy, it is very natural that messages which tend to give hope to the economic situation of the country would resonate strongly with most of the electorate.

Jeffries (1998: 2004-2006) has argued that one of the reasons people in Ghana vote the way they do is their desire for certain amenities including water, roads, schools, markets, clinics and hospitals. This desire by the electorate for amenities which rank in order of preference of voters also corroborates the positions held by Ninsin (1993) and Austin (1970; 1975) that voters in Ghana are also swayed by messages that seek to improve their material well-being.

The study found that corruption was still prevalent in the country. In all the ranking of voters, messages on corruption were rated third with an average score of 9.9 per cent for both 1992 and 2000. The only exception was 2008, where the phenomenon attracted a score of 9.8 per cent. Even here the rating was the same (that is third) as the preceding years. This evidence from the study shows that public interest in corruption has increased since 1992, however, the drawback is that over the years, government in dealing with it has been indifferent.

Apart from the three messages stated above, there were “other” messages whose ratings were between the highest and lowest declared by the electorate. Among such messages were those on employment, health, education and “others”. Prior to each of the three elections, there was

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a pervading sense that those messages were not only important for the electorate but had the power to sway the choices of most of them. Unfortunately, the results of this study do not confirm this contention.

Messages relating to ethnicity and good governance (that is, issues on human rights, accountability and transparency) had the least influence on voters. On the issue of ethnicity, scholars have divided opinions on its effect on the choice of voters. While some emphasised the role ethnicity plays in the country's politics, others believe it has little or no effect at all on the choices of the electorate. In this study, the influence of ethnicity on the choice of respondents was very minimal. This means that factors other than ethnic considerations influence voter choices (Frimpong 2001: 158).

The study revealed poor voter consideration for issues of good governance. Perhaps, the only explanation is that though governance issues were important in the three election years, their meaning was not fully understood by the ordinary voter. It appears that for the same reason, messages on rule of law, security, improvement in democratic rule and education had little effect on voters.

Second, on the relationship between messages and constituency of voters, the study established that influences of messages on the choices of voters in constituencies were mixed. The study showed that messages put out during campaigns had the same or different effect on the choices of respondents in either all or some of the constituencies. Among the reasons for the mixed responses to the messages from voters in the constituencies is the inability of politicians to develop messages that were constituency-specific and relying on a few messages for all constituencies.

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Third, on the link between campaign messages and education, the study revealed that in every election, though certain messages produced the same responses, there were instances where different messages had different influences on respondents with different educational backgrounds. In this connection, we noted that in all the constituencies, while economic messages swayed most of the illiterate voters and those with senior high school education, those with tertiary education had no single but a mixture of messages influencing their choices.

Fourth, slogans and gestures as messages also influenced voter choices in specific constituencies. Of the slogans, the NDC's were most influential, followed by NPP's. The slogans were more influential in their strongholds of South Dayi and Fomena constituencies respectively. The slogans of the "other" political parties were the least influential.

We also found that the effect of party slogans on respondents differed from one educational category to the other. Among those with no formal education, the NDC slogan was most influential, with mixed responses for those with senior high school education. Respondents with tertiary education were influenced by the NPP slogan.

Fifth, the use of non-verbal communication as gesture in the 2008 elections produced certain responses. Of the five constituencies studied, gestures of both the NPP and the "other" political parties influenced a lot of voters with the NDC gesture being less influential.

Furthermore, the study revealed that illiterate respondents were swayed by the gesture of the NDC which affected the choice of this category of voters in three of the constituencies. The gestures of "other" political parties had the least effect. For those with senior high school education, the gesture that was instrumental in their electoral decisions was that of the NDC.

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Among respondents with tertiary education, the NDC gesture influenced their choices most. The gesture of the other political parties had the least effect.

Out of the four channels of communication assessed in this study, political rally was the most influential channel employed by politicians to reach out to the electorate, followed by newspapers. Television was the next most important channel. Its influence was felt mostly in 1992 and 2008. Radio emerged as the medium with least influence.

The study examined the relationship between channels of communication and respondents' educational background. The state-owned radio was the most popular medium for the illiterate respondents and those with up to senior high school and tertiary education during the elections. Most voters with up to senior high school education depended on the state-owned radio to make their electoral decisions in the 1992 elections. In 2000, however, both the private and state-owned newspapers were influential. Respondents with different educational backgrounds based their electoral decisions on these channels of communication. Respondents with up to senior high school education depended on state-owned newspapers for their electoral decisions in the 2008 elections.

In sum, the arguments above suggest that though there have been changes in the form and sophistication of political communication, the effect associated with these changes in relation to the choices of the electorate have produced responses that do not attach significant influence to either messages or channels of communication traditionally used in elections. Out of the 14 messages used in the study, only the economy influenced voters in all the constituencies. Other messages on development and corruption had little influence on the choices of the respondents. Surprisingly, governance issues such as rule of law, human rights, accountability and transparency had insignificant influence on the choice of the electorate. On channels of communication, it is interesting to note that out of the channels used for the

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study, political rally was the most influential channel of communication. Other channels did not mean much in elections in Ghana.

9.3 Conclusions

The study has brought to the fore a number of findings which are relevant to the development of political communication in the country. On the basis of these findings, we draw the following conclusions:

We have noted from the study that though political parties use diversity of messages in elections, those relating to the economy matter most to the electorate. Other messages, according to the study, appear important to the electorate, though their impact on voter choices in terms of influence is somehow limited. This means that the various economic policies and programmes pursued by governments in the Fourth Republic, with their accompanying achievements notwithstanding, voters believe there is still more room for improvement. Until recently, the country's economy performance had been touted by international organisations as one of the fast growing economies in the world. Ghana became a lower middle income country, but the fact that voters continue to rely on their economic status to make electoral choices during elections, irrespective of their levels of education and constituency or residence is an indication of the poor health of the economy and its adverse effects on most of the electorate.

Since the 1990s, when Ghana embraced democracy and good governance, a lot of studies have pointed to the country's governance credentials. Notwithstanding these achievements, our study reveals that issues relating to human rights, accountability and transparency, which are necessary condition for democracy, do not mean much to the electorate. That accounts for the challenges the country is encountering in democracy and governance processes.

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On the relationship between message and constituency, the findings of our study revealed that while some messages were most influential on the choices of the electorate in some constituencies, others have little or no effect at all. This points to the fact that the design of the messages was made without due regard to the social psychological needs and relevance to the constituency. Added to this was the determination that different messages had different effects on the choices of voters with different educational backgrounds. For instance, while in 2008 pair trawling was a major concern for illiterate fishermen in the coastal areas, those in urban constituencies were interested in development issues such as potable water, educational and health infrastructure.

Similarly, the study reveals that though the impact of slogan and gesture was specific to certain constituencies, they are yet to influence most of the electorate. In the case of slogan, we noted that the NDC's slogan was the most influential, particularly with illiterate voters. Regarding gesture, the NPP's slogan was the most popular and influential, but its effect, like the NDC's slogan, was mainly on illiterate voters. Given the fact that most electorate were not influenced by these two messages coupled with the fact that such messages influenced illiterate voters mostly, it therefore stands to reason that both messages, as an important tool of political communication is yet to be fully accepted by voters in Ghana.

Our study shows that the vibrancy of the media, that is, radio, television and newspapers notwithstanding, political rally has become the preferred platform by politicians to get their message across. Part of the reason is the inability of many voters, especially those in the rural areas, to buy radio and television sets to enable them listen to and watch electoral programmes. Similarly, newspapers are prohibitive cost wise and therefore, beyond reach of a sizeable number of the electorate. It is therefore, clear from the above that the medium which is cost-effective and easily accessible is political rally. Added to this is advantage of

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face-to-face contact with candidates derived from the use of this medium as well as treatment with money and other gifts.

It is evident that despite the changes in form and sophistication of political communication, manifested in a variety of message forms and channels of communication, their influence on voter choices have not been significant. What is clear is that only messages on the economy and the channel of political rally have contributed in no small measure in deciding voter choices. Perhaps, something more than changes in form and sophistication of political communication will be needed to determine voter choices in elections in Ghana.

9.4 Recommendations

There are many strategies for winning elections. In the same breadth, the role message plays in electoral processes does not need further emphasis. It is against this background that the communication component of every electoral campaign needs to be attended to seriously. The effective and efficient manner in which the various components of communication are handled and managed go a long way to enhance the chances of politicians.

As we have already indicated, the politician who constitutes the source of messages during elections is the determiner of what needs to be communicated (message), the channel to be used for the communication and the recipient of the message. It is an important responsibility that requires expertise to discharge.

The study shows the relevance of the various sectors of the Ghanaian state to decision-making in voter choices. It is recommended that for political parties in government, the acceptability or otherwise of their messages depends on the work they have done in those areas as well as achievements. This lessens their task in developing the right message for the electorate. In the case of opposition parties, especially those who have not been in power,

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there is nothing of reference in terms of achievement. In the circumstance, the best thing to do is to develop the message that will influence the choice of the electorate. This requires research and careful framing of such messages.

Every sector of the state is very important. For electoral purposes, it is important to note from the study that messages which were critical in influencing voter choices be given the most attention. On this score, it is appropriate for ruling governments to fix the economy if they are to win power. But for opposition parties, there is the need to develop very good economic messages so as to sway voters and win power ultimately. To do this, it is important that the parties look at the economic fundamentals critically and factor them into the message. Like the economy, messages on development and corruption must be improved and made relevant and attractive to the electorate. In the case of development, it was observed that not all the areas of the country had the same level of development.

From the study, it appears that slogans and gestures are making impact on electoral politics. What politicians have to do is to research into critical messages and develop them into powerful slogans. Both the NDC and NPP slogans have taught us lessons that if slogans are developed in a very careful and succinct manner, so as to reflect the circumstance of the time, it is likely to sway a number of voters. Like slogan, the use of gesture is also catching up. Due to its non-verbal nature, it makes its use easy and smooth for both illiterate and literate. It is also cost effective as it requires no advertising cost. Politicians must turn their attention to the use of gestures in their campaigns to make their campaigns complete.

The survival of every state rests on the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. This is the basis of governance. The study reveals that important issues of governance, particularly human rights, rule of law, transparency and accountability have the least responses. It is in the light of this, we urge politicians to

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intensify education on governance issues so that when messages are developed the electorate can follow. This calls for the discussions on governance issues as those that impinge on the voters daily existence rather than an academic exercise of no meaning to the electorate.

It is important for politicians to study and vary the channels of communication used in elections. The study has shown that if politicians go beyond the traditional channels of communication (radio, television and newspaper) to include other ones, they will have more avenues for the electorate to receive their messages. The use of political rally in electoral campaigns has been an important eye opener in this direction. Efforts must be made towards the use of non-traditional media like friends and family, among others, to get more voters to be exposed to their messages.

The beauty of any academic study is what it bequeathed to society in terms of findings. Given the findings from this study, it is recommended that future research should focus on other forms of message such as jingles, songs and text messages, which have become important in electoral politics in Ghana today. In addition, studies on the use of media channels like bill-boards, branding on vehicles, fliers and posters will go a long way to expand society's knowledge on the various forms of political communication and how they impact on elections.

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APPENDIXES

Department of Political Science

University of Ghana

QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

I am a Ph. D candidate at the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana conducting a research into the "Changing Forms of Political Communication and Voter Choices in Ghana's Elections, 1992-2008". The questionnaire is designed to solicit opinions from the general public on the effect of political communication on voter choices since the re-introduction of democratic elections in 1992. Any information you provide by way of answers to the questionnaire will form part of the overall field data and will be used solely for the purposes of this study.

Thank you for your assistance.

BACKGROUND DATA

Name of Interviewer……

Questionnaire I.D. ……..

Region [ ] Greater Accra [ ] Eastern [ ] Central [ ] Western [ ] Ashanti [ ] Volta [ ] Northern [ ] Upper East [ ] Upper West

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Name of Constituency ……

Electoral Area…….

Description of Electoral Area [ ] Urban [ ] Rural

House No…….

Time of Interview……

Date of Interview…….

Language of

Interview……

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

1. Were you a registered member of any political party during the following elections?

   1992: Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember [ ]

   2000: Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember [ ]

   2008: Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember [ ]

2. If yes, which of the following political parties were you a member?

   1992 elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PHP [ ] NIP [ ] PNC [ ] Don't remember

   2000 elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] NRP [ ] UGM [ ] GCPP [ ] EGLE [ ] DPP [ ] Don't remember

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2008 elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] GCPP [ ] Don't remember

3. Give reason(s) if you did not register with any political party.

……

……

……

……

4. How active were you in the activities of your party, especially in your constituency during the following elections?

1992: [ ] Very active [ ] Active [ ] Not active

2000: [ ] Very active [ ] Active [ ] Not active

2008: [ ] Very active [ ] Active [ ] Not active

5. Were you a registered voter during the following elections?

1992: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2000: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2008: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

6. Did you vote in any of the following elections?

1992: Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember [ ]

2000: Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember [ ]

2008: Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember [ ]

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7. Which of the elections did you vote?

   1992: [ ] Presidential only [ ] Parliamentary only [ ] Both Presidential and Parliamentary [ ] Don't remember

   2000: [ ] Presidential only [ ] Parliamentary only [ ] Both Presidential and Parliamentary [ ] Don't remember

   2008: [ ] Presidential only [ ] Parliamentary only [ ] Both Presidential and Parliamentary [ ] Don't remember

8. Give reason(s), if you did not vote in both the presidential and parliamentary elections (in the spaces aside the election years provided below).

   1992:

   …….

   2000:

   ……

   2008:

   ……

9. Which party/ parties did you vote for in the following elections?

   1992: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PHP [ ] NIP [ ] PNC [ ] Don't remember

   2000: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] NRP [ ] UGM [ ] GCPP [ ] EGLE [ ] DPP [ ] Don't remember

   2008: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] GCPP [ ] Don't remember

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10. Why did you vote for the party/parties in the said election(s)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. If you were not registered with a party, which of the following parties did you have sympathies for during the following elections?

1992: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PHP [ ] NIP [ ] PNC [ ] Don't remember

2000: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] NRP [ ] UGM [ ] GCPP [ ] EGLE [ ] DPP [ ] Don't remember

2008: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] GCPP [ ] Don't remember

FACTORS THAT AFFECT VOTER CHOICES

(MESSAGE)

12. Which issue(s) contained in the campaign messages of the political parties influenced you most in the choices you made during the following elections? [You can choose more than one option].

1992: [ ] The Economy [ ] Rule of law [ ] Accountability [ ] Transparency [ ] Ethnicity [ ] Health [ ] Corruption [ ] Development [ ] Education [ ] Human

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rights [ ] Employment [ ] Security [ ] Improving Democracy [ ] Other(s)…….

2000: [ ] The Economy [ ] Rule of law [ ] Accountability [ ] Transparency [ ] Ethnicity [ ] Health [ ] Corruption [ ] Development [ ] Education [ ] Human rights [ ] Employment [ ] Security [ ] Improving Democracy [ ] Other(s)……

2008: [ ] The Economy [ ] Rule of law [ ] Accountability [ ] Transparency [ ] Ethnicity [ ] Health [ ] Corruption [ ] Development [ ] Education [ ] Human rights [ ] Employment [ ] Security [ ] Improving Democracy [ ] Other(s)……

13. Rank the above issues in terms of their importance (Place 4, 3, 2 and 1 on issues you considered very important, important, less important and not important respectively).

1992 Elections: [ ] The Economy [ ] Rule of law [ ] Accountability [ ] Transparency [ ] Ethnicity [ ] Health [ ] Corruption [ ] Development [ ] Education [ ] Human rights [ ] Employment [ ] Security [ ] Improving Democracy [ ] Other(s)…….

2000 Elections: [ ] The Economy [ ] Rule of law [ ] Accountability [ ] Transparency [ ] Ethnicity [ ] Health [ ] Corruption [ ] Development [ ] Education [ ] Human rights [ ] Employment [ ] Security [ ] Improving Democracy [ ] Other(s)…….

2008: [ ] The Economy [ ] Rule of law [ ] Accountability [ ] Transparency [ ] Ethnicity [ ] Health [ ] Corruption [ ] Development [ ] Education [ ] Human

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rights [ ] Employment [ ] Security [ ] Improving Democracy [ ] Other(s)…….

14. Did any of the political parties introduce a new slogan during the following electioneering campaign?

1992: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2000: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2008: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

15. If yes, which party introduced the slogan?

1992 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PHP [ ] NIP [ ] PNC [ ] Don't remember

2000 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] NRP [ ] UGM [ ] GCPP [ ] EGLE [ ] DPP [ ] Don't remember

2008 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] GCPP [ ] Don't remember

16. Which party's slogan appealed to you most?

1992 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PHP [ ] NIP [ ] PNC [ ] Don't remember

2000 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] NRP [ ] UGM [ ] GCPP [ ] EGLE [ ] DPP [ ] Don't remember

2008 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] GCPP [ ] Don't remember

17. Did the messages contained in the party's slogan influence the way you voted in the elections?

2008: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

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18. Did any of the parties communicate their messages through the use of gestures during the electioneering campaign?

    2008: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

19. Which parties communicated their messages through the use of gestures?

    2008 Elections: [ ] NPP [ ] NDC [ ] PNC [ ] CPP [ ] GCPP [ ] Don't remember

20. Did the messages associated with such gestures influence your vote?

    2008: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

THE MEDIA AND OTHER CHANN ELS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

21. How free was the state of the media in the country before the elections?

    1992: [ ] Very free [ ] Free [ ] Not free [ ] Don't remember

    2000: [ ] Very free [ ] Free [ ] Not free [ ] Don't remember

    2008: [ ] Very free [ ] Free [ ] Not free [ ] Don't remember

22. From which source(s) did you receive most of your information about the issues and candidates in the elections?

    1992: [ ] Radio [ ] Television [ ] Newspapers [ ]Political Rallies

    2000: [ ] Radio [ ] Television [ ] Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Political Rallies .

    2008: [ ] Radio [ ] Television [ ] Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Political Rallies

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23. Which of the following channels of communication did you rely upon mostly in deciding who to vote for during the elections?

1992: [ ] Radio [ ] Television [ ] Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Political Rallies

2000: [ ] Radio [ ] Television [ ] Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Political Rallies

2008: [ ] Radio [ ] Television [ ] Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Political Rallies

24. In your opinion, which of the channels of communication did you rely upon mostly to give you truthful information about who to vote for?

1992 Elections: [ ] State-Owned Radio [ ] State-Owned Television [ ] Private-Owned Radio [ ] Private-Owned Television [ ] State-Owned Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Private-Owned Newspapers [ ] Political Rallies

2000 Elections: [ ] State-Owned Radio [ ] State-Owned Television [ ] Private-Owned Radio [ ] Private-Owned Television [ ] State-Owned Newspapers [ ] Billboards [ ] Private-Owned Newspapers [ ] Political Rallies

2008 Elections: [ ] State-Owned Radio [ ] State-Owned Television [ ] Private-Owned Radio [ ] Private-Owned Television [ ] State-Owned Newspapers [ ] Political Rallies

25. Did your educational background informed the choice you made at polls?

1992 Elections: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2000 Elections: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2008 Elections: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

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26 Did the constituency you reside in during elections play a role in your electoral choice?

1992 Elections: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2000 Elections: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

2008 Elections: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't remember

IDENTITY ISSUES

26. Which Ghanaian language(s) do you:

a. speak……
…

b. read…….

c. write……
…

d. understand……
…

27. What is your mother tongue?.....

28. Rate how you feel towards the following subjects (Rank from 4= Strongly Attached to 0= No Attachment)

A Religion [ ]

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An Ethnic group [ ]

An Association [ ]

Other……. [ ]

PERSONAL DATA

29. Gender [ ] Male [ ] Female
30. Age [ ] 18 – 24 [ ] 25 – 31 [ ] 32 – 38 [ ] 39 – 45 [ ] 46 – 52 [ ] 53 – 59 [ ] 60 and over
31. Educational Background [ ] None [ ] Senior High School [ ]Tertiary ...
32. Occupation [ ] Unemployed [ ] Farmer [ ] Trader [ ] Artisan [ ] Teacher [ ] Businessman [ ] Manager [ ] Professional [ ] Public Servant [ ] Other ……..
33. Personal/Individual Income level (per annum) [ ] Less than GHC 500 [ ] GHC 500-GHC 999 [ ] GHC 1000-GHC 1499 [ ] GHC 1500 and above.
34. Religion [ ] Christianity [ ] Islam [ ] Traditional [ ] Others……..
35. Region of birth [ ] Greater Accra [ ] Eastern [ ] Central [ ] Western [ ] Ashanti [ ] Volta [ ] Northern [ ] Upper East [ ] Upper West
36. Region currently living [ ] Greater Accra [ ] Eastern [ ] Central [ ] Western [ ] Ashanti [ ] Volta [ ] Northern [ ] Upper East [ ] Upper West [ ].

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