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**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**A CRITIQUE OF THE ROLES OF INDIGENOUS
COMMUNICATIVE ACTS AND THE MODERN MASS MEDIA IN
CONTEMPORARY GHANA**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)
IN AFRICAN STUDIES DEGREE**



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree in African Studies and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains neither material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

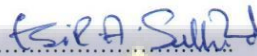
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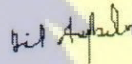
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DEDICATION

To my wife, Otuko, and to my children, Yayrator and Selasi.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACR	African Communication Research
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AGJW	Association of Ghanaian Journalists and Writers
AIJC	African Institute of Journalism and Communication
AP	Associated Press
APA	Africa Press Association
AUCC	African University College of Communication
BBC	The British Broadcasting Corporation
BGL	Bureau of Ghana Languages
CIB	Castle Information Bureau
CISP	Cultural Initiatives Support Programme
CPP	Convention People's Party
FEF	Friedrich-Ebert Foundation
GAR	Greater-Accra Radio
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GBS	Gold Coast Broadcasting System
GCF	Ghana Culture Forum
GCR	Garden City Radio
GFIC	Ghana Film Industry Corporation
GIBA	Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association
GIJ	Ghana Institute of Journalism
GJA	Ghana Journalists Association
GNA	Ghana News Agency
GNC	Ghana National Commission
GPC	Ghana Press Club
GTV	Ghana Television
IAMCR	International Association of Mass Communication Research
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IM	Indigenous Media
ISD	Information Services Department
LEKMA	Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MMM	Modern Mass Media
MSM	Mainstream Media
NCC	National Commission on Culture
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NFB	National Folklore Board
NHC	National House of Chiefs
NLC	National Liberation Council
NMC	National Media Commission
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
PNP	People's National Party
PRAAD	Public Records and Archives Administration Department

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RSF	Reporters Sans Frontières
SM	Social Media
SMC	Supreme Military Council
SNS	Social Networking Sites
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
UTV	United Television
VHF-FM	Very High Frequency-Frequency Modulation
WPE	World Press Encyclopedia



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ABSTRACT

This study is located within the growing scholarship on news-sharing in contemporary mass media channels vis-à-vis indigenous communicative acts and protocols in the Global South, using Ghana as a specific geographical entry point. Evidence showed that news and information sharing, particularly on culturally sensitive matters, in the contemporary mass media channels have drawn a critical attention of some Ghanaians in recent times. The critics appear to have misgivings about the lack of concern for the values of communication and ethics of appropriateness of communication in the modern mass media channels. Consequently, this study critiqued the notions and processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts in relation to contemporary mass media channels, and the perceived tensions, focusing on three cases purposively selected to match three themes on, “news about the dead,” “news on divulging of private information and conversation,” and “news concerning deliberate falsehood.” In view of these themes, this study attempts at establishing whether some indigenous communicative acts and protocols of news-sharing could have served as a solution to the phenomenon, or they have outlived their practicality. Furthermore, it explores how the modern mass media could be socio-culturally positioned to adequately meet the needs of society. Regarding methods, multi-dimensional qualitative approaches of data gathering were employed. Primary and secondary sources of data which include in-depth semi-structured interviews and, media texts (audio-visuals, pictures, newspapers, and internet sources), and administrative texts (press releases, letters, and memos) respectively, were used. Textual, together with critical and interpretive analyses were used. The encoding/decoding model of communication was deployed as the central theoretical framework. This model is very significant in elucidating the comprehensibility of how people make meaning through news-sharing in ‘everyday natural settings.’ This study, therefore unearths a theoretical connection between socio-cultural index of encoding/decoding dualism and news-

sharing for the purpose of examining new social media driving forces of convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation and mass media channels' ownership vis-à-vis the cultural context. The revealing finding of this study is that participants, comprising cultural experts and media practitioners were influenced by diverse protocols such as intertextual cultural knowledge, personal experiences and dispositions, professional orientation, and biases as they decoded the cases/images. Also, very insightful finding is that the media practitioners often displayed their interest in cultural awareness issues and read the cases in the preferred and negotiated modes of the encoding/decoding model. And that they were not pleased with the originators of the publications and those who shared them. Further finding is that the cultural experts, mainly, used the preferred approach to read and were also irritated by the creators of the texts and those who published them. This study concludes that indigenous communicative acts still address the communication needs of people in rural communities. The contemporary mass media channels are considered as high-class in visuals, therefore are unable to address deep-rooted societal and culturally sensitive issues. Finally, it has also been disclosed that so far as the contemporary mass media channels reach huge audiences and can captivate, the useful values of both media should be integrated to provide effective communication to the people of Ghana.



CHAPTER ONE **INTRODUCTION**

The oral communication resource available in traditional society, directs its focus on the factor of “face.” The face factor [...] naturally restrains or conditions the flow of speech in the face of authority. This becomes inevitable as society becomes more and more complex, and it becomes more and more impossible for elders to ask, “Whose son is he to be so unrefined in speech? (Yankah 1998, p. 40).

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This thesis examines a topic that has, broadly speaking, been of concern in the field of media and communications studies, namely a critique of the processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts vis-à-vis contemporary mass media channels. The thesis contributes to these intellectual endeavours from a very specific geographical entry point, namely, that of Ghana. The thesis also investigates the questions about media ethics in the contemporary Ghanaian context, and how these ethics may exist in tension with indigenous traditions. The influence of the modern mass media in relation to indigenous communicative acts and protocols of news-sharing have drawn a critical attention of some Ghanaians in recent times. Scholars and commentators on ethnography of communication, media and the African context, and media and regulations, such as Yankah (1998), Hagan (2006), Gadzekpo (1999) and Karikari (2017) have expressed their disquiet about the operations of the modern mass media in Ghana, particularly, in news and information sharing on culturally sensitive matters. These scholars appear to have misgivings about the lack of concern for the values of communication or ethics of appropriateness of communication in the modern mass media of a country such as Ghana where both indigenous and colonial influences manifest in their contemporary lives. They observe that the modern mass media have come to control and define not only the space-time boundaries of public discourse, decision-making, citizen engagement and response time to events, but that they have also changed

the language and nature of public discourse (Hagan 2006; Karikari 2000). It can be deduced from the above that indigenous communicative acts appear to address basic issues that mass communication raises in all manner of contexts. For instance, Hagan notes that in the indigenous communicative acts and media, questions are specifically asked about: Between who and whom does the communication occur? What is the purpose of the communication? What is the content of the communication? What is the context of the communication? What are the reactions, responses, and the consequences of the specific means of communication? (Hagan 2006). These questions are not different from those asked in conventional journalism. However, it seems a certain obligatory significance can be derived from these questions regarding news-sharing from the indigenous media (IM) standpoint of news. For example, in most Ghanaian communities, unfavorable news from the war front, the death of a traditional leader or a chief, et cetera, are shielded and carefully disseminated to palace authorities, close family members, the community, before the public. Even the news of the death of an ordinary citizen goes through the protocol of the closest family members (spouse, children, siblings) knowing first, following which the head of the family will cause announcement to be made to the public.

Thus, the study critically examines, explains, and interprets perceived tensions and notions pertaining to news and information sharing in the context of indigenous media and the modern mass media in Ghana. The study is to establish whether some indigenous communicative acts and protocols of news-sharing have outlived their practicality, and how the modern mass media could be socio-culturally positioned to adequately meet the needs of society. It is important to indicate that it is not the purpose of this thesis to categorically uphold, justify or exalt ethical practices of any society nor, indeed, to denounce or abhor them. In other words, the interest of this study is not to moralise over African value systems as against Euro-American value systems, regarding

communication; rather, this study is an attempt to find some of the intersections at which both systems can work in the communication dynamics of the Ghanaian society. As Rao and

Wasserman rightly observe, it is not the case that

[...] values articulated by Western theories (such as truth and non-violence) cannot transcend the cultural, geographic, or religious experiences in which they are situated and from which they emerge. Nor do we wish to construct a romantic view of precolonial cultures based on erroneous and static notions of culture that ignore syncreticism with the West. [...] cultures are dynamic, that societies undergo hybridization and that their members display agency in appropriating Western ideas and values suited to their contexts (Rao and Wasserman 2007, p. 30).

Rao and Wasserman emphasise the point that societies evolve based on social influences and each generation holds beliefs, values, and ideas within societies; behaviours and characters get moulded according to these values and beliefs, which become acceptable norms of society. In most societies of the World and, indeed, in many African societies, culture and tradition is not homogenous. Each ethnic group in Ghana has a unique historical tradition of group identity and cultural composition. Ethnic groups such as Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbane, Guan, Ga-Adangbe, et cetera,¹ have peculiar culture and traditions associated with them (Anyidoho & Dakubu 2008; Bodomo, Anderson & Dzahene-Quarshie 2010; Dakubu 1996; Sadat & Kuwornu 2017). Despite the cultural differences among Ghana's various peoples, there are some common acceptable standards. For instance, in relation to speech-making, Yankah (1991a) notes that the Akim, Bono, Wassa, Agona, Denkyira, Assin, et cetera, speak distinct dialects and have slight differences in cultural practices, but they all assign the same thoughts to speech-making, and respect the application of appropriate language as essential in the performance of some important tasks within the socio-political sphere.

¹ *Akan* comprise Asante, Fante, Akwapim, Akyem, Akwamu, Ahanta, Bono, Nzema, Kwahu, and Safwi; *Ewe* constitute Anlo, Some, Tongu, Avenor, Agave, Peki, Kpando, Ho, Danyi, Agu, Fodome, etc.; *Mole-Dagbane* cover Mamrupsi, Dagomba, Gambaga; *Guan* represent Gonja, Anum, Larteh, Nawuri and Ntsumburu, Akpafu, Lolobi, Buem, Nkonya, Likpe, Logba, Avatime, etc. and *Ga-Adangbe* comprise Ga, Adangbe, Ada, and Krobo or Kloli. There are groups such as Efutu, Awutu, Senya, etc.

From the above, it may be argued that cultural differences are bound to have impact on newssharing in the media. However, there are time-honoured traditions that serve as benchmarks for social coexistence and characterise ethical prudence, which communicative acts and the media are expected to uphold. Crisp observes that “ethics [are] a uniquely human concept and an explicitly social one, tied to systems of value and custom shared within and among groups of people” (1998, p. 132). This implies that moral obligations imposed on societies are to define or distinguish a particular society from the other. An enquiry around general questions such as the following becomes imperative to this study: Are the notions of media freedom and free speech enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana attuned to indigenous social constructions and communicative protocols?² What about the seemingly unbridled and unencumbered communicative practices as a result of the advent of new communication technologies? A critique of the roles of the indigenous media and the modern mass media in the contemporary era is required in order to deal with the challenges inferred in the above questions. This is because both the indigenous media and the modern mass media have each had to suffer from the dominance of theoretical frameworks derived from the Global North, whereby the indigenous media is somewhat displaced by the modern mass media. Interrogating the structures that had to be transformed as Africa transitioned from traditional to modern nationhood, Yankah believes that “One area that underwent modernization was communication: an attempt to supplant or pluralize the legacy of indigenous language and face-to-face communication highly cherished in Africa” (1998, p. 1). This is not to say that freedom of speech is not guaranteed in the traditional setting and in indigenous communication. Yankah again refers to a counselling session for a newly installed traditional ruler in the Kwawu area in Ghana, to demonstrate the adherence to the tenets

² The freedom and independence of the media as guaranteed under Article 162(1) of the Constitution, encompasses all forms of media for mass communication operated by both the state-owned and the private media.

of free speech in the traditional setting. He indicates that the ruler was admonished to permit free expression in affairs with of his subjects; “Let him not pronounce guilt on the speechless, if the speechless person is pronounced guilty, it’s a vain verdict” (Yankah 1998, p. 14).

Rao and Wasserman argue that there is the need to incorporate culturally relevant communicative acts in modern mass media practice, noting:

[...] the modern media are Western in origin and ethical theories one suggests for the media are bound to be those that emerge from the West. However, satellite news channels such as Al Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, and Zee News have proven that the traditionally cherished Western values of journalism are no longer viable in global journalism. [...] The complicated social and cultural composition of globalization makes it difficult to sustain a simple equation between capitalist modernity, Eurocentric cultural values [...] (Rao and Wasserman 2007, p. 33).

Rao and Wasserman’s position is very forceful to this thesis in examining the questions of ethical decisions of the contemporary Ghanaian media based on indigenous values. The challenges Yankah (1998) and, Rao and Wasserman (2007) underscore, demand that issues of indigenous and contemporary encounters and their impact on society and cultural constructs are confronted on both vertical and horizontal levels. Whereas the vertical tendency deals with bureaucratic systems (the-powers-that-be), the horizontal tendency handles society and cultural issues across board on an everyday basis.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The mass communication domain in Ghana has experienced radical changes over the last two decades in terms of media practice, private ownership of media organisations and policies about the media (Bokor 2014). The explanations for these changes may be numerous and mixed, but two reasons are instructive: the guarantee clauses of freedom and independence of the media provided in the 1992 Constitution and technological developments in the communication sector. Or, differently stated, radio and television stations and most newspapers were exclusively owned by

the state prior to 1992; technological developments in communication also led to wide spread of news-sharing and interactivity on social media platforms, websites, and so on (Sey 2011a). Thus, conventions of news-sharing and public discourse such as civility, politeness, verification, et cetera, have not been absolutely adhered to, especially on social media platforms.

In terms of scholarship in response to changes in journalistic standards vis-à-vis traditional norms, marked evidence has been the announcement of the death of Asantehene Opoku Ware II, the Asantehene, on February 25, 1999. The announcement in the media provoked public discontent, especially, amongst the Ashanti royal family because palace authorities and stakeholders had not been confidentially informed. Also, the palace authorities had not been accorded the reverence to announce the ruler's death to the public as custom demanded (Gadzekpo 1999).³ Scholars and critics questioned the essence of journalism, communication, respect for cultural and traditional values versus the right to expression and information. Gadzekpo observes that

The incident sparked a national debate on culture versus journalistic freedoms, with proponents of culture and tradition arguing strongly that journalism must be practiced in a cultural context and with a view to respecting cultural values and norms (1999 p. 3).

Among the first foreign media houses that reported the news of the traditional ruler's death were *The New York Times*, *The British Broadcasting Corporation Radio – BBC Radio*, *The Guardian*,



³ According to Hagan the reason to bar the announcement of the death of a king or traditional ruler until palace authorities do so, stem from the fact that the death creates a critical constitutional situation, which means that the people have lost their protector and the land is literally fragmented into possessions of villages and individuals. As the council deals with the constitutional crises, the time lapse becomes necessary to deal with any potential power struggle that may ensue (Hagan, 1968).

and *The Independent*.⁴ Locally, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* published the news together with an editorial which featured on GhanaWeb,⁵ followed by publications in state-owned newspapers. The Asanteman Council blamed the media for contravening traditional protocols. The media were invited to Manhyia Palace in Kumasi for interrogation. Following this, the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) issued a statement, entreating the media to “respect time-honored institutions and practices” (Faibille 1999). The Asantehene’s ‘death announcement incident’ was followed by other similar ones that drew the attention of scholars and commentators. Everyday instances, including the circulation in social media of nude pictures of a ‘Y’107.9 FM presenter, Ms. Ada, whose story of a purported abduction and sexual assault turned out to be false, abound in the Ghanaian media.⁶ The new media was particularly blamed for overlooking fact-checking and spreading false news. Nii Tetteh Kwei II, the Ga Dzaasetse, lamented at a news conference, saying:

We are here to let you know that the Paramount Chief of the Ga State has [has died]. Rumours about the King’s passing had been rife long before he was pronounced dead by medical doctors in London. [We] hope that with the formal announcement of King Tackie Tawiah's death, the rumours would die too. [The media] must learn to investigate and speak the truth at all times and not just say anything in the name of freedom of expression (<http://www.myjoyonline.com> Jan. 15, 2013, 11:21 GMT).

John Mahama, the former President of the Republic of Ghana, reminded the media to build society by avoiding sensationalism in their reportage. This had become necessary due to a bribery allegation aimed at the revered traditional ruler of Asante, Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. Mahama bemoaned, saying:

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/04/world/opoku-ware-ii-king-of-asante-is-dead-at-89.html> by Michael Kaufman, March 4, 1999; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/303645.stm> by Mark Doyle, March 5, 1999, 07:00 GMT; <https://www.theguardian.com/news/1999/mar/05/guardianobituaries.westafrica> by Cameron Duodu, March 5, 1999, 12:48GMT; <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-king-opoku-ware-ii-of-ashanti> <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-king-opoku-ware-ii-of-ashanti-1078403.html> by James Walker, March 5, 1999, 01:02 GMT.

⁵ <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/The-Ghanaian-Chronicle-5372>, March 1, 1999.

⁶ <https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/April-14th/kidnapped-yfm-presenter-ms-ada-found-recouping-at-hospital.php>

[...] look at the recent lie that [the Asantehene] was the conduit for passing bribes to the Judges and now you can't hold anybody responsible because somebody did it online and so that should warn our media [...].” The media is supposed to advance society; it is not supposed to harm society [...] (www.peacefmonline.com/pages/politics/politics/201309/174483.php Sept. 15, 2013; “Mahama condemns bribery allegation against Asantehene,” citifmonline.com/Ghana by Efua Idan Osam, Sept. 15, 2013 at 11: 52a.m).

At a congregation of the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) in Accra, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo notes:

The Media has immeasurable power to build up the confidence and values of our society and its institutions [...], media practitioners must take a second look at the power they wield and the responsibility they owe society with the view to ensuring that they do not sacrifice integrity and the future of our society for today's headline or breaking news (3news.com General News of Friday, 3 August 2018).

With the advent of the internet and online news sites, many commentators like Rockson Nelson Dafeamekpor⁷ have suggested that the regulators of broadcasting have lost the battle on unbridled news-sharing. Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor proposed to the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) to review its code of ethics to include social media practices. He contends that

The difficulty facing the GJA in matters of this nature [fake news and misrepresentation of information] is that they ought to review the GJA Code of Ethics in view of the blossoming social media business in the country and globally to take care of practices in that part of the divide of the media practice
(<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel>, 19 April 2015).

The regulatory bodies are seemingly faced with the difficulty of regulating the activities on the internet, even much more handicapped in this era of convergence, bolstering the “integration of voice, video, and data technologies” (Borchers 2001, p. 99; Campbell 1999) or mixture of media, “multimedia,” or “integrated media” (Rich 2010, p. 4). The element of national jurisdictions in the cross-border world of the internet raises debates about the appropriate regime for deciding internet disputes and the possible need for an international convention. There is simply too much

⁷ Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor is a legal practitioner and Ranking Member of the Constitution and Legal Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana and a Member of Parliament for South Dayi Constituency in the Volta Region.

information to cover in one day, making the selection of what to cover necessary (Grabber, McQuail & Norris 1998, p. 22; Nnorom 2012). Borchers believes that convergence of the media and the possibility to provide news rapidly, means there will always be an upsurge in speedy reporting (Borchers 2001). The effect of all these is, stories may not be double-checked before publishing or broadcasting. In the traditional context and among most ethnic groups in Ghana, information communication is a power transaction and follows a set of complex protocols. For instance, in a marriage announcement, the giving and receiving of drinks marks the completion of a specific communication transaction. The person, who receives the drink, by extension news, incurs certain responsibilities and must act swiftly. The entitlement to receive and release information is well-defined. The restrictions guiding news-sharing are instituted in the indigenous context and safeguarded by the traditional rulers to avert the society from any act that may defile its communicative values and make it amenable to indiscipline. This is not conceivable in many communities today due to Ghana's republican status and constitutional rule, which has limited the power-role but maintained the cultural functions of traditional rulers. This is not to say that the contemporary mass channels do not work within regulatory regimes. However, they do not labour under any such strict controls as in the case of the indigenous media. Commenting on the intricacy of media ethics and practice in a fluid technological era, O'Connor notes that:

Opening up and democratising creation and distribution of content [in a new media world of the Internet] also opened a Pandora's box of credibility concerns, as unfiltered, unverified and often untrue claims [...] were regularly asserted, swallowed whole, regurgitated and then repeated, over and over, until accepted by many as facts (2012, p. 22).

No matter the reasons for these circumstances in the media, the outcomes are obvious: the presentday media environment appears to be engulfed with 'unprofessionalism,' and presentation of opinions as fact (Ginsburg 2016). The situation with news-sharing in the modern mass media worsens when it comes to reporting on traditionally sensitive matters that need the attention and

reflection of the people. It is, therefore significant to consider how indigenous communicative norms can be made to impact on the contemporary mass media channels.

Media ownership and authorship of news poses another problem for media practice in Ghana. The fact that many media houses are privately owned and serve specific interests of certain clients signifies a takeover from the people, the ‘cultural ownership of the media.’ The media entities have fostered economic, political, religious, ethnic, and regional clienteles. These groups of clienteles influence what is newsworthy, instead of the media entities focusing on key manifestations of news as outlined by Rich (2010).⁸ Hagan (2006) argues that within a democracy, it is inevitable that the ownership and control of the media be contested by those who seek a stake in civil society and government. Thus, “in a free multiethnic and pluralistic society like ours, the spread of the media might come to reflect the demarcation of spheres of influence and the restructuring of social influence and power-relationships in society” (Hagan 2006, p. 6). In a perspective described by Hagan, without a clear cultural philosophy and agenda for the media, those who own and control the media might become unwitting allies of the powerful external forces who may negatively influence the cultural orientation of the people in terms of choices and behaviour thereby alienating the people from their cultural roots. Referring to articles in the April 27 and 30, 2015, issues of the *Public Agenda* newspaper, Karikari remarks that

[...] there is a growing tendency toward concentration and monopoly of media, especially in broadcasting. And this development is even the more insidious and inimical to free speech considering the fact that there is, as the *Public Agenda* puts it, “a nexus” of interests between business and politics (Karikari 2017, p. 5).

⁸ Timeliness (event that occurred in a day, or that happened a day before, or that will occur in the near future is deemed timely); proximity (event that is of interest to a particular community); unusual nature (out-of-the-ordinary, bizarre, rare events); human interest (stories about people with special issues, accomplishments or competences); conflict (news with elements of conflict with authorities); impact (events that provoke stories in response); helpfulness (consumer, health, etc. stories); celebrities (stories about entertainers, athletes, about people who have attained fame – good or bad); entertainment (leisure-time-oriented stories); issues or problems in the community (story containing qualities of conflict and proximity) and trends (stories that indicate patterns or shifts in issues, e.g. increase in armed robbery, social issues, etc.)

So, one observes each time and everywhere, instances of mainstream media deception in the form of opinionated ‘pay-per-post news,’ unfounded information, manipulated images and ‘hiredout views’ (O’Connor 2012). In order to make informed judgement on matters of significance to their survival, members of society strive each day to ascertain the correctness, objectivity and reliability of news items, newsmen, and media houses. The declarations of the 1992 Constitution on liberalisation of the media led to media pluralism and proliferation of private media ownership in Ghana. The Provisions of the Constitution regarding plurality of ownership and editorial point- of-view brought about two factors. On the one hand, they have encouraged individuals and groups to own radio stations, newspapers, and television stations (push=competition); on the other hand, society’s demand for news has increased (pull=patronage) (O’Connor 2012). The media networks must compete for audiences by producing news on short deadlines while under pressure to be the first to break the stories. In so doing, they engage in the creation of epidemic of fake news of which society is at a risk of being innocent enablers through, in most cases, posting and reposting of these news items. O’Connor notes that

This push and pull between speed and accuracy merely reiterates an age-old tension in news, pitting the urge to get it first against the need to get it right. [...]. Since both speed and accuracy are crucial in news reporting, separating truth from rumour and fact from fiction remains essential for maintaining trust (2012, p. 132).

As one of the studies that examine the media in Ghana, this thesis is located within the growing scholarship on news-sharing in new mass media channels in the global south. It is also situated within the overall field of media, communication, and tradition/cultural studies. Available scholarship shows that studies on the media in Ghana have placed emphasis on various categories. For example, scholars such as Agyekum (2013, 2010, 2002), and Yankah (2011, 1998) researched into linguistics and ethnography of communication, cultural foundations of free speech, and communication with contemporary society. Scholars including Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005, 1998,

1994), Gadzekpo (2008, 2001, 1999) have explored media and democratisation, education and development, and culture/indigenous communication, while palace communication, etiquettes and proprieties have been investigated by Hagan (1968) and Yankah (1991a & b). Gadzekpo (2009) has further examined media and feminist concerns. Adjetey (2000), Afreh (2000), Dzirasah (2000), Karikari and Kumado (2000) spearheaded themes on media reception, expression, ethics, and the law, while subjects on broadcast policy and regulations have been studied by Amegatcher (1998) and Anderson (2013). Elsewhere, scholars including Anyidoho (2016b), Hackett and Zhao (2010) focus on tradition, audiences and messages interface, modernity, and foundations of ethics whereas Herman and Chomsky (2002) concentrated on communication, globalisation, culture, and development. Popular media, convergence, ownership, globalisation versus glocalisation, democracy and development, have been the focus of scholars such as Nyamnjoh (2010, 2009), Oduro-Frimpong (2011) and Wasserman (2012, 2011, 2010, 2007). Cooper (2007) and Karen (2003) focus on pop culture's influence on children, and effects of violence in the media. It should be clear from the above that studies regarding the media in Ghana appear not to have dwelled largely on new media forms that deliver content by relying heavily on the internet, online media technologies, such as social media and social network platforms, and on computers, mobile phones, et cetera. For instance, specific subjects like convergence and interactivity due to advancement in technology vis-à-vis indigenous communicative forms in Ghana have not been fully studied. However, earlier studies by Ghanaian and African researchers such as Akpabio (2003), Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998, 1994) and Owusu (2012), and generally, Friend and Singer (2007), McCarthy (2010), Park and Pooley (2008), and Shapiro and Humphreys (2012) have focused on historical communication systems to unearth understandings into contemporary communication issues. These studies proposed further investigations and additions to scholarship in order to

understand the fine distinctions, conflicts, and impact in present-day communication practices. Likewise, these studies have not essentially considered the concepts of globalisation and glocalisation, regarding social identities in the media and on general notions of policymaking, legislations, and the economy. Glocalisation slightly alters the dynamics and emphasises both global and local ethos and link them, in a unique way, to media production, news-sharing and consumption experiences, social and cultural frameworks (Burgh-Woodman, 2014; Chao-Chen, 2013). Although Akpabio (2003), Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) and the rest, mentioned earlier, have proposed further investigation into the area of historical communication systems, this thesis in addition seeks to explore contemporary communication systems to see how both systems have impacted on each other.

The emergence of social media and social networks has increased the phenomenon of interactivity to boundless heights to the extent that owning a mobile phone can make one assume the position of a news producer, newscaster or reporter, news reviewer, besides being a listener or a viewer (Hagan, 2006). These are all encouraging developments as far as news-sharing and decision-making is concerned. However, how these developments can be harnessed to serve the public interest remains a huge question. O'Connor observes that "The new media world of the Internet, with its emphasis on speed and immediacy, had in some respects only made [the] crisis of confidence worse" (2012, p. 22). As noted earlier, this suggests that speed in information dissemination brings about challenges relating to verification, especially with online media and its commercial pressures. Baumann (2013) contends that the commercial pursuit of media persons has a great impact on the narratives and content they produce for society in a convergence and interactive epoch of the media. In respect of social and cultural implications, Hagan argues that "[...] public discourse will be across ethnic domains even when it is in one indigenous language"

(2006, p. 6). The inference, therefore, is that inflamed emotional discourse coupled with an enlarged media space could overwhelm and destroy society, particularly when indigenous norms of information sharing have been, somewhat, disregarded. The growing disputed concept of confidentiality, the increasing complexity of public discourse, and the deepened demand for accuracy are all matters of concern to the Ghanaian society. These are typical issues of the new paradigm of mass communication that must necessitate inquiry, principally by considering how civility can be restored into public discourse during new technologies of news-sharing and in the era of media convergence and interactivity in Ghana.

This research builds on the studies outlined above and specifically seeks to contribute to scholarship in the area of news-sharing in new mass media channels in relation to indigenous communicative acts in Ghana. The study examines three cases purposively selected; one case for each theme: *News about the dead* (Sharing of the news of the passing of Paul Victor Obeng⁹ by the *Daily Guide* newspaper); *News on divulging of private information or conversation* (Sharing of a private conversation between Ebo Quansah¹⁰ and his friend by Asempa 94.7 MHz FM) and *News concerning deliberate falsehood* (Sharing of satirical image and publications about H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur¹¹ by Peace 104.3 MHz FM Online. These cases were selected based on the public interest they generated in Ghana, leading to their extensive sharing on social media platforms, on radio and television. The cases were also selected because they were reported to the National Media Commission (NMC), a constitutionally mandated arbiter of issues in the Ghanaian media. Thus, there are official documents on these cases, therefore lend credibility to academic study such as this. Lastly, the selected cases have not been critically analysed within the

⁹ Paul Victor Obeng was a former Chairman of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and a Senior Presidential Adviser on Governmental Affairs.

¹⁰ Ebo Quansah is a veteran journalist, the editor of the *Ghanaian Chronicle* newspaper.

¹¹ H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur was the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana.

scholarship, and their examination may serve as reference points for further studies in Ghana and elsewhere in the area of media and communication.

The thesis presents a theoretical connection between socio-cultural index of encoding and decoding dualism advocated by Hall (1980, 1982) and news-sharing in order to examine new social media driving forces of convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation and ownership of media organisations vis-à-vis the cultural context.¹² In terms of proliferation of media houses and ownership, and information-sharing in the mass media, a survey on the subject shows that apart from a few studies such as Osei-Appiah (2019), Owusu (2012) and Tetey (2001), analysis on the subject has often been expressed through commentaries and observations, and by reporters and columnists.¹³ The study therefore seeks to fill the gap in knowledge of the concepts of convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and media proliferation and ownership regarding news-sharing in new media channels in relation to indigenous media in Ghana.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to compare perceived tensions that exist between the processes involved in the sharing of news and information in traditional communicative acts and in contemporary mass channels. Although the study does not seek to do a comparison of the indigenous media and new media, it will make references to how both forms of media are similar and dissimilar to establish relevant points. The specific objectives are to:

¹² “Convergence,” “interactivity,” “globalisation” and “glocalisation” are explained later in this chapter.

¹³ Kwame Karikari referred to two of such publications in the April 27 and 30, 2015, issues of the *Public Agenda* newspaper when he delivered the Public Agenda Inaugural lecture at W.E.B DuBois Centre in Accra on the topic “Politics, Human rights and the Media in Ghana” on Dec. 11, 2017.

1. Determine indigenous communicative acts in Ghana in relation to the themes (*News about the dead, News on divulging of private information or conversation, News concerning deliberate falsehood*) selected and find out how they are applied in information and newsssharing on culturally sensitive matters.
2. Find out whether practitioners in the contemporary mass channels are familiar with indigenous communicative acts and how these acts are upheld in an era of media convergence and interactivity, owing to technological advancements in communication.
3. Determine how globalisation and glocalisation affect information and news-sharing in contemporary mass channels.
4. Explore how proliferation of media and media ownership (mainstream and social media) affect indigenous communicative acts in information and news-sharing.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following questions to help fill the gaps identified in the scholarship and to expand on previous knowledge in the area of information and news-sharing. This is within the context of media convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, media proliferation and ownership, in relation to indigenous communicative acts and new mass media channels in Ghana:

1. What are the indigenous communicative acts pertaining to information and news-sharing on culturally sensitive matters and how are they applied in the area of the three themes (*News about the dead, News on divulging of private information or conversation, News concerning deliberate falsehood*)?

2. Are media practitioners in contemporary mass channels familiar with indigenous communicative acts and do they endeavour to uphold them in an era of media convergence and interactivity?
3. What impacts do the contexts of globalisation and glocalisation have on information and news-sharing in the themes selected for examination?
4. Does proliferation of media and media ownership (mainstream and social media) affect information and news-sharing, regarding presentation and representation in the selected themes and how?

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The study employs the Interpretive Model, which traces its roots to Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey (Roth & Weber 1976), and the Critical Model, developed by Stuart Hall in 1982 (Hall 1982, 1997a, 1992). Both models are encamped in epistemology of cultural/traditional and historical enquiries, political and economic perspectives, textual analysis, audience reception, and in media studies. These approaches have enabled the examination of the basis for production of cultural texts, investigation of media texts or messages (video clips/excerpts, written texts, et cetera), and study of how producers of media texts and cultural participants perceive these texts. Also, it is innovative to this study to use the Interpretive and Critical Models because from the literature reviewed, both theoretical frameworks have not been used in the study of the Ghanaian media. Thus, the research questions of this study have been fashioned in line with the approaches described above. This study has been created in three parts for examination. Each of the three parts has been featured in each of the three cases selected for analysis. Thus, *sharing of the news of the passing of Paul Victor Obeng, sharing of a private conversation between Ebo Qaunseh and his friend, and sharing of satirical image and publications about H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur.*

The criteria for selecting the cases for analysis are in two folds: because the cases had been the subject of much media discussion; and because the three cases had been reported at the NMC, a statutory institution with the powers conferred on it under Article 167(b) of the 1992 Constitution to “take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media.” Case studies are known to have worked in fulfilling systematic research obligations that justify generalisation (Gerring 2007), a notion that is also shared by White (1994) and Babbie (1992).

Part One deals with the historical and political perspectives of each case, derived or constructed from administrative-text-based data, which comprises press releases, letters, memos, and other correspondences. The cases were grouped according to their themes to give a context to each of the cases. This approach has also helped to establish specific issues raised against each selected case.

Part Two involves textual analysis of each case and guided by the purpose of this study “to critique the processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts vis-à-vis contemporary mass media channels.” The textual analysis approach is significant because media texts or messages, essentially, cannot be “viewed as static, transparent and unchanging throughout the communication process” (Procter 2004, p. 57). In other words, communication is continually consciously slanted or subjective.

Part Three examines readings and interpretations of media experts and practitioners and, to borrow Kuwor’s words, “cultural bearers and Ghanaian indigenous knowledge authorities, including chiefs, elders, [...]” (2018, p. 2) with regards to the creators’/sharers’ biases and

depictions in the selected cases. The critical and interpretive models have been applied to one-on-one field interviews conducted.

Hall's (1982, 1973) encoding/decoding theoretical framework of communication has been applied across the three parts to deduce connotations, depictions and values from the publications and the news shared. This is a social framework of communication that accommodates perspectives and systems of both production and consumption of media texts.¹⁴ This communicative concept makes room for this study to establish what happens in indigenous media and in contemporary media when it comes to disseminating information on the three selected themes. Procter notes that "Encoding/decoding' was primarily intended as a critique of mass communications research and its empirical claims" (2004, p. 58). Hall argues that the conventional theories consider that the "sender creates the message and fixes its meaning, which is then communicated directly and transparently to the recipient" (Hall 1980, p. 131), instead of seeing the recipients as active audiences. It may well be said that Hall developed encoding/decoding theory as a means of expanding on conventional theories of mass media research.

The study draws on the three parts-approach and Hall's communicative framework to interrogate the roles of the indigenous communicative acts and the contemporary mass media in news-sharing in the era of convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation of media and media ownership.

¹⁴ Media text – the basic element that fosters shot-by-shot, close reading (textual analysis) of media products. It contains codes such as shot duration, camera movement, and lighting that structure a particular act of communication, a message. The code must be shared by the sender and the receiver for the message to be understood (Corrigan & White 2004, pp. 423-424). Metz (1974a) defines text as "any finite, organized discourse intended to realize communication [...]" (Metz 1974a, p. 51). Media products are organised to enhance communication, therefore qualify as texts.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is as a result of a systematic research, dating from 2015 to 2020. The study focuses on three case studies with different themes. As mentioned earlier, these cases have been selected based on the huge public debate generated among Ghanaians, questioning the role of the modern mass media and how they reflect the traditions of ‘the people’ and serve the public interest. Also, the cases have been selected because they have been reported to the National Media Commission of Ghana. This suggests that the selection of these cases does not exhaust the list of numerous similar cases that occur daily in the Ghanaian media, especially on social media platforms. The cases were selected from the period 2010 to 2015. The period is significant because it is after the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, therefore can be described as guaranteeing a vigorous, free, and open media enshrined in the Constitution. It is also a period immediately before and within the effective study period from 2015 to 2020, when cases relevant to the study had been reported. The study is interested in the themes chosen because they emphasise the values, traditions, and beliefs of most ethnic groups in Ghana and can be said to represent Ghanaian perspectives. Although the cases studied have been limited to one case each for a theme, the selected cases are important enough to represent comparable cases. These cases are fully presented in Chapter Five.

1.6 MOTIVATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has been motivated by the notion that as humans, we are witnesses to our time and history. Thus, it behooves on us to be interested in matters important to the maintenance of the values, norms, attitudes, et cetera, of society, especially when they create the opportunity to pursue research. The following notions about the motivation for the study are significant:

1. The ‘One who has forgotten the past will not grasp the present.’ In essence, this adage connotes that a society may not progress if it is not deeply rooted in its traditions, and at the same time ready to accept change. It is important that the high-tech expediency of newssharing in the contemporary mass media does not take over the time-honoured communicative values of Ghanaians. Gitelman (2006), Park and Pooley (2008), and Shapiro and Humphreys (2012) have examined in their works historical communication systems, and arrived at the conclusion that these systems “can help identify nuances, tensions, and motivations in contemporary communication practices” (Shapiro and Humphreys 2012, p. 1152). This thesis seeks to augment this literature, regarding Ghana, in order to deepen the understanding of contemporary communication issues, and the subjects of tradition and modernity, change and continuity.
2. The media, in general, is one of the most powerful instruments in human history, representing the conscience, the sense of right and wrong, of a society. Hagan describes the media’s role in the modern time as a prophetic one. He used an Akan proverb to demonstrate this: “if the traditional soothsayer foretells the destruction of the nation, he is himself a victim of his dire predictions” (Hagan 2006, p. 13). Thus, Hagan is cautioning the media to be constructive in playing its watchdog and visionary role.

The study is significant because it has been designed to cut across social sciences and humanities discipline of communication studies. This strategy is helpful to locate the study in several possible ‘homes.’ While this thesis is focused on a particular issue, “information and news-sharing in indigenous communicative acts vis-à-vis in contemporary mass channels in Ghana,” it provides insights into matters of global importance. For instance, the study interrogates fallacies about indigenous knowledge practices and philosophies relating to indigenous communicative acts. This

era demands of the African scholar to draw parallels and reflections of African cultural inspirations from the perspectives of the global flow of ideas to make them worthwhile. In a connected and transnational world in which so many phenomena are less boundary-defined, and become comparable across contexts, this orientation is ever more urgent for a researcher in African studies, and in Africa. It is hoped that the debates and findings of this study will provide students, academics, media practitioners, communication policymakers, researchers, government officials, and other stakeholders who have an interest in this subject with the necessary strategies and tools to serve society in a more efficient manner.

With the above expositions on the purpose of the study, the problem statement, research objectives and questions, scope of the study, and motivations and significance of the study, it is now necessary to clarify certain key concepts and terminologies at the centre of this study, so as to properly establish the context in which they have been deployed.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

In a thesis about media, communication and culture, many concepts and terms take on a variety of connotations. The key concepts and terms used in this thesis are: indigenous media, modern mass media, new media (digital media), news, globalisation and glocalisation, culture and tradition, conflict and tension, and text. Also, some concepts and terms have been used interchangeably. For example, the terms “conventional media,” “mainstream media,” “modern mass media” and “old media” have been used interchangeably to refer to newspapers, magazines, radio, television, film and the internet.¹⁵ Scholars such as Curran (2000), Friend and Singer (2007) and O’Connor (2012) use conventional media and mainstream media, respectively, in their writings, while Hagan (2006) uses modern mass media to mean the same channels stated above. “New media” or “digital media”

¹⁵ “Conventional media” are also now commonly referred to as “traditional media” or “legacy media.”

have been used interchangeably with “the internet and social media (Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.)” in the same way as Friend and Singer (2007), Ginsburg (2016), Hope & Ryan (2014) and Sikanku (2011) have used them in their works. “Contemporary mass channels” has been used in this study to embrace “modern mass media” and “new media.” “Indigenous communicative acts,” “indigenous media,” “traditional media,” and “indigenous communication systems,” have also been employed interchangeably as in the writings of Claxton (2010) and Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998, 1994). Additionally, “news-sharing” refers to “information-sharing.”

1.7.1 Indigenous Media (IM)

The term, ‘indigenous,’ has been delineated by Claxton to mean “[an experience that is] local or native to the country, the people or the society concerned” (Claxton, 2010:2). So, ‘indigenous’ connotes concepts (traditions, values, norms) or people who dwell in a particular geographical location and are inhabitants of the land. “Indigenous” suggests a phenomenon that originates, it is distinctive of, and occurs naturally, in a specific space or place. It also implies that indigenous societies play key roles in creating and preserving shared memories and time-honoured activities that characterises histories of values and significances (Blake 1993). Thus, considering indigenous traditions as part and parcel of meaning-making in indigenous societies can be constructive to the communication needs of these societies.

The use of ‘indigenous media’ in this thesis implies the primary means of communication in Ghanaian society before the contact with Europeans (missionary, trade, and colonialism), and with the inception of newspapers, radio, and television. Ansu-Kyeremeh contends that indigenous media is any form of endogenous communication process, which by its institution, form and integration into a particular society, functions as an avenue for disseminating messages in a way that involves the use of values, symbolism, institution, and belief systems of the society (Ansu-

Kyeremeh 1998). Akpabio holds a similar view, noting that indigenous communication system appeals and connects with the society, therefore boosts effectiveness of the message that disseminates in the society (Akpabio 2003). This form of media was the institutional organ and the official channel of communication in most Ghanaian communities, and was protected by law. For instance, in Akan¹⁶ tradition, the *Ɛsen* (court crier or town-crier) heralded by the talking drum, horn, gong, et cetera, disseminated news and communicated with the people. Similarly, expression of information through musical instruments, storytelling and performance are aspects of mass media in the Ghanaian perspective (Finnegan 1970; Nketia 1971; Yankah 1998). In this respect, a fair balance of communicative cues (the use of a situation and emotion, body language, etc.) and speech (tone, voice inflection, etc.), and even silence, are effective to disseminate information. For this reason, bowing to an elderly person can signify many things (greeting, apology, and so on), depending on the nature of the bow. It is non-verbal but sends a message before a word is said.

Contrary to a generally held view that mass communication is a Western concept because it required technology-mediated gadgets, this thesis argues that some indigenous communication systems such as the drum language (talking drums), gong beating, smoke signals, et cetera, are mass-focused. Both indigenous and technologically-driven mass communication encodes messages, which the receiver decodes, using his/her experiences in a culture vis-à-vis current or prevailing knowledge. Yankah notes that “The Akan did not need to borrow the word ‘broadcast.’ Whereas *bɔ dawuro* literary means ‘to beat the gong,’ it also means ‘to announce,’ ‘to

¹⁶ Akan is the predominant ethnic group in Ghana. 47.5% of Ghanaians are Akan. The Akan occupy the greater part of Southern Ghana. Akan comprises various dialects: Asante, Akuapem, Fante, Akyem, Agona, Akwamu, Assin, Denkyira, Twifo, Wassaw, Kwawu, Brong and Buem (Agyekum 2006; 2010 Population & Housing Census, Summary Report of Final Results, Ghana Statistical Service, May 2012).

broadcast.’ It depicts the typical African mode of public news communication [...]” (Yankah 1998, p. 6). He holds a similar view about the manifestations of other indigenous communicative acts:

The horns and talking drums indeed constitute the nexus between the folk and mass media in Africa, since like radio, they communicate messages over long distances. In historical times, these served as strategic modes of mass communication (1998, p. 7).

In the Ghanaian cultural context, mass communication is protected with norms and protocols that recognise the overall interest of safety, societal values, and the rights of interested parties in society. Indigenous or traditional protocols of news-sharing refer to culturally acceptable and entrenched norms, procedures, etiquettes, et cetera, of communication in the traditional context that are to be “preserved and not lost” (Graburn 2001, p. 6). This suggests that the application of these protocols in communication promotes social cohesion and order. The *dawurobofo* (gong-beater), for instance, exercised deliberate care and diligence with public communication, and came out only occasionally to inform or summon the community to action. The conventional notion is that the indigenous media has limited reach and general expense associated with face-to-face modes of communication are the reasons why mass media forms are preferable in many news-sharing contexts in contemporary times. But Yankah observes that “As communication becomes more faceless, the indigenous norms of restrained discourse are bound to slacken, taken over by greater openness and candour where affront is inevitable. But this also deepens the communication crisis [...]” (1998, p. 40). Faceless communication manifests in situations where it is impractical to attach face-to-speech. For instance, during radio and television phone-ins, which are everyday experiences in a contemporary complex society.

1.7.2 Modern Mass Media (MMM)

The modern mass media represent the means by which encoded messages and information are delivered to a mass public through newspapers, magazines, radio, television, film, and the internet.¹⁷ In other words, the modern mass media are any of the various means that can reach a large group or masses of people, either through print, electronic or broadcasting. Newspapers and magazines are collectively referred to as the print media, while radio, television, film, and the internet imply electronic media. (Wimmer & Dominick 2006). Also, “the media,” refers to the main means of mass communication and other technologies that allow immediate access and contribution of content in the form of images, video, and text; the reporters, journalists, et cetera, working for organisations engaged in such communication (Lowrey 2018). Thus, Lowrey is suggesting that with the media, there is often a principal part dealing with personnel such as a newspaper publisher, and an establishment such as a television or radio station or network studio that produces content for a larger audience. It should be stated that broadcasting at all material times has involved two elements. These are content production and transmission. The two combine to constitute the broadcast medium. These also mean message that stem from a certain established source (the sender), passes through a medium (the mediator), and to a mass of diverse and anonymous audience (the receivers). Hence, the reference to ‘modern mass media’ implies mass media communication in the contemporary era such as conventional media, digital media, new media, social media, social networks, et cetera (Lowrey 2018). It appears, so far, that what differentiates the modern mass media from other communications media, for example, the telephone, is its “mass” characteristic. The above essential factors of media still exist even though their character has changed, pivoting on development of technologies of mass communication, and

¹⁷ Television and film are sometimes referred to as screen media (See Dovey 2009).

the commercialisation of information distribution. Mass communication itself is a communal activity and has not altered its close connection to culture and society even in the modern time. To comprehend the modern mass communication process, researchers seek to better appreciate both the nature of communication, such as who creates and sends the message, what is communicated, how, and with what result (Wimmer & Dominick 2006). Therefore, the media play roles as political communicators, providing information on the state and the government. The media also play the role as agents in the distribution of special types of messages to ascertain what changes occur as media 'comes between' the sender(s) and the receiver(s) of the messages. Some scholars recognise fictional entertainment such as film to be a medium for public discussion on social and political matters, therefore serving as a mass media (Curran 2000). These notions and approaches to examining the media are key to this study.

1.7.3 New Media or Digital Media

The new media presents the most radical forms of connecting, communicating, and exchanging ideas in societies, among individuals and groups (Friend & Singer 2007). It also creates a digital world with a quick and speedy access to information without any boundaries. The internet, with its associated platforms is referred to as new media. Since new media comprises elements of print and electronic media, it characterises the convergence or integration of both (Zheng 2018). The new media are of four main types: social media and networking, microblogging, photo sharing and video sharing. These types comprise platforms such as *Social Networking* (CompuServe, very beginning of emails in 1979; MySpace, 2003; Facebook, 2004, gained one billion active users in 11 years while radio hit 500 million users in 38 years; LinkedIn, 2002; Viber, 2010, over 100 million monthly active users from its 280 million global registered users; WhatsApp, 2010, about

100 million messages are posted each day), *Microblogging* (Twitter, 2006; Tumblr, 2007; Sina Weibo, 2012, has 503 million users), *Photo Sharing* (Instagram, 2010; Snapchat, 2011; Pinterest, 2010), and *Video Sharing* (Vimeo, 2004; YouTube, 2005; Periscope, 2015; Facebook Live, 2016). These platforms have enhanced the work of newspapers, radio, and television in exchange of information, ideas, views, news and gained enormous popularity and inroads in mainstream media (Ginsburg 2016; O'Connor 2012).

1.7.4 News

With reference to 'news,' Bennett (1996), Borchers (2002) and Patterson's (1998) notions are relevant. Borchers views news as "the content produced by news media" (Borchers 2002, p. 85). Borchers holds the view that news normally informs people of events that are important to them and helps them make decisions about important societal matters. Patterson explains that although journalists often view news as a "mirror held up to society," news is a "highly selective account of events. News is a construct: it is a version of reality shaped in significant part by journalistic norms and conventions" (Patterson 1998, p. 17). Patterson's viewpoint presents a question of subjectivity about what should be printed or transmitted. In reviewing scholarly critiques of news, Bennett, indicates that news has four characteristics that make it passable as a product for consumers. He posits that news is

personalised (news focusing on individual actors as opposed to institutional factors; news directing public attention to scandals, careers, personal wins and losses, prestige and status), *dramatised* (presentation of news as a TV programme, movie or theatrical production with the essentials of drama and narrative. [...] this dramatic focus of news makes it difficult to draw the line between "journalists as reporters of fact and as creators of fiction); *fragmented* (news out of focus and missing many pieces; ignoring the context of stories), and *normalised* (the tendency to filter new information through traditional values, beliefs, and images of society and to deliver the filtered information through the reassuring pronouncements of authorities charged with returning things to normal) (1996, pp. 37 & 65).

As definitions of news keep changing, it is prudent to relate to its traditional qualities (timeliness, proximity, human interest, conflict, impact, helpfulness, celebrities, entertainment, etc.). These forms of news are not, in any remote way, different from what pertains with the indigenous media. However, it is important to state that the indigenous media only releases news occasionally, thereby creating informal and other well-recognised effective means of gathering, synthesising, analysing and disseminating news and views such as mouth-to-ear transmission of information (Akpabio 2003; Hagan 2006). While gossip and rumour may be abhorred in ‘ordinary’ life, in media circles it is seen as occupying a news void. In the past and, indeed, in some communities today, there was no other means of getting information disseminated daily than by means of rumour. Mostly, the well or water collection points, markets, drinking places, hair dressing and barbering salons, and so on, are the venues for getting the news of the day, verifying, or editing and spreading it. Women played a leading role in information gathering and broadcasting (Hagan 2006). Though there are subtle differences in the conception of rumour by various humanistic scholars, Tamotsu’s classic definition will suffice here: “a substitute for news; in fact, it is news that does not develop in institutional channels,” and that “[f]ar from being pathological rumour, it is part and parcel of efforts of men to come to terms with the exigencies of life” (Tamotsu 1966, p. 62). These definitions of rumour are denominated by their speculative tendency, and point to rumour’s vague nature and universality. Shedding light on the understanding of the phenomenon and its significance in current time, Kimmel notes that “with any desired bit of information instantaneously available with a click of a computer mouse, we might expect that rumors, which traditionally have flourished during periods of news blackouts and information famines, would be a thing of the past” (Kimmel 2004, p. viii). Paradoxically, the opposite seems to be the case. In Ghanaian contemporary society, rumours circulate wildly. Increasingly, rumours

seem to arise not from a lack of information, but within a context of information spill-over. This apparent contradiction can be traced largely to the public's seemingly unquenchable need to know. As demands for greater access to news and instantaneous communication continue to grow, the reliability of any one piece of information has become that much more difficult to assess (O'Connor 2012).

1.7.5 Globalisation versus Glocalisation

As mentioned earlier under "Problem Statement," globalisation as a concept, typically emphasises the idea of policymaking, legislations, economy, and social standards, while glocalisation focuses on global and local philosophies of societies (Burgh-Woodman, 2014; Chao-Chen, 2013). In this study, these ideas are linked to the media regarding social and cultural contexts of production of news, its broadcast and consumption experiences.

Globalisation underscores people of the world interdependent on one another in respect of cultural and social dynamics, such as ideas, power of institutions, et cetera. The unavoidability of globalisation and its impacts on societies, peoples, and cultures, is an ongoing enquiry to scholars of development concepts, education, politics, and so on (Pieterse 2004). Although interrelatedness of societies and cultures may produce a collective culture, this phenomenon should also be viewed as critical to engendering uniqueness within the shared culture. The concept of glocalisation concentrates on diverse significances of societies and cultures as a representation of both the global and the local (Deleuze & Guattari 1980; Ritzer 2003). The views of Deleuze and Guattari, and Ritzer become imperative in investigating the present situation of media and news-sharing identities in the globalised world.

Gyekye (2013) provides a curious perspective in examining the concept of development, in relation to national orientation, which to an arguable greater extent, is not disconnected from

the perspective of the media. These ideas connect, in not a remote way, to the concepts of globalisation and glocalisation as they relate to national orientation and public philosophy. Gyekye notes that “National orientation must be closely tied to the public philosophy of a people. A public philosophy refers to a corpus of basic ideas and beliefs, an under-layer of values, perceptions, outlooks, fundamental convictions, and truths shared by a large section of a society” (2013, p. 159). There are two assumptions associated with development. One is the belief that development describes the political, economic, and social condition of Western countries. The other one is the assumption that any country which follows a set of policy recommendations that are thought to have led to the present condition of Western societies will attain a condition similar to them. Macamo ruled out the existence of the concept of ‘development.’ He contends that “Better still, development is an argument, a fallacious one at that” (2005, p. 21). Macamo argues that development is to be found in the kinds of policies which aim essentially at making everyday life more predictable (Macamo 2005). This implies that development should consist of policies designed to solve local problems with means that do not require more than the material and intellectual resources which people have at their disposal.

1.7.6 Culture and Tradition

Culture, tradition, and the media are interlinked, commingled, to the extent that culture and traditions sometimes determines the type of media a society should have (McCee 1990; Nyamnjoh 2009). For this reason, this section elaborates about culture and tradition. This study considers classic and contemporary concepts of culture. In terms of classic concepts, Tyler notes that culture is “the complex whole which includes, knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1958, p. 1). White, on the other hand, believes that culture is “an extrasomatic temporal continuum of things and events – tools,

implements, utensils, clothing, ornaments, customs, institutions, beliefs, rituals, games, works of arts, and language” (1958, p. 3). According to Williams, culture denotes “types of products produced by people in a particular society. These products include art, literature, television shows, films, and architecture. Culture also refers to the “whole ways of life” of a society” (Williams 1977). Both concepts of culture by Williams, are distinct but connected in their interpretation of culture as an “active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system” (Fiske 1989, p. 23), which is relevant to this study. As a result, operational aspects of culture comprise laws, instructive systems, and habits of reliability and institutionalising these beliefs and values. Putting both meanings of culture by Williams together, Gunn and Brummett claim that cultures are multifaceted structures of beliefs, values, and practices. They extend cultural components to include “food, clothing styles, ways of walking and sitting, architecture, forms of entertainment, sayings and expressions, moral and ethical norms, religious practices, and other artifacts” (Gunn & Brummett 2004, p. 22).

With regards to contemporary notions of culture, this study relies on the ideas of Gyekye (2013, 2001), Graburn (2001), Horner (1990) and Kuwor (2013). Like Gyekye and Horner, this study uses the terms “culture” and “tradition” interchangeably. According to Graburn, “Tradition was the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost” (2001, p. 6). Horner describes tradition as a reservoir. “Tradition as a reservoir is the concept that tradition is strength to draw upon, a source of historically defined identity, and a source of a sense of safety, specialness, or difference” (1990, p. 9). From these positions, both Graburn (2001) and Horner (1990) are suggesting that tradition borders on transfer of knowledge, skill, and attitude from one generation to the other. It can then be said that tradition, in general terms, refers to habits in a particular ethnic group such as cultural

institutions, ceremonies, events, arts of African ancestors, customs, rituals, folklore, belief, et cetera. Although some of these traditions may be outmoded, they are still used in some communities to counsel, apprise, caution, inspire and motivate people on what, when, where and how to conduct themselves.

In terms of culture, it “[...] is the specific embodiment of a people’s way of life in its totality” (Gyekye 2013, p. 142). Gyekye’s position on culture explains that human beings living in a particular location would put in place a social structure (values, practices, institutions, patterns of thought and ways of behaving) to direct their conduct. In this way, the need for culture can be attributed to finding solution to problems that arise when human beings come together in a society. In Gyekye’s point of view, culture has identifiable features: “it is a community creation (group products), not of an individual; it is a shared experience; culture is a social heritage; it is a learned behaviour; culture is dynamic and diverse; and it conditions the life of a people” (2013, p. 142). Kuwor’s delineation of culture fit together with Gyekye’s and it is key to this study. Kuwor clarifies that culture is “accumulated practices and experiences of a people in a given geo-physical environment through time and causation” (Kuwor 2013, p. 230).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), “Culture is a space for dialogue in our communities” (2019, p. 3). Culture comprises, among others, worldview, cosmology, philosophy, beliefs, ideas, perceptions, values (knowledge about nature and the cosmos), folklores, oral traditions, cultural expressions, creative culture (performances – dances, theatre, performance poetry, storytelling), visual arts (sculpture, painting, drawing), cultural practices (rain-making, rites of passage), et cetera. UNESCO’s definition of culture evidently implies that all forms of culture are created. This is important to this thesis

because it relates to the creation of media texts (audio, images, and words), which contain cultural elements. Mansouri (2017) confirms that whatever is created bears the ‘signature’ of the creator.

Although the above notions and interpretations of culture agree on the fact that culture consists of something that is shared and/or learned by a group of people, the content of culture varies in different definitions. It may be appropriate to deduce as Birukou, Blanzieri, Giorgini and Giunchiglia (2009) do, that “culture” is a slippery and ever-present concept.

Today, the World is confronted with cultural challenges whose scope and complexity have become apparent over the past twenty years. According to UNESCO, “More than ever, it is vital to ensure the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, in societies where new fault lines are emerging due to the combined effect of growing inequalities, the resurgence of conflicts and the increase in migration flows” (Cultural Policies and Development Culture Sector, UNESCO 2019, p. 3). Likewise, globalisation has brought about the problem of interactions of cultures. On the one hand, such interactions lead to distorting restrictions between cultures, while on the other hand, it leads to the growing need for people to be aware of one another’s cultural understandings to be able to coexist (Mansouri 2017). Thus, the relevance of UNESCO’s assertion to this thesis, lies in the fact that the media as major stakeholders in creating, safeguarding, and transforming culture, have a role to play in shaping people’s understandings and feelings towards culture of others.

Connecting culture to media and communication, Balnaves, Donald and Shoesmith (2009), Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1982) present interesting perspectives. Hall, like Gyekye, believes that “cultures have different styles of communication and different contexts that reflect their individualism or collectivism. Hall further examines cultures as ‘high context’ or ‘low context.’ Ghana and other African and most Asian countries may be categorised as having high context culture because their cultures tend to have greater conformity to group expectations. Cultures of

USA, UK, et cetera, may be considered as low context because they have the tendency of being individualistic. Hall's assertion is that in individualistic countries, competition rather than cooperation is encouraged and personal goals take precedence over group goals. This further explains that in collective societies people are born into extended families or clans that support and protect them. The individual is emotionally dependent on organisations and institutions, and individuals trust group decisions ((Hall 1976). One of the reasons for conflict in the interface between traditional protocols of news-sharing and the contemporary mass channels in Ghana could be attributed to the shift in cultural orientation from 'high-context-collectivism' to 'low-context individualism.' Hofstede (1982) identifies 'power distance' and 'uncertainty avoidance' dimensions of culture. Power and authority are a part of Hofstede's idea of 'power distance.' He asserts that in some 'power distance' cultures,

people are not perceived to be equal and they have a rightful place – they are, literally, distant from real power and are expected to show difference to those with authority. The variations in *power distance* cultures are *high power distance* (show of great reverence and respect for authority) and *low power distance* (hold that inequality in society should be minimised) (Hofstede 1982, p. 59).

According to Hofstede, uncertainty avoidance cultures such as in Portugal, Greece, and Germany tend to be characterised by a higher level of anxiety and stress than other cultures because people think of the uncertainty as inherent in life and as a continuous hazard that must be avoided. 'High uncertainty avoidance' cultures try to avoid uncertainty and ambiguity by providing stability for their members. This is done by not tolerating deviant ideas and behaviours and believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise (Hofstede 1982). Hofstede's ideas provide another consideration from which to comprehend the conflict at the interface between traditional protocols of news-sharing and the contemporary mass channels. In the view of Balnaves, Donald and Shoesmith,

Time and *high* and *low context communication* are other important dimensions that affect how people communicate. Western cultures for instance tend to be *monochronic*. Time is divided into intervals and the clock helps to regulate behaviour and actions. *Polychronic* cultures hold *relationship* to be more important than time [...] (2009, pp. 149-150).

Here again, one could see a cultural change occurring in the case of Ghana. The contemporary mass channels are always in haste to be the first to post or announce a news item thereby cherishing the use of time to standardise action. Using time to regulate what news should be released immediately and which one later has been the hallmark of the indigenous media as well, but it is coordinated significantly with what relationships the sender and the receiver must build, especially in culturally sensitive matters. Balnaves, Donald and Shoemith further emphasise that the

[...] use of communicative cues in some cultures provide example of high context communication. *High context communication* is ambiguous, indirect, maintains harmony, understates and is reserved. *Low context communication* is precise, direct, open and based on explicit statements in text or in speech (2009, p. 150).

The contemporary mass channels may perhaps be associated with high context communication. Although these channels are pervasive and closer to society it is difficult to understand the meaning of a condition, hence there is the need for explicit statements. The indigenous media could be likened to low context communication, though not ever-present in society, it has closer relationship with society in perceptive consideration of issues. The ‘high context-low context’ ideas are not simple dichotomies in the current global media environment. The concept of culture becomes fundamental in these discourses because national and ethnic identities are at stake. Thus, in this study, significance of culture is understood on the mediation process and the impact of communicative differences on interpretation.

1.7.7 Text

In simple terms, ‘text’ in this thesis signifies content found in visual (what is seen); audio (what is heard) and written (what is read). So, reference has been made to visual, audio, and written texts.

These have been further grouped into two in the study: media-based (newspaper cut-outs, radio

news excerpts, television news excerpts, computer screen shots, images, or photographs/pictures) and non-media-based or administrative (source emanating from press releases, letters, memos).

Media-based texts also include music/song and drum texts. Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis suggest that long in 1977, Roland Barthes,

distinguished between the “work,” defined as the phenomenal surface of the object, for example the book one holds in one’s hand, i.e. writing read as a completed product conveying an intended and pre-existent meaning, as opposed to the “text,” defined as a methodological field of energy, an ongoing production absorbing writer and reader together (Stam, Burgoyne & Flitterman-Lewis 1992, pp. 191-192).

The use of text here conforms to Barthes’ idea “that the text is not a line of word releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of an Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space” (Barthes 1977, p. 146), which takes on a variety of constructions, creations or assemblages that intermingle for meaning-making. In this study, the creator(s) of the pieces or author(s) of the works; media-based and non-media-based texts is/are not the main concern but the piece or work itself. Metz (1974b) holds similar opinion when he describes text as any predetermined, prearranged production meant to generate communication. Thus, he classifies films as belonging to works composed of texts and having textual systems. Texts represent a rich body of data.

Atkinson and Coffey stress the fact that “[Texts] are ‘social facts,’ in that they are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways. [...] They construct particular kinds of representations with their own conventions” (Atkinson & Coffey 2004). Metz in 1974 developed textual systems, speaks of it as “the undergirding of a film-text considered as a singular totality. The textual system does not inhere in the text; it is constructed by the analyst” (Metz 1974b). This is consistent with a deconstructionist idea of text (Metz 1974b). When media-based and nonmedia-based works used in this study are viewed as texts, then they “convey[s] a greater sense of methodological exactitude” (Nichols 1985, p. 6) or “signal[s] a desire for precision and specificity” (1985, p. 6) for analysing them. Text lends itself to analysis of language and interpretation of

discourse. So, textual analysis constitutes methodological criticism (Nichols 1985, p. 6). To a large extent, creators of artworks encode or wittingly share codes with their receivers. Textual analysis attempts to decode these works. Polan notes that “texts [...] are contracts in which spectators or readers willingly agree to relate to codes in a certain way and with knowledge usually of the workings of many of these codes” (Polan 1985). Further explanation can be reached to elucidate text’s inclusivity by drawing relationships, as Dryer (1979) and Gomery (1978) indicate, between text and context on the one hand (Dryer,1979), and as Mulvey (1990) and Metz (1974b) assert, between text and viewer on the other (Mulvey 1990).

This approach of analysis departs from the views of realist theorists, Bazin (1967) and Kracauer (1960), who draw the relationship between text and reality, and from auteur theorists who consider text and author (Bazin 1967, Kracauer 1960). In other words, textual analysis ascribes significance to the relationship constructed within the text, examining style and substance, while contextual analysis sees the meaning of the text as founded on the ever-shifting discourses that surround it at any given moment, that is, region(s) of interest, time of release, and so forth. Bordwell claims that there are four types of meaning to be found in films (texts), “referential,” “literal or explicit” meanings as well as “implicit” and “symptomatic or suggestive” or “repressed” ones. For him, a criticism of comprehension can reveal the explicit while interpretation does the rest (1989, pp. 170-171). From information theory perspective, information sharing thrives when codes intrinsic in a text are common to the senders and receivers of the information. These codes may either be buttressed or negated. Whatever the case may be, it is for the enlargement of analysis of the text. This interplay between confirmation and contradiction of text analysis has been described by Kermode as “one between credulity and skepticism” (1983, p. 24) or “between recognition and deception” (1974, p. 106; Nichols 1985). According to Stam, Burgoyne and

Flitterman-Lewis, “Textual analysis finds its historical antecedents in biblical exegesis, in pedagogical method of close reading (*explication de texte*) and in New-Critical ‘immanent’ analysis” (1992, pp. 48-49).

1.8 SUMMARY

Chapter One set forth to give an overview of the thesis by examining the purpose of the study. It further positions the study within the developing scholarship in news-sharing in new mass media channels in the global south and the general discipline of media, communication, and tradition/cultural studies. This chapter also locates the fields within indigenous communicative acts and new mass media channels, regarding convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation and ownership, where the study endeavours to make a contribution. The problem statement, research questions, scope of the study, overview of theoretical and methodological approaches, motivations, and significance of the study, stating why the study is important, and clarification of key concepts, are all presented in this chapter. The rest of the thesis is structured as provided in the next section headed, “Outline of Remainder of the Thesis.”

1.9 OUTLINE OF REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Chapter Two presents perspectives for related historical antecedents of communication and media generally and, particularly, in Ghana. It also features some ethical and professional dilemmas in information and news-sharing, raising the question of the degree to which ethics may be transferred to and transformed by a new media environment. The functions of constitutionally established and association-based regulatory bodies have been captured in this chapter in order to provide understanding of their roles.

Chapter Three reviews appropriate literature on information and news-sharing, using indigenous communicative acts, and in the contemporary mass channels (mainstream and social) in Ghana. The Chapter, also, critically analyses literature on convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation and ownership to find out how these paradigms impact news-sharing in contemporary mass channels.

“Theoretical Framework and Methodology” have been featured in Chapter Four. The Chapter specifically analyses Stuart Hall’s pioneering encoding/decoding theory of communication that reinforces the examination of news production practices, individual and collective behaviour of news-sharing, using indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass channels in Ghana. The “Methodology” comprises the research design and explanation of methods used for sampling, data collection and data analysis. The suitability of the methods to the study has also been stated.

Chapter Five focuses on the three selected cases. Textual, contextual, and thematic analyses have been employed to examine representations of perceived conflict or tension and consider the concerns, regarding news-sharing by means of indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass media channels in Ghana. The Chapter also examines the interests and concerns of media persons, and investigates the special ethical and professional ethos that influence the production and sharing of the news. Halls’s (1982) encoding/decoding theory has been applied here.

“Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations” have been presented in Chapter Six. Specifically, the Chapter summarises the key findings resulting from the earlier chapters and shows the way these findings make easy answering the research questions. The Chapter also states the implications and limitations of the study and recommends areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXTS
OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA IN GHANA

We live in a world of participatory media, a world in which we expect to be not only consumers but producers of mediated messages. That world begs new ethical questions and presents new kinds of professional dilemmas that challenge our definitions of objectivity, authorship, authority, and yes, even journalism itself (Dianne Lynch in Friend & Singer 2015).¹⁸

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter analyses historical and philosophical contexts of communication and media, particularly, in the Gold Coast and Ghana. The Chapter also features some ethical and professional dilemmas in information and news-sharing, raising the question of the degree to which ethics may be transferred and transformed by a new media environment. The functions of constitutionally established and association-based regulatory bodies have been examined in this chapter. These subjects have been interrogated in four key sections: *pre-colonial*, *colonial*, *independence/postcolonial* and *contemporary*. This chapter is important in two main ways: First, it presents an overview of the various stages of the development of communication and media in the Gold Coast and Ghana. Second, it provides a significant context to understand the sequence of events that had and/or continue to have impact on communication and the media in Ghana.

2.1 PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD: Before 1874

The pre-colonial period effectively refers to the historical phase before the establishment of European colonial rule in parts of the world, especially in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, South and Central America for principally economic and religious advantages (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2006). The colony of the Gold Coast was established in 1874 (Information Services Department

¹⁸ Dianne Lynch was the Dean of Park School of Communications, Ithaca College.

of Ghana, 1977, p. 8), therefore it is appropriate to describe the span of time prior to 1874 as a precolonial era with reference to Ghana. Boahen (1975) notes that nearly all the ethnic groups, consisting of modern Ghana had inhabited their present-day settings by the end of the Sixteenth Century. Boahen further indicates that archaeological works carried out in the coastal zone of Ghana explains that the area has been occupied since the early Bronze Age (see also Agyei-Mensah & Owusu 2010; Anyidoho & Dakubu 2008; Bodomo, Anderson & Dzahene-Quarshie 2010; Sadat & Kuwornu 2017). This section investigates how pre-colonial existence, communication and news-sharing was organised by the indigenous people and the European traders and missionaries. Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) observes that indigenous communication systems or modes existed in Ghana long before colonialism. He submits that even in an era of Western technology, indigenous communication modes still exist. In Chapter One, Ansu-Kyeremeh clarifies the term ‘indigenous’ to mean ‘what originates from a particular society or location,’ and describes the indigenous media as an endogenous communication process, which disseminates information and messages, using the belief systems of a particular society. Wilson, and MacBride and Abel’s delineations have been used here to further elaborate on the context of indigenous communication modes or indigenous media to explain how they operated in the pre-colonial era. Wilson refers to the indigenous media as “oramedia,” which is the ways of communication in the various communities in Africa (Wilson 1998). Wilson’s description is like Ansu-Kyeremeh’s, except that Wilson seems to have limited indigenous communication to the ‘oral.’ But Osho notes that, Wilson’s definition “is quite apt to demonstrate [indigenous media] as enduring, sustaining, and inevitable in the modern world as they represent the culture and tradition of the people” (Osho 2011, p. 12). MacBride and Abel believe that

[indigenous] media [...] are body languages and other non-verbal languages being used in the traditional societies for millennia for a variety of purposes [...]. The messages and ideas

are transmitted by means of itinerant dance and mime groups, puppet shows and other folk media which serve not only to entertain but to influence attitudes and behaviour (1984, p. 47).

The indigenous communication modes can be termed official and unofficial. The official and unofficial communication modes come under three broad categories: inter-personal (face-to-face) level; broader (inter-group) level and mass (inter-group) level. These broad categories may further be categorised into verbal and non-verbal communication, both of which apply to the three categories, contingent on the message to be put across and how effective it can be (Osho, 2011). The official modes are the town crier, drum (talking drums), horn, gong, linguist staff, et cetera, which are guided by laws or protocols. According to Yankah, in the case of the drummer, he/she

[...] occupies a very important position within the communication hierarchy in traditional society. The creation myth of the Akan depicts the drummer as one of the first social functionaries to be created by God. [...], God first created *Esɛn* the court crier; then came *Ɖdomankoma Kyerema*, the divine drummer, and finally *Kwabrafo*, the executioner. The court crier was created as a public advocate of peace, order and tranquility, [...]. Then came the drummer, whose duty it was to inform and educate; he was virtually in charge of the communication portfolio. The executioner's duty was to apply sanctions, thereby ensuring compliance with social norms (1998, p. 7).

It is clear from the creation myth of the Akan and the social-communication-official roles assigned to the drummer that the Akan cherish well-mannered communication as a means of creating conducive environment for progress.

The unofficial indigenous communication modes include folk songs, tales, parables, proverbs, storytelling, festivals, traditional apparels, sculpture pieces, wall paintings, architecture of palaces, and so on (Wilson 1998). Water collection points, markets, palaver huts and drinking places were also sources and venues for getting daily news, verifying, or editing information and sharing them, if needed, with appropriate embellishment. Some persons in society acquired reputation as news seekers. *Asempefo* (the news collector), not a very fitting status, was the name assigned to someone who was nosier in information seeking and gathering in Akan society (Hagan

2006, p. 2). Although this form of news-sharing may be referred to as gossip or rumour mongering, there was no other means of getting information on a regular basis. It is in this respect Wilson believes that indigenous media “are the local means of communication that remain what essentially sustain the information needs of the population” (Wilson 1998, p. 8). According to Hagan, information seekers attain positions as secret advisors and confidants to the elders, leaders and traditional rulers and were deemed as sources of reliable information (2006, p. 4). The indigenous communication modes of news-sharing functions effectively in some rural communities of Ghana in the contemporary time despite newspapers, radio, television, and new media transcending their usefulness. In the contemporary time, rendezvous for unofficial news gathering and sharing include hair and beauty salons, barbershops, mechanic shops, et cetera.

The inter-personal (*face-to-face*) level, broader (*inter-group*) level and mass (also *intergroup*) level categories of indigenous communication have verbal and non-verbal components. The verbal and non-verbal communication provide different impetuses to information dissemination (Osho 2011). For instance, verbal category (town crier/gong beater, songs/music, etc.) relies heavily on oral means of communication, while the non-verbal category (dance, drum messages, signal fires, drawings, etc.) depends on the cognitive power to communicate (Oreh 1980; Osho 2011). Songs, music, and dance as channels of communication function in ceremonies such as “birth, initiation, marriage, title taking and death” (Agyekum 2000, p. 10). Agyekum states that songs are dialogues and interactive talks in their own right. These characteristics have existed from time immemorial and almost all African traditional songs share this quality. He emphasises that “[...] Traditional and folk songs deal with current issues whether political, cultural, or social. There are certain satirical songs and lampoons which are meant to bring shame on the culprits and to discourage future misconduct” (2000, p. 10). Avorgbedor

affirms that a song performance form which used to be enacted to call attention to ill-deeds/manners in some Anlo-Ewe communities is *haló*.

Haló is [a] musical-dramatic performance popular among the Anlo-Ewe, from ca. 1912 until its official proscription in 1960. [It] is characterized by direct or comic forms of provocation, aggravation, and sung and spoken insults, which are sometimes exaggerated through dramatic enactments. [...] *haló* [...] draws on a variety of artistic channels for the sake of incisive, aggressive, and superior communication of insult and musical affect (1994, pp. 84-85 & 108).

Agyekum corroborates Avorgbedor's claim, indicating that "[Songs] also cast insinuation and innuendo and even verbal assault not only on individuals but on current governments and draw their attention to certain faults in their governance" (2000, p. 10). Similarly, Gbormittah notes that "poetic funeral songs comprise one of the means through which African values [and information] are transmitted" (2016, p. 11). Two of the songs performed at the funeral of *Dumega Kɔdzovi Anyidoho*¹⁹ by the *Haikɔtu* group of Ueta-Gbɔta in the Volta Region of Ghana serve as instances. Although primarily composed as dirges, both songs qualify as folk songs, too. Likewise, the songs have elements of folk tales, parables, proverbs, all together, and send an obvious information about "a symbiotic relationship with the community in which they live" (2016, p. 11). The texts²⁰ below focus on proverbs and parables:

Agbeme na ne wɔm	Life's occurrence has affected me
Metso avɔkpowo dome va tsi ama	I exist (live) among clothes but I'm naked
Agbeme na ne wɔm	Life's occurrence has affected me
Nugbegble tɔ vem	Nugbegble's experience is painful
Ne eyia medo gbe na ŋɔɔgbea wo	When you go, send my greetings to the forebears
Medo gbe na ŋɔɔgbea wo	Send my greetings to the forebears
Medo gbe na Aɔɔɔɔ ha wo	Send my greetings to Aɔɔɔɔ and the rest

¹⁹ *Dumega Kɔdzovi Anyidoho* also known as *Kɔdzovi Nugbegble* was a co-founder of the Ueta-Gbɔta *Haikɔtu* Performing Ensemble and held very important positions as its *Henɔ* (poet-cantor) and *Azagunɔ* (master drummer) (Gbormittah 2016). *Kɔdzovi Nugbegble* "was the last great *Azagunɔ* and *Henɔ* of his generation" (Anyidoho 2015, p. 9).

²⁰ The songs have been recorded and transcribed by Francis Gbormittah.

The information or messages about situations relating to political, health and economic, and places, are disseminated via song, also. Historical and political experiences are emphasised in the texts below:

Yevuwo minyaa ezu nu mi kpe	The advent of the Whites has brought us distress
Ghanatowo, eya dzi mee miele	Ghanaians, this is what we seek
Nuya mi dzia, eyae mi kpɔ	The misfortune we seek for, is what we got
Wo ga gbɔ na kple ame beble	There they come with deceit
Be mi tiam ne ma yi Assembly	That elect me to represent you in parliament
Ne ma dzra dua ɔ na mi	So I bring development to the town
Eyi Assembly, Ueta ya me nyonyom o	He's in parliament but development eludes Ueta
Aleka koe dua ga le	The town hasn't seen development

The communicative roles indigenous media play in most African societies have been acknowledged by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), disclosing that “[...] the UNESCO Commission on Communication recognises the age-long introduction of indigenous media and their relevance in contemporary world” (Osho 2011, p. 16).

Another subject worth exploring is the rejection of African indigenous communication practices as examples of mass communication by the West. Thus, there were hardly any studies along these lines until about three decades ago (Osho 2011). This was, probably, because mass communication was viewed as a technologically-imbued and negotiated, avant-garde, and western phenomenon. Ong's suggestion that there are three forms of media may, perhaps, be a telling revelation on the Western position that there was no form of mass communication in Africa. Ong has identified the oral (orality), written and electronic media as three forms of media. The oral form of media occurs on face-to-face basis between the sender and the receiver of the message, both of whom rely entirely on vocalisations and body movements to express thought; whereas in written media, the source and the receiver of the message are removed from each other. In this case, the receiver of the message does not know its context immediately and directly. The written

form also requires a text-processing capacity differently from what pertains in oral cultures. The electronic media reunited the source and receiver in a distinctive way from in oral societies. Some of the factors of the distinction are the fact that the audience are larger in scope and more diverse in composition. The electronic form of media also allows audience to encounter events that they are far removed from (Ong 1982). But Osho contends, there are mass level or inter-group level of indigenous media or communication prior to the advent of newspapers, radio, television, and films, which are colonial legacies (Osho 2011). The town-crier, for instance, was an institutional organ of mass communication in most Ghanaian societies, usually heralded by the drum, horn and gong.

Yankah notes that

The drummer, like the information officer, is the society's alert signal, the early warning signal of impending crises: war, fire. He informs but also mobilizes the people to resolve or fight crises. [...] That is why it is a prohibition to provoke the drummer while he performs his communication duties. Significantly, the drummer is entirely the king's prerogative, a stateowned media functionary, unavailable to any other social personages (1998, pp. 8-9).

The gong-beater (or *dawurobofo* in Akan), like the drummer, was an official or prescribed means of mass communication and was guided by protocols and laws. As indicated in Chapter One, *bo dawuro* implies "to broadcast" (Yankah 1998, p. 6).

The integrity in, and ethics of, communication such as honesty, truthfulness, accuracy and primary rights to speak, diversity of perspective and open-mindedness of dissent to attain a well informed and conscientious conclusion necessary to a cultured society, were strictly adhered to in the context of indigenous communication (Osho 2011). The Akan recognise the responsibilities that complement free speech. Therefore, provisions have been made for these in the indigenous communication setting. Agyekum notes that "There are varieties of verbal taboos in Akan that were traditionally adhered to. They include *ntam*, 'reminiscential oath,' *duabo* 'imprecation,' *nsedie*, 'self-imprecation,' *atennidie* 'inventives' and *ammodin*, 'unmentionables.'" Agyekum further clarifies that "*Ntam* is a form of oath that involves an evocation of the past unpleasant

experiences of a people and the state.” *Ntam* serves as a means of preventing people from making comments about certain events that are likely to create public disquiet or dishonour to the society. *Ammodin*, is another means of imposing responsible speech. “[These verbal taboos] are to be avoided because they are considered distasteful and indecent for normal linguistic usage. *Ammodin* expressions center around [...] death, pregnancy excrement, sexual organs, dreadful diseases like leprosy, barrenness, tuberculosis, epilepsy, insanity, [etc.]” (2009, pp. 4-5; see also, Agyekum 1996 and Rattray 1927). *Ntam* and *ammodin* are particularly relevant to this study as both appear to serve the purpose of integrity in communication.

The indigenous media appear to strictly conform to cultural traditions, language, and activities of society, and seem to offer instant response, making communication well-ordered and cost-effective too, compared to the modern mass media (Osho 2011). For instance, the gong-beater or town-crier, in some cases, provide answers to questions instantly. The indigenous media is characteristic in many ways, some of which have been mentioned earlier. The other specific aspects of the indigenous media are the roles they play in contemporary time as alternative sources of information for ordinary people. The indigenous media also serve as a means of authenticating news received through modern mass media sources, especially for the masses. As an agent of the traditional ruler, the town-crier’s message is deemed to have credibility. This is what, according to Osho, McLuhan describes as the “medium is the message” (McLuhan 1964; Osho 2011). It therefore suggests that most African societies have confidence in their traditional leadership (rulers, clan heads, etc.) and rely on information emanating from the palace. It is worth noting that a gong-beater does not always bear the message itself. Instead, he calls together the people to a meeting venue for the message to be delivered by the traditional leader or a senior palace authority. Thus, importance or gravity of the news determines whether the gong-beater delivers it or the

traditional ruler himself or his direct representative. Okyeame Boatey, Chief Linguist of Manya Krobo in Ghana, and the Kabiyesi Oloogunbe Ajinese I, Aseyin of Iseyinland of Oyo State in Nigeria, indicated that they still use the gong-beater to disseminate news in their respective communities in spite of the strong presence of the modern mass media.²¹ This confirms Osho's assertion that some traditional rulers across Africa, even in big cities, still use town criers to reach the people because the mass media and the new media are elitist (Osho 2011). It may be deduced therefore that African traditional rulers and societies are neither totally traditional nor entirely modern. Osho identified some challenges the indigenous media encounter in contemporary times. He recognised the extinction of African languages, the domineering nature of the modern mass media, issues of globalisation, the breakdown of the social and value systems in Africa, lack of pride in African tradition and its values as some of these challenges (Osho 2011). In terms of languages, English as a colonial vestige and the official medium of communication in Ghana threatens the speaking of indigenous languages and their development. Despite the domination of English in daily affairs of Ghanaians, Adika observes that

English in Ghana, as an outer circle phenomenon, has been travelling the delicate expansionist path of innovation, adaptation, and maintenance of standards over the years. The distinctive Ghanaian linguistic and cultural colouration continues to permeate the English language on all levels, including vocabulary, idiomatic usage, and pronunciation (2012, p. 156).

There are over fifty indigenous languages in Ghana out of which the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) operates with eleven.²² The eleven are also taught in schools and are used on radio and television, especially by the public broadcaster, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) (Dakubu 1996; Obeng 1997; see also Ghana Broadcasting Study Report 2005 &

²¹ Personal interviews with both traditional leaders in Odumase-Krobo on December 8, 2016, and Iseyin, Oyo State in Nigeria on Jan. 17, 2017. Although Iseyin is not within the jurisdiction of data collection for this study, the researcher took the opportunity to talk to people about the thesis when he was on a fellowship in Nigeria.

²² Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Ewe, Mfantse, Ga, Dangme, Nzema, Dagbani, Dagaare, Gonja and Kasem.

www.bgl.gov.gh/about-us.php). It may be right to say that teaching these languages in schools, and using them on radio and television have not achieved much because they are still not popular among the citizenry (Obeng 1997). This may be as a result of the dominant use of English, a foreign acquired language. The challenge of appropriating foreign languages for daily activities is not peculiar to Ghana. To curtail the onslaught of the pervasive modern mass media and the impact of globalisation on the cultures and the value systems of indigenous peoples, some indigenous artists in the Global south have intervened by producing home-grown media content for the modern mass media (Ginsburg 2016). These home-grown media productions have become, according to Ginsburg, “a particularly robust form of contemporary cultural production, expressive of longstanding concerns shared by indigenous people across the planet to gain control over their representations” (2016, p. 83). Ginsburg refers to the feats of these cultural media productions as providing a “media sovereignty.” He applied “sovereignty” in the legal sense of “possession of [political] authority over an area [or] over a land and populace to the possession of technical, cultural, political, and creative control over media produced by indigenous peoples and about their lives” (2016, pp. 82-83; see also Ginsburg 2019; Raheja 2013). This approach may possibly not be enough to confront the global media ‘attack’ of other minority ideologies, values, and beliefs. However, it is an intervention that may influence the world significantly.

Having discussed the structure and values attached to indigenous media systems in the precolonial period, it is appropriate to now examine the advent and workings of the modern mass media in the pre-colonial era.

Newspapers, radio, television, and film, comprising the modern mass media, arrived in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) at different times. Newspapers were the first to be introduced in 1822 with the publication of *The Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer* by Sir Charles

MacCarthy²³ in Cape Coast. This newspaper was edited by Alexander Gordo Laing and was in circulation until 1824, after the British forces were defeated and MacCarthy killed by the Ashanti in the Battle of Nsamankow. The aim of the newspaper was to provide British merchants in the Gold Coast (Ghana) with economic and commercial information, as well as to disseminate news concerning Britain and the West African colony (Anyidoho 2016; Hasty 2005). Bourgault and Eizlini also submit that initially these newspapers were operated as newsletters owned by Europeans for the readership of merchants and civil servants in the colony. However, soon after the newspaper publication control of Europeans, indigenous Africans embarked on ownership of newspaper houses (Bourgault 1995; Eizlini 2004). The first indigenously owned newspaper was *The Accra Herald* by Charles Bannerman (1857-1859). Although Bannerman's paper had small readership, comprising mostly of African elites,²⁴ it heralded publication and editing of other indigenous newspapers such as *Gold Coast Independent* (1918-1955) by J.J. Akrongi and D.G. Tackie. Complementing these newspapers, were the few started by Christian missionaries such as the *Christian Messenger and Examiner* in 1859 (Bourgault 1995; Kitchen 1956).

Colonial and post-colonial events regarding the media appear to be interdependent. If for nothing at all, neo-colonial activities almost place them in a symbiotic relationship. What the next two sections attempt to do is to discuss antecedents of both periods at their distinct and defining points, regarding communication and the media.

2.2 COLONIAL PERIOD: 1874-1956

The “colonial period” denotes the epoch Europe occupied, partitioned, and governed parts of the world, including Africa (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2006). The justification for selecting 1874 to

²³ Sir Charles MacCarthy was governor of the British Gold Coast settlements.

²⁴ This newspaper was for the African elite community because Charles Bannerman was a son of British lieutenant governor and a member of the Asante royal family.

1956 as the colonial period in the Gold Coast lies in the historical activities of the era outlined in the subsequent paragraph.

The Dutch left the coast of what is today the nation of Ghana in 1870. In 1874, the coastal regions were declared a British colony. The defeat of the Ashanti in the Third Anglo-Ashanti War²⁵ in the same year gave the British impetus to occupy the Ashanti territories. The Gold Coast Colony was established on July 24, 1874, constituting the coastal regions and the Ashanti territories. The Northern part of Ashanti, later to be called the Northern Territories became British protectorate in 1902. Thus, the coastal regions, Ashanti territories and the Northern territories became a single political group or what was referred to as the crown colony or as the Gold Coast. The present boundaries of Ghana were created in 1956, after British Mandated Togoland (now the Volta Region) voted in a referendum to be part of the Gold Coast (Boahen, 1975; Information Services Department of Ghana, 1977). From the above account, it may be argued that colonisation in Ghana was not exclusively about exploitation, hostility, and conflicts. Rather, colonisation also paved the way for socio-economic growth of a cohesive country that would be realised at the time immediately before independence in 1957 (Information Services Department of Ghana, 1977).

The media in the colonial era has been described as an effective force in terms of dealing with political and socio-cultural issues. The African elite continued to use the media, as in the precolonial period, to communicate among themselves and to send information to the populace (Faringer 1991; Gadzekpo 1997). Newspapers still dominated the earlier part of the Colonial Period as the only form of the modern mass media. The ownership of newspapers by individual Africans and Christian missionaries continued to feature with the establishment of a few such

²⁵ The Anglo-Ashanti Wars were a series of five 19th-century conflicts. The Third one occurred from 1873 to 1874. British General Garnet Wolseley led 2,500 British troops and several thousand Indian and African troops against the Ashanti Empire. For the first time, the British defeated the Ashanti and abolished the Ashanti Empire.

newspapers (Ainslie 1967). Newspapers established by the Christian community within the period include, *Christian Messenger* (1883); *Gold Coast Methodist*, later called *Gold Coast Methodist Times* by English Methodist Missionaries, W.T. Coppin and W.M. Cannell, and an indigene S.R.B. Attoh Ahuma (1886-1898); and *Gold Coast Catholic Voice* (1926-1927).

Individual ownership of newspapers comprised, *The Gold Coast Times* by James Hutton Brew (March 1874-November 1885); *Gold Coast Assize* by W.C. Niblett, an English Lawyer (Nov. 1883-Feb. 1884); *Western Echo* by James Hutton Brew, J.E. Casely Hayford and Timothy Laing (Nov. 1885-Dec. 1887); *Gold Coast News* by W.C. Niblett (1885); *Gold Coast Chronicle* by Timothy Laing and J.E. Casely Hayford (Sept. 1890-Jan. 1896); *Gold Coast People* by J. Mensah Sarbah (1891-1898); the *Gold Coast Independent* was revived by Dr. Chas. Easman, A. Cole and J. Bright-Davis in March 1895 and was in readership until January 1898; *Gold Coast Express* by Timothy Laing (March 1897-March 1900); *Gold Coast Aborigines* by Attoh Ahuma and K. Egyir Asaam (Jan. 1898-Jun. 1909); *Gold Coast Advocate* by A. Boi Quartey-Papafio (March 1904-Jan. 1914); *Eastern Star and Akwapim Chronicle* by Timothy Laing (Aug. 1913-March 1925); *Gold Coast Spectator* (Aug. 1927-1955); *Gold Coast Daily Telegraph* was established in August 1928; *The Ashanti Pioneer*, now *The Pioneer* by John and Nancy Tsiboe (1939-1962); *Statesman* by Edward Akuffo Addo (1949); *Sunday Mirror* (1953), which later became *The Mirror*; and the *West Africa Times* by J.B. Danquah was published between 1931 and 1935 (Jones-Quartey 1968, 1959, 1965; Sampson 1934).

It is worth noting that cinema as an impressive new example in the development of the modern mass media in the nineteenth century was demonstrated world-wide within a few years of its invention in 1895. Thus, as newspapers were being established and operated, films were also experienced in the Gold Coast for the first time during the First World War (1914-1918) when

silent movies were screened in five cinemas in Accra and Sekondi. Thereafter, the British colonial power founded the Gold Coast Film Unit in 1948 (Hesse 1995; Ukadike 1994).

While *The Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer* was targeted at promoting literacy, encouraging rural development, and quelling the political aspirations of native elites by securing their loyalty and conformity with the colonial system, the indigenously-owned papers were critical of the colonial government, denouncing specific officials and opposing policies, an overall strategy by native elites to gain political power (Hasty 2005, p. 34-35, 78, and 167). The indigenously-owned papers began to circulate beyond the elite circles into local communities, to traditional leaders and to the ordinary urban population. Although, the British colonial authority indulged the local news media in the Gold Coast, it is, however, arguable to say that there was total media freedom as a policy direction (Ainslie 1966; Barton 1979).

The involvement of Kwame Nkrumah in the media cannot be understated. The *Accra Evening News* was established in 1947 by Nkrumah. It was the mouthpiece of the Convention People's Party (CPP), and was mainly written by party officials (Hasty 2005). As Eizlini points out, "Newspapers in Ghana were established and run, not by professional journalists but by professionals in other areas, such as medicine, law, or education. They used the press to further their messages in the hope of influencing others to rally to their nationalist cause" (2004, p. 46). Nkrumah together with Industrial Development Corporation and local merchants formed the Guinea Press Group, which renamed the *Accra Evening News* to the *Ghana Evening News* (Ainslie 1966). In 1950, the London Daily Mirror Group established *The Daily Graphic* with Cecil King as its head. This newspaper maintained a professional journalistic stand by encouraging, somewhat, impartial reporting and political objectivity. The colonial period witnessed the concept of party press. Newspapers were published and owned by political parties. This was particularly

during the anti-colonial campaign period between the 1940s and the 1950s (Ainslie 1966). Karikari notes that

Though the [United Gold Coast Convention] UGCC, the first political party to propose colonial freedom as its objective, did not have its own newspaper, each of four of the Big Six published a newspaper or two: Ako Adjei (The African National Times), Akufo Addo (The Statesman), J.B. Danquah (Several Newspapers during his adult life. [...] Danquah and Nkrumah published the most newspapers among the nationalists of their time (Karikari 2000, pp. 4-5).

The next form of the modern mass media that was introduced in the Gold Coast was radio on July 31, 1935, following newspapers and films. Station ZOY or “Operation ZOY” was established in Accra by Governor Arnold Hodson of the Gold Coast, primarily, to “transmit BBC programs to some three hundred colonial residents and privileged native elites” (Ainslie 1966, p. 26; Wells 1997). Radio was government-owned and controlled. Aside ZOY, no other independent radio system was allowed to operate. ZOY’s broadcast was later relayed to key centres such as Cape Coast, Koforidua, Sekondi and Kumasi (Eizlini 2004). This means that radio was restricted to major towns due to either technological challenge or colonial agenda to control its reach in order to monitor information flow. Radio transmission was carried out through re-diffusion boxes. According to Hagan, the re-diffusion box was seen as a novelty of human creation when it reached the Gold Coast. He further explains that the box was a mechanism, not for dialogue with the public but for information, entertainment, and edification in a one-way direction (2006, p. 5).

Indeed, there was no question about radio’s use for political purposes by the colonial government. Karikari indicates that “one of the objectives for radio was to combat the nationalists’ intelligentsia’s press whose publications [Governor Arnold Hodson] considered to be ‘communistic’ propaganda” (Karikari 2017, 7). It was along the lines of the Colonial Government’s grip on expanding news media that it created the Gold Coast Broadcasting System (GBS) as a department in 1953 in Accra (Ainslie 1966; <https://www.gbcghana.com/>).

The news media in the Gold Coast have played vital roles in upholding national identity and unity, and in promoting political discourse. Before independence, the news media contributed to the independence struggle by giving expression to rampant campaigns leading to independence in 1957.

2.3 INDEPENDENCE AND POST-COLONIAL PERIOD: 1957-1991

The “postcolonial period” refers to the era following the colonial period and exemplifies how colonial tendencies have impacted the actions of people in former colonies (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006). London and Shohat describe ‘postcoloniality’ as a term that deals with concerns arising from colonial relationships and their repercussions to colonial societies, across historical epochs to the present time (London 2003; Shohat 2000). This thesis defines the period from 1957 to 1991 as post-colonial period of Ghanaian history in line with Hart’s assertion that “from the moment of [Ghana’s] independence under Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 through the military coup of Jerry John Rawlings in the early 1980s – is conventionally defined by the series of coups and changes in political leadership that characterized early postcolonial state politics” (2013, p. 375). Also, 1957 to 1991 represents the period of the First, Second and Third Republics, which were short lived, and are distinct in terms of media practice. It is, therefore deemed appropriate and convenient to separate this period from the Fourth Republic, which started in 1992. The Fourth Republic has been termed the Contemporary Period in this thesis in order to deal with issues, regarding the media in Ghana specific to this period.

After attainment of independence, there was the inclination of many African states to embrace colonial governance styles. This became indicative of how post-independent governments carried-on with control of the news media. Eizlini notes that “If the African press was, to a large extent, under the control of the colonial authorities, the press after independence

did not enjoy much liberalization at the hands of indigenous African leaders” (2004, p. 51). Newspapers, radio, and television were seen as an ideological tool to promote national identities and uphold the policies of political leaders at the time. As a result,

Local histories of colonial authoritarianism, anti-colonial nationalism, and postcolonial instability inform the terms and techniques of political contest between the state and oppositional groups, an antagonistic discourse played out in the public sphere between the state press and the private press (Hasty 2005, p. 70).

Somehow, newspapers enjoyed some form of indigenous and individual ownership which made them independent from government control compared to the electronic media. “Although independent leaders were viewed as liberators, some of them had the propensity to control the media and prevent opposing views from being heard (Hachten 1971).” According to Ainslie, Nnamdi Azikiwe,²⁶ said that “there is no better means to arouse African peoples than that of the power of the pen and of the tongue” (1966, p. 34).

Kwame Nkrumah as the President of Ghana chose a governance style that controlled and used the news media for ideological purposes. This reflected in the way he viewed the news media. According to Hasty (2005), Nkrumah saw media as an instrument of state authority, using newspapers as propaganda tools to build national unity. He orchestrated a state information apparatus through a hierarchical network of institutions, including the Ministry of Information, Ghana News Agency, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, and his own press, Guinea Press, Ltd., that published two daily newspapers, one free weekly, and several specialised publications. Collins observes that “When Ghana became fully independent in 1957, Nkrumah expanded and Africanised the film and broadcasting sector” (2005, p. 19). The radio transmitting power of the Accra Station was increased one-hundred-fold from wartime level and became part of the state

²⁶ Nnamdi Azikiwe was a Nigerian journalist and an African nationalist. Like Nkrumah in Ghana, he became the first President of Nigeria in 1963.

monopoly called the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). So, the Colonial Government's GBS was replaced with GBC. The Gold Coast Film Unit evolved into the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC) and produced newsreels and government propaganda films. Nkrumah saw the important role the media could play in advancing his Pan-African philosophies and in diffusing ideas and knowledge of people (Collins 2005). Nkrumah's control of the news media was not limited to maintaining a large state-owned media system, but also included banning newspapers that were critical of his administration. For instance, *The Ashanti Pioneer* faced consistent harassment by the Nkrumah government in 1962, leading to incessant censorship cases and detention of the editors and eventual shut down (Karikari 1998; see also Ainslie 1966; Barton 1979; & Faringer 1991).

Not happy with portrayal of Africa in the foreign media, Nkrumah set up the Ghana News Agency (GNA) and launched it on 5th of March, 1957, a day before Ghana's independence as a news hub for Ghana and Africa, to provide news representative of the African situation to counter negative news of other networks, particularly, the Western media. The Agency's mandate was to provide more balanced representation of local, national, and continental news (Hasty 2005). GNA as a media hub, was to be a force to reckon with, serving as a reference point and a centre for training in West Africa. As expected, GNA was also used by the Nkrumah government to control news production and circulation to the people through its district and regional offices, and censoring news meant for its international bureaus for consumption of the world (Barton 1979). The Agency was faced with predicaments that have been attributed to lack of financial support by successive governments after Nkrumah's removal from office. Lack of funding for the Agency has been ascribed to its seeming political association with Nkrumah. Some observers also believe that lack of funding for the Agency in recent times has been due to the influx of radio stations and

other technologies used for accessing news.²⁷ GNA used to pride itself with correspondents nationwide, in parts of Africa and Europe, as well as the United States of America. News bulletins were prepared for mainstream media and foreign embassies (Collins 2005). To satisfy the need of educating and training journalists, the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) was established in 1958, with the mandate to inculcate in journalists, African ideals, and viewpoints in their practice of journalism (GJA 1995).

Nkrumah was determined to see the liberation of African and other Third World countries. So, he initiated Radio Ghana's External Service in 1961 to broadcast propaganda as well as solidarity messages in Arabic, English, French, Hausa, Portuguese, and Swahili to countries fighting for independence and self-rule all over the world, especially in Africa (Hasty 2005).

Next was the inauguration of Ghana Television (GTV) on July 31, 1965. A change over from black/white to colour television transmission started in 1985 and completed in 1986 (Duodo 1995; Wells 1997). Television improved the structure of information and news-sharing, making it possible for people not only to hear presenters but also see their faces, actions, and emotions. Social life changed with this means of communication. For instance, as radio could be listened to while carrying out other activities, television required viewers to be seated and fixed in front of it. Like radio, television was state-owned, urban-based and was not endowed sufficiently to gather news from the rural areas or broadcast news to the rural people, therefore "television would be used to increase the government's control of information" (Eizlini 2004, p. 62). Hasty (2005) indicates that Nkrumah stressed the need to use television to educate citizens for national development rather than merely entertain or generate profit.

²⁷ Report on the GNA at a thanksgiving service to climax its 60th anniversary, by Sarah Ofori, GTV24, December 31, 2017.

The news media environment after the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 to the current democratic dispensation had been rather unpredictable. This is because the country had been ruled by military governments as well as democratic republics, resulting in the media being handled with two basic ideologies and mindsets: radical censorship and democratic indulgence. According to Bourgault and Faringer, the military regimes “[had] little need and perhaps even less desire for an open media system. [...], civilian rule under the 2nd and 3rd Republics attempted to liberalize the media environment, but neither administration lasted long enough to entrench those freedoms” (Bourgault 1995; Faringer 1991, p. 22). However, the National Liberation Council (NLC) of Lt. Gen. Joseph Ankrah and Lt. Gen. Akwesi Afrifa, promoted open-door policy on information sharing and objective assessment of the government. Hasty (2005) explains that the NLC took a more libertarian approach to the news media: releasing independent journalists from prison, closing the more blatant instruments of state propaganda, and lifting forms of censorship and bans on foreign journalists. However, most media were then owned by the state and therefore obliged to change their editorial positions.

Communication and media participants such as M’Bayo and Onwumechili (1995) justify the use of the media as a tool for nation-building, following independence because the colonial masters had obliterated African culture, social life, and economic fortunes through colonialism. Both believe that engaging the media in the manner described here will reflect the attributes of journalism that has the development of independent nations at heart. Eizlini’s summary of Wilcox’s (1977) assertion on development journalism is worth noting:

[...] there are four important roles and responsibilities of the press in post-colonial Africa: nation building, national unity, mass education and offering constructive criticism. As such, development journalism is quite tightly aligned, not only with the government’s goal to develop their society, but with the government itself. This closeness between the press and the government, and, by extension government officials, is often decried by Westerners as being ultimately damaging to the autonomy of the press as well as being contrary to values of an independent press (2004, p. 52).

Following general elections and institution of the Second Republican Constitution, Kofi Abrefa Busia was inaugurated into office in October 1969 as the Prime Minister of Ghana. Upon assumption of office, the government annulled regulations that suppressed media freedom including the newspaper licensing law. This gave the Busia government unprecedented positive image of press-government relationship since independence. The National Redemption Council (NRC) of Gen. Ignatius Kutu Acheampong assumed power in January 1972, while the Supreme Military Council (SMC) of Lt. Gen. Fred W.K. Akuffo took over power in July 1978. Both regimes reinstated strong control of the media witnessed under Nkrumah by reintroducing the licensing laws and restriction of publications against the government (Faringer, 1991).

The Third Republican Constitution ushered in Hilla Limann of the People's National Party (PNP) in September 1979, after a brief stay of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings through a coup d'état in June 1979. Twumasi notes about the Constitution that it was the first-time provisions were made for freedom of the press and the right to freedom of expression (Twumasi 1981). However, on December 31, 1981, Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings took over power again and formed the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), jettisoning the new constitution of 1979.

Rawlings, like Nkrumah, used the news media primarily to cultivate his revolutionary principles. For Rawlings to fully achieve this goal, the state news media were controlled, their editorial contents were deliberately changed to conform to the ideals of the regime, and some editorial staff were dismissed or transferred. The licensing law which made it compulsory for registration of newspapers was brought back (Karikari 1998). According to Karikari the Castle Information Bureau (CIB) was created mainly to serve as a “propaganda unit, and a watchdog to ensure press subservience” (1998, p. 193). New radio stations were also opened by the GBC to

reach the public in other parts of the country with the messages of the revolution. For instance, the *URA Radio* in Bolgatanga was established in 1985, *Accra FM Radio* in 1986, and *Apam FM* station commissioned in 1987. With a support of the German Government, GBC established VHF-FM named *Radio 3* in 1986, which covered Accra and Tema metropolitan areas (Hasty 2005). The World Press Encyclopedia (WPE) states that as a common feature there were “repressive laws, public intimidation and harassment, bans on oppositional publications, and arrest and detention of journalists” (2003, p. 369). In the 1980s, Rawlings held a tight grip over a state-owned media apparatus (including radio, television, and two daily newspapers), churning out a continual supply of populist propaganda heralding the triumphs of national unity and development under the ruling party PNDC. During this period, most private media were either banned outright or harassed out of existence (Hasty 2005).

Internal and external pressures mounted on the Rawlings’ regime from 1989 to restore democracy in Ghana. The democratic governance initiative was preceded by emergence of private media operations, especially lotto and sports newspapers. These became a means of upholding freedom of expression. The articles published in these papers employed satire, euphemisms, and proverbs in the commentaries on national political affairs. The champions of the new era of free speech and free press included Tommy Thompson’s *Free Press*, Kofi Koomson’s *The Ghanaian Chronicle* and Kabral Blay-Amihere’s *The Independent* (Karikari 2017). Rawlings’ power was being contested by some intelligentsia and the Ghanaian public at large. These demands took the form of civil society groups pressing for solution of internal economic collapse and external donors removing budget support and aid provisions (Bratton & Walle 1997; Diamond 1999; Huntington 1991). This campaign was heeded to by putting a constitution together. The PNDC was transformed into a political party, National Democratic Congress (NDC), led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John

Rawlings, which contested the 1992 General Elections and returned Ghana to multi-party democracy (Blay-Amihere 2015; Blay-Amihere & Alabi, 1996).

2.4 CONTEMPORARY PERIOD: After 1992

This thesis describes the period after 1992 as the Contemporary era. It is for the purpose of dealing with matters pertaining to the media in the Fourth Republic, separately from other periods, and Constitutions such as those of 1957, 1960, 1969 and 1979. It is worth starting with the premise that Ghana has had a vibrant media environment since the coming into effect of the 1992 Constitution, and the public domain has been inundated with media businesses such as production and distribution channels and training institutions. Generally, Ghana has benefited from press freedom and local ownership of the media in the contemporary time (Amoakohene 2004; Gadzekpo 1997; Kwansah-Aidoo 2001; Sikanku 2011).

The 1992 Constitution has a resemblance of the Third Republican Constitution in many regards as far as the media is concerned. Key among these is the inclusion of the article on freedom and independence of the media. Considering the media as partners in the promotion of democracy, creators of the Constitution provided for the responsibilities and limitation on rights and freedoms of the media in Article 162. The media landscape, somewhat, opened up since the coming into effect of the 1992 Constitution but not without continued promotion of Rawlings and the NDC government agenda by the state media. *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* were the major culprits. The comeback of the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, *The Independent*, *The Free Press*, and *The Statesman*, mainly newspapers critical of the government, was visible (Blay-Amihere 2015; BlayAmihere & Alabi 1996).

Despite the constitutional provision for private ownership of media organisations, the government monopolised the media through the state broadcaster and state newspapers. This

activated the involvement of the intelligentsia in 1993 to organise series of lectures to educate Ghanaians on the importance of free media. The *Public Agenda* newspaper in 2005 quoted a survey conducted by Safo (1993), which revealed that 90% of a sample of 100 experts welcomed the idea of privatisation. The respondents who objected were mostly employees from the state-controlled GBC, arising from their apprehension for competition. Even this finding did not convince the government to liberalise the airwaves (Karikari 2000). In May 1994, an unlicensed or unregistered FM station, Radio Eye, owned by Dr. Charles Wereko Brobey sounded on the airwaves. The station was closed, equipment impounded by government security operatives within twenty-four hours, and the owner and his accomplices were arrested. This provoked upheaval in Accra, and marked the beginning of taking government's grip off broadcasting (Karikari 2000). But it was not until July 1995 that the airwaves were liberated with allotment of licenses and frequencies, leading to the establishment of the first private FM radio stations in Ghana; *Radio Univers 105.7 FM* and *Joy 99.7 FM*. Also, in 1997 the first private television stations began operations. *Crystal TV* in Kumasi, and *TV3* and *Metropolitan Television (Metro TV)* in Accra (Hasty 2005).

The Contemporary Period also saw continuation in expansion of radio service to other parts of the country by GBC. FM radio stations were established as follows: *Twin-City FM* in Sekondi-Takoradi (1994), *Dormaa Ahenkro Community Station* (1994), *Garden City Radio (GCR)* in Kumasi, Ashanti Region (1994), *Radio Savanna* (1995), *Greater-Accra Radio (GAR)* (1995) in Accra, *Radio Central* (1996), and *Volta Star Radio* in Ho (1996). These stations introduced indigenous language broadcasts and interactive programmes via telephone call-ins (Hasty 2005; <https://www.gbcghana.com/>). The main transmission of GTV programmes was, and is still, carried out from GBC's studios in Kanda, Accra, to transmitters, transposers and boosters at key location

dotted all over the country (Blay-Amihere & Alabi 1996).²⁸ As may be deduced, in 1997, following establishment of private television stations, satellite systems emerged. The major ones are *Multichoice*, which offers *BBC World Service* signals, *CNN*, *SuperSports*, and *M-Net*, *South African Commercial Network*, offering mostly western movies, music videos, and television serials (Hasty 2005; Koomson 1994). It may be reasonable to say that long years of state control of the media has led to explosion of information sharing regime, in all manners, following liberalisation of the airwaves in 1995. The liberalisation of the airwaves was not peculiar to Ghana, but a continental phenomenon that affected many African countries in the 1990s. It engineered liveliness and competition into radio and television broadcast media and encouraged this sector to pay attention to social issues, hitherto, not given much consideration. The liberalisation has also brought about citizen participation or pluralism in radio and television programmes. This is a development that promotes airing of varied views and representation in the media of various sectors of society and culture (Doyle 2005).

The emergence of the internet in Ghana between 1989 and 1990 further boosted interactivity and sharing of opinions in the media. Radio and television became live-interactive with the public using telephone call-ins, text-messaging/SMS, and internet-based forms such as emails. In the late 1990s, news and entertainment portals began to spring up in Ghana, augmenting work of the conventional media as additional information channels. GhanaWeb is Ghana's first vertical portal, content curation and syndication website launched on January 1, 1999, as an amalgamation with GhanaHomePage blog, to offer news, background information, classifieds, radio stations, and a social network for Ghanaians and the

²⁸ GTV has transmitters at Ajankote in the Greater-Accra Region, Kissi in the Central Region, Jamasi in the Ashanti Region, and a relay station in Tamale in the Northern Region, Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region, Sunyani in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Han in Upper West Region, Amadzorfe and Akatsi, both in the Volta Region. Transposers or boosters operate at Ho, Akosombo, Prestea, Sunyani, Oda, Tarkwa, Dunk-wa, and Mpraeso.

Diaspora (<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/>). The website has “evolved over the years to include video content and social media components to its news feed as well as a mobile app for smooth web navigation” (<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/>).

With the heightened use of internet on mobile devices and the quest for more timely news, the ‘traditional’ channels followed in the steps of the entertainment blogs that developed very fast. Radio stations like Joy 99.7FM of the Multimedia Group, launched web portal (<https://www.myjoyonline.com/>) with various sections covering, news, entertainment, politics, business, entertainment, sports, religion, et cetera. The *Daily Graphic* newspaper also launched its portal (<https://www.graphic.com.gh/>). Although the primary source of access to internet at the time for most users were public places such as internet cafés and telecentres, its advent made Ghana one of the first countries in African to be hooked to the new communication technology (Sey 2011a, p. 381). The connectivity rate of the internet in Ghana was expected to expand, as government support for it was high too. It is for this reason that the *Wall Street Journal* mentioned Ghana as an example of ‘silicon nations’ in terms of connectivity, information security, human capital, and business climate (Karikari 2000).

In his inaugural speech in January 2001, John Agyekum Kufuor promised to advance the tenets of free expression and independent media. This commitment was evident in his government’s invitation of both state and private news media to cover events and have permanent correspondents at the seat of government; repeal of the Criminal Libel Law in 2001; and donation of a place to the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA). In terms of radio and support for the state broadcaster, GBC re-commissioned and renamed in 2002, the *Greater-Accra Radio (GAR)* set up in 1995 to *Uniiq FM*, and established *Radio Upper West* (2001), *Radio BAR* (2001), *Radio Sunrise FM* (2002), and *Radio Obonu FM* (2002). These stations, like their counterparts established

between 1994 and 1996, also introduced indigenous language broadcasts and interactive programmes through phone-ins (Hasty 2005; <https://www.gbcghana.com/>). The *Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF)*, or *Reporters Without Borders* notes that “Ghana enjoyed real press freedom in 2003 and appears to be establishing a culture where those freedoms are respected by all sectors of society” (RSF 2003, 8). This suggests that democratic dispensation in 1992, which led to recognition of individual and societal rights, precipitated media freedoms as well. Despite Kufuor’s tolerance for the media, Eizlini notes that he was compelled through his Ministry of Information headed by Jake Obetsebi Lamptey in 2002 to censor reports of media persons on the Yendi crisis (Eizlini 2004).²⁹

As at the end of the first term of Kufuor in 2004, about forty newspapers operated in the country. The state-backed news media houses were the Graphic Corporation (now Graphic Communications Group), which published *Daily Graphic* and *The Mirror*, and the New Times Corporation, which published *The Ghanaian Times* and *Weekly Spectator*. About sixteen privately owned newspapers were in circulation, among which were *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, *The Independent*, *The Free Press*, *The Crusading Guide*, *Public Agenda* and the *Insight Newspaper* (Anyidoho 2016).

Arguably, Kufuor’s era had seen tremendous technological advancement in all fields of endeavour, especially in communication technology. The period witnessed the ‘mastering’ of social media and social network activities and media technology in Ghana. Publishing lines of the print media had increased to incorporate free Web versions and to social media platforms; leading to decline in newspaper subscriber strength (Anyidoho 2016). Hussman Jr. describes this occurrence as newspapers becoming “multiplatform enterprises” (Hussman Jr. 2007). In order to

²⁹ The Yendi crisis led to the murder of a traditional leader of Dagbon, Yaa Naa Yakubu Andani II and twenty-eight of his clansmen.

attract readership from social networking sites (SNSs) to newspaper sites, hyperlinks to articles, reports, et cetera, hosted on the newspapers' website are shared. This change in news-sharing was not peculiar to the Ghanaian media landscape. Parr made similar claims about the news-sharing in the USA, saying, "Many newspapers have devoted substantial resources and hired social media specialists to cultivate their social media audience" (2014, p. 1). Also, radio and television have become interactive with their audiences. News gathering, making, broadcasting, et cetera, is no more the preserve of trained journalists but have extended to the listener and citizens. This encourages dissemination of information across cultural and national boundaries.

The period of John Evans Fiifi Atta Mills between January 2009 to July 2012 and John Dramani Mahama from July 2012 to January 2017 (and then from January 2013 to January 2017), both on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), was not very different from Kufuor's era with regard to the news media. Perhaps, the major difference had been intensification of social media presence in news dissemination. It is also worth noting that few business and financial newspapers emerged due to economic revival engineered by the confidence local and international businesses had in the democratic path the country had chosen for governance. Particularly, Kufuor's government provided good business climate, which enabled increased interest in business issues. The newspapers in this category include *Business and Financial Times* and *Business Chronicle*. Likewise, GBC had created television channels with specialised programming: *GTV Sports* (All Sports Digital Channel) (2010), *GBC24* (24hours News Digital Channel) (2011), *GBC Life* (All Life Digital Channel) (2011), *GTV Govern Digital Channel* (2014) and *Obonu TV Digital Channel* (2014) (<https://www.gbcghana.com/>).

The social media participation in news-sharing goes without saying that technology has enriched the lives of Ghanaians. Social media's increased use in Ghana was evident from Kufuor

through to Atta Mills and Mahama's presidencies. The concern that often comes up is whether technology is becoming a threat to the society's long-standing values of communication. Whereas communication technologies educate and serve many useful purposes, they can be a menace to society without adequate care and propriety. Social media platforms, for instance, carry all manner of images, some of which infringe upon societal standards of communication, and can damage society immeasurably (Anyidoho 2016). According to Eszter Hargittai,³⁰ the internet "is a source of unprecedented amounts of content [...] both lauded for its breadth and critiqued for its sometimes free-for-all ethos" (quoted in O'Connor 2012, p. 53). In 2013, John Mahama called society's attention to the need to engage itself more in order to educate, guide, monitor and observe itself to navigate the technology age purposefully, now that almost every member of society has become a 'journalist' of a sort (www.peacefmonline.com/ Sept. 15, 2013). Although the emergence of news and entertainment portals in the late 1990s to early 2000s is a positive development, the high patronage of news and entertainment portals has given rise to individuals to also create websites and blogs such as <http://www.nkonkonsa.com/> and <https://ameyawdebrah.com/>. Some of these portals circulate information without verification. They share audios, videos and images that will not, hitherto, appear in any form on radio, television, or print. The portals are also not run by people with journalistic training so the quality is obviously poor. In order to gain more hits which translates into money, fake news has become the order of the day for some of these websites. Most Ghanaians, especially young people, depend on such media for their source of information. Mahama's call therefore suggests that technology or new media platforms, by virtue of their very essence, are not ends unto themselves, but rather a blueprint for a responsible behaviour and

³⁰ Eszter Hargittai is an associate professor at the Department of Communication Studies at Northwestern University and one of the leading scholars who has investigated online credibility issues in depth.

journalism. It also emphasises the point that new technologies are not just ‘about’ media practice, but ‘for’ media practice, requiring that journalistic norms be strictly taken into consideration.

In December 2016, NPP won power again and formed a government with Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as the President of Ghana. Nana Akufo-Addo has been highly touted by many people in Ghana and abroad as a human rights lawyer and advocate. He led and won landmark media operations-related cases and human rights lawsuits in the Supreme Court of Ghana such as the right to equal access to airtime at GBC by political parties and the right to demonstrate without police permit, respectively. Regarding equal access to airtime at GBC, he was against an incumbent political party having monopoly of the state broadcaster’s (GBC’s) airtime, especially during political seasons. So, he fought for equity in political parties’ appearance on GBC programmes. Nana Akufo-Addo was also the publisher of *The Statesman Newspaper*, therefore he has a strong connection to the media. For these attributes, Nana Akufo-Addo appears to uphold social justice and media freedoms. Indeed, the media environment seem to have witnessed considerable vibrancy in terms of press freedom in the three-and-a-half years of the presidency of Nana Akufo-Addo. It should also be said that the Akufo-Addo government benefited from the previous governments (in the Fourth Republic) adherence to constitutional provisions on the media, which made it possible for the media to thrive. The constitutional provisions and civil society dedication to defending the rights of free speech have encouraged citizen involvement in public interest matters through mass media channels. Some media watchers believe that the unimpeded tolerance or accommodation of media has led to apparent breaches of regulations, especially in radio and social media platforms (Karikari 2017).

Today, there are about 575 radio stations and 146 television stations authorised by the National Communications Authority (NCA) to operate in Ghana.³¹ According to GeoPoll in 2020, Peace 104.3FM, Citi 97.3FM and Joy 99.7FM, are the most favourite radio stations while TV3, UTV, AdomTV, Joy Prime, GTV, Joy News, GhOne, TV XYZ, Kessben and Atinka TV, are the popular television networks across the Ghana. The GeoPoll ranking reveals that Peace 104.3FM has 95.6k followers (as at October14, 2020) on Instagram, 659k likes on Facebook and 443.1k followers on Twitter. Citi 97.3FM, the second most listened to radio station, has 223k followers (as at October 14, 2020) on Instagram, 1,244,990 likes on Facebook and 59.8k followers on Twitter. (<https://www.geopoll.com/blog/ghana-media-measurement-2019/>).³² The summaries of radio and television stations authorised by the NCA in Ghana as at the second quarter of 2020 are provided in the tables in **Appendixes I and II**.

It is appropriate to say that the Fourth Republic of Ghana has seen the most developments in terms of expansion in private broadcasting, curtailing state control of the media and promoting freedom of speech. The new media or mixed media, with advanced technologies such as the computers, mobile phones, the internet, et cetera, providing support for various social media and networking, microblogging, photo, and video sharing platforms have enhanced communication and liveinteractivity in radio and television. Prior to the phenomena of interactive engagement with radio and television, information and entertainment was shared in a one-way direction. The closest form of interactivity was through letters to radio and television stations and networks (Bokor 2014; Karikari 2017). Karikari (2017) asserts that the global and local political environments aside, innovations in the technologies of communication in the 1980s and 1990s

³¹ <https://www.nca.org.gh/industry-data-2/authorisations-2/fm-authorisation-2/>
<https://www.nca.org.gh/assets/TV-List-Q2-2020.pdf>

³² GeoPoll is a media research establishment.

made untenable, impossible, and unsustainable state monopoly and control of mass media and information dissemination.

It is revealing from the above presentations on the media in Ghana (Africa) that they have, generally, undergone different stages of development that are like the development of cinema in Africa. Boughedir contends that African cinema has experienced six thematic and formal concerns and classified African films “according to the theoretical positions of their auteurs and their effect on the public [...] their ultimate function” (Boughedir 1987 quoted in Zacks 1999, p. 6). These classifications are “the political tendency,” “the moralist tendency,” “the commercial tendency,” “the cultural tendency,” “the ‘self-expression’ tendency,” and “the ‘narcissistic intellectual’ tendency” (Zacks 1999, p. 6; see also Connon 2017; Givanni 2001). These phases of development of African cinema can conveniently be adapted for mainstream media in Ghana. The nine phases of development of the media in Ghana in **Table I** below have, therefore been adapted from Boughedir’s six phases of development of African cinema. These phases may fit into the experiences of some other African countries, too. Boughedir’s six phases have been expanded to nine phases to make room for the years after propounding his six thematic classifications.

Table I: Phases of development of mainstream media in Ghana.

Phase	Period	Disposition	Main Characteristics
1.	Mid-Late-1800s	<i>Moralist Tendency I:</i> distrust and cynicism	European supremacy and domination in newspaper operation and readership (merchants and civil servants). Local elites secure loyalty and conformity with the colonial system.
2.	Early-1900-1960s	<i>Political Positivity Tendency:</i> hopefulness and confidence to change minds of people.	Awareness creation to engage and rally the citizenry for a collective resistance (of liberation and decolonisation). Building a common front of the people.
3.	1960s-1970s	<i>Moralist Tendency II:</i> return of distrust and cynicism.	Critical of post-independent governments, official policies, and authoritarian rule. Restricted analysis of problems of the Ghanaian society. Exploitative, locus of white power, system of integrity.
4.	1980-Mid-1990s	<i>Cultural Tendency:</i> reassessment of contemporary African	Economic decline, party-political degeneration, state crisis, political power contestation, pressing for solution of internal economic failure.

		culture vis-à-vis Ghanaian traditions.	
5.	Late-1990s-Mid-2000s	<i>Commercial Tendency</i> : attempts to entertain by selling excitements.	National development agenda issues.
6.	Late-2000s-2005	<i>Self-possession, 'Self-expression' Tendency</i> :	Pluralistic and domesticated media. Representation of opinions of democratisation, identity, confidence, etc. Employment of wits, ironies, adages, etc. in the explanations of national activities.
7.	2005-2010	<i>'Egocentric philosophical' Tendency</i> : a sub-classification of 'self-expression.'	Inclined towards romanticism, reminiscence of traditional Ghanaian culture. Spread of untruths. Varying personal agendas. Consolidating democracy.
8.	2010-present	<i>'Optimistic Nationalistic' Tendency</i> :	Technology and connectivity. Intensified digitisation and multi-media broadcasting. Increased interactivity. Abuse of right of freedom of expression.
9.	Present—Future	<i>Globalisation Tendency</i> : envisaged to be a dominant feature.	Unprecedented amounts of content. Free-for-all ethos. Breaches of regulations, especially in radio and social media platforms. Unbelievable citizen involvement in public interest matters.

As may be noticed in **Table I**, this study attempts to establish the contemporary situation regarding mainstream media and predicts its future. Clearly, the analysis presented on the historical trajectory of the media shows that Ghana has a vibrant media with a remarkable history. In the same way, Ghana has constitutionally-established as well as association-based bodies that have ensured that the rights and freedoms of the media, and responsibilities and limitation are enforced. In the next section, the functions of these bodies will be examined together with some ethical considerations.

2.5 SOME CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON THE MEDIA

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana provides for the freedom of private and the state-owned media in Articles 162 (1-6) and Article 163: “Freedom and Independence of the media.” In Article 164 of the Constitution, provision has been made for “Limitations on Rights and Freedoms” in situations of national security, public morality, protection of reputation, rights, and freedoms of other persons. Additionally, in situations where

the media can go contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) Code of Ethics, the principal reason must be “for public interest or good.” In making such judgments, in most cases, the media come into conflict with the Constitution, their code of ethics and indigenous protocols or communicative acts of news-sharing. As regards indigenous protocols, the media may come into conflict with news-sharing on matters with cultural and societal sensitivity. The dilemma for media practitioners, to some extent the public, is that the media is in business to disseminate news to the public, therefore cannot be part of a conspiracy to suppress news (Karikari 2000). To be considered, also, is the fact that culture and traditions are dynamic, not static. Therefore, what society may see as sane today may not be seen in the same light in future. But Kwame Ansah-Brew maintains that “we’re Ghanaians first before we’re citizens of the world.”³³ Ansah-Brew is implying that despite changes due to the dynamism of society, there are certain traditional norms that define Ghanaians from other people that must be adhered to. The questions to ask therefore are: What is the appropriate balance between responsibility and liberty or freedom of the media? Who should decide where the lines between right and wrong are to be drawn, and on what values should these decisions be made? Is it the case that media producers must find content and distribution forms that will be profitable? Attempts have been made in the next subsections to address these questions.

2.5.1 Media Law and Ethics

Media law denotes legislation and regulatory communication systems (Crone 2002, p. viii), while media ethics “concerns the delicate balance between society’s interests and the interest of individuals, groups and institutions such as the press and the government” (Alexander & Hanson

³³ TV3 News 360, 7.30p.m. on Saturday February 3, 2018. Kwame Ansah-Brew is the founder/president of the Performing Arts Centre for African Cultures (PACAC), Inc., a non-profit organisation that promotes a better understanding of African cultures.

2016, p. 93). It is vital for journalists and broadcasters to have knowledge of the law, especially in the contemporary time, due to the rapidly evolving methods of delivering media products to the public. This is to avoid the risk of legal proceedings such as libel, invasion of privacy, and so on (Crone 2002, p. viii). “Libel is essentially a false and defamatory attack in written form on a person’s reputation or character. Broadcast defamation is libel because there is usually a written script [news story, headlines, photos, cartoons, film, tape, records, signs, bumper stickers, advertisement]. Oral or spoken defamation is slander” (Green 2002, pp. 36-37; Gillmor 1974). Although journalists have qualified privilege under the law to print defamatory statements if they “are being fair and accurate and the information is from a public proceeding or public record” (Rich 2010, p. 296), qualified privilege could be repudiated in court if the story comprises inaccuracies. Fair comment and criticism are other defense mechanisms available to media persons. “To qualify as fair comment, a comment must generally be on a matter of public interest, it must be based on facts known or believed to be true, and it may not be malicious or made with reckless disregard for the truth” (ibid, p. 298). One area regarding ethics and the law that appears to have been constantly abused both in the conventional media and social media is the invasion of privacy of people. Rich (2010) indicates that “Issues of privacy involve ethical decisions, not matters of accuracy. Truth may not be enough of a defense in privacy cases” (p. 299). Privacy cases are also considered based on space and location. For example, whether a photograph was taken, or audio recorded in a private or public property. Four bases have been identified by the courts in relation to invasion of privacy matters. The bases for lawsuits are “intrusion, public disclosure of private and embarrassing facts, [publicity that puts a person in a] false light, and misappropriation of a person’s name or image without permission” (ibid, pp. 298-300; Karikari & Kumado 2000). When decisions on matters that raise ethical reasoning are to be made, media

persons resort to three basic guidelines: defining the dilemma, examining all alternatives available to them, and justifying their decisions (Rich 2010). This is because journalism or news-sharing is not only seen as telling the news as truthful or believable as it may be, but also being accountable and responsible. In other words, news-sharing is not about divulging everything to the public, otherwise the media will be seen to be too commercialised than being professional. Rich (2010) provides some further key ideas about the workings of the media in news-sharing. These ideas are modified and consolidated here to give them a composite understanding for the purpose of this study. Broadly stated, they are about journalists or news-sharers providing the public with information and news that is needful and that will make the people free and self-sustaining. Rich adopted *The Poynter Institute Model*³⁴ on ethical issues in asking relevant significant questions that encompass all pointers to overcoming ethical dilemmas. The Model poses nine questions:

1. Why am I concerned about this story, photo or graphic? [obligation to tell the truth]
2. What is the news? What good would publication do? [loyalty to the people]
3. Is the information complete and accurate, to the best of my knowledge? [discipline to verify]
4. Am I missing an important point of view? [maintain independence from the news and persons]
5. What does my reader need to know? [independent monitor of power]
6. How would I feel if the story or photo were about me or a member of my family? [provision of forum for public criticism and compromise]
7. What are the likely consequences of publication? What good or harm could result? [make the significant interesting and relevant]
8. What are my alternatives? [keep the news comprehensive and proportional]
9. Will I be able to clearly and honestly explain my decision to anyone who challenges it? [exercising of personal conscience] (Rich 2010, p. 318; see also Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001)

Also, media persons rely on their Code of Ethics in making ethical decisions. It should be clear that 'citizen journalists' may not be aware of *The Poynter Institute Model* and association-based

³⁴ The Poynter Institute is a nonprofit school for journalists and a publisher of original journalism. Since 1975, Poynter has hosted seminars on news media ethics, written about ethical controversies and provided news organizations with advice on ethical decision-making (<https://www.poynter.org/poynter-institute-code-ethics/>).

codes or may not consider the guidance they provide at all. However, awareness of and adherence to these guidelines are important to upholding sanity in the media.

Local language broadcasting is vibrant and cherished by many listeners in Ghana. This is understandable because one's first language is also 'language of the heart.' Realising this and what its effects can be to media practice, the NMC developed a guideline for local language broadcasting along the lines of the English language broadcasting guidelines. These guidelines mention "accuracy, objectivity, fairness, comprehensiveness, right to reply, sensitivity to the vulnerable, prohibition against incitement and the need to promote peace" (NMC 2009, p. 1) as the principal journalistic ethics for local language broadcasting.

Accuracy. Great care must be taken not to blur the distinction between truth and fiction. *Objectivity.* Objectivity requires the capacity to suppress a broadcaster's own prejudices in order to examine given facts from varied perspectives. [...] this demands deliberate suspension of [...] linguistic and cultural subjectivity [...]. *Fairness.* [...] all sides to a story [must be] given equal opportunity for presentation. *Comprehensiveness.* [This] requires that information is presented in full without any attempt at manipulation. [...] citizen's right to information. *Right to Reply.* [The] right of reply [...], or retraction or correction [...] should be aired as soon as practically possible, and given the prominence that is comparable to the subject of the original error. *Promoting Peace.* Local language broadcasting must [...] aim at promoting peace. [...]. [...]. *Incitement.* Local language broadcast must not, [...] carry content that can incite people (2009, pp. 1-4).

These local language stations are viewed by many as of 'the society,' that is, the new type of traditionally based communicative experience. According to Dicks (2000), the media's apparent neglect to conform to traditional protocols of news-sharing have mobilised discourses around local identity, belonging, place, and environment. These discussions are meant to accentuate tradition as a social communicative practice of which local language radio and television stations play important roles. The local language stations celebrate the communicative practices, lifestyles and culture of ethnic groups, traditions, and localities. It is a generally held view that since its inception on September 7, 1995, *Radio Gold 90.5FM* has targeted mostly Ewe, Akan and Ga speakers in the cities, especially in Accra. On the other hand, *Peace 104.3FM*, established on February 4, 1998,

mostly targets Akan speakers in Accra and beyond. Various reasons such as politics and business may be assigned to aiming at these language strata of audiences. But one thing is common; there has been a ‘local language aesthetic’ in electronic media practice, which has encouraged in the Ghanaian society a display of news-sharing of everyday life in local languages (Manual for Journalists on Reporting Culture 2010). *Radio Gold 90.5FM*, *Peace 104.3FM* and television networks which broadcast in local languages like *United Television (UTV)*, *Atinka TV* (Akan television networks), serve as a communication opportunity for ‘everyday citizens.’ This development could be described as ‘local language seizure’ of the airwaves and a spectacle of multiculturalism as many local languages and dialects are spoken. As history has it, radio and television were viewed as an elite experience or used for elite knowledge propagation. However, and particularly since the mid-1990s, there has been exhibition of local language skillfulness, which has encouraged public involvement in these media. Kwami Sefa Kayi, a senior journalist and host of *Kokoroko* on Peace 104.3FM, notes that “local language media provide the possibility for local cultural and social appropriation (*Personal Interview, October 16, 2017*).” In the following section, constitutional provisions relating and media regulatory bodies in Ghana are examined.

2.5.2 National Media Commission (NMC) and National Communications Authority (NCA)

The NMC is constitutionally empowered to protect the media “from interference [manipulation and censorship] by the government, [...] protecting rights of free expression [...]” (Eizlini 2004, p. 74; see also Blay-Amihere 2015). The NMC was established on July 7, 1993, by an Act of Parliament (Act 449) pursuant to Chapter 12, [Articles 166-173] of the Constitution (NMC 1993, pp. 1-6). The main roles of the NMC are to watch over the media and uphold the balance between unencumbered media, and to promote timely resolution of editorial-led grievance regarding rights

of individuals (reputation, privacy, fair treatment, etc.). Since 1993, the NMC has played this constitutionally-mandated guardian role. Additionally, the NMC is to review the laws that impinge on journalism practice to safeguard and guarantee an exalted benchmark of professionalism (NMC 1993, p. 1). The NMC is composed of eighteen members, representing various media and non-media institutions.³⁵ It could be deduced from the composition (collection of different interest groups and professionals) of the Commission that it is to ensure its independence and public service responsibilities. It is worth stressing that

The NMC protects the constitutional guarantees against unfair or undue interference from the government. It is not simply a protector of the media but also ensures that the media does not unfairly or unduly attack or accuse either the government or other individuals. The Commission is the first recourse in correcting inaccurate or malicious journalism and in this way also protects journalists from over-zealous prosecution (Eizlini 2004, p. 76).

The main issue that dominated discussions regarding the work and authority of the NMC in recent times is its lack of constitutional mandate to enforce parties to abide by its decisions. According to Eizlini, “This is problematic as it may undercut the NMC’s authority or legitimacy [...], especially if the media themselves do not adhere to its decisions” (2004, p. 76).

The NCA was established by an Act of parliament Act, 524 of 1996, repealed and replaced by NCA Act, 2008 (Act 769), as a communications industry regulator in Ghana to provide effective and transparent regulation “by setting and enforcing high standards of competence and performance [...]” (NCA 2007; nca.org.gh). Covered in NCA’s Service Charter are its purpose and values as a regulatory authority mandated to undertake roles as follows: “Give licenses and

³⁵ The composition of the NMC are one representative each of the following: the Ghana Bar Association (GBA); the Publishers and Owners of the Private Press; the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) and the Ghana Library Association; the Christian group (the National Catholic Secretariat, the Christian Council, and the Ghana Pentecostal Council); the Federation of Muslim Councils and Ahmadiyya Mission; the training institutions of journalists and communicators; the Ghana Advertising Association and the Institute of Public Relations of Ghana; the National Association of Teachers; the National Council on Women and Development; the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Association of Private Broadcasters. The rest are: two representatives nominated by the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA); two persons appointed by the President; and three persons nominated by parliament (NMC 1993, 6-7).

authorisations for operation of communication systems and services; Ensure fair competition among licensees; Establish and monitor quality of service indicators for operators and service providers; Educate and protect consumers; Authorise type approval and enforce equipment standards; and Coordinate international frequency (<https://nca.org.gh/the-nca/what-we-do/>). These constitutional mandates are to leverage communications and media environment in order to play their roles meaningfully and impartially to Ghana's development. There are many who believe that the establishment of these regulatory boards is not enough, thus, they must be given the 'teeth to bite.'

2.6 GHANA JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (GJA) AND GHANA INDEPENDENT BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION (GIBA)

The main membership-based and professionally-founded regulatory bodies which support the works of NMC and NCA are the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA). The GJA was initially established on August 15, 1949, as Africa Press Association (APA) to provide the local media practitioner with an alternative to the colonial press in the then former British colony of the Gold Coast. It was later renamed the Ghana Press Club (GPC) in 1959. Thereafter, it was changed to the Association of Ghanaian Journalists and Writers (AGJW). Yet again the name of the Association was changed to its current designation during the Second Republic of Ghana (Ghana Journalists Association 2011, p. 38). GJA is an umbrella body and a mouthpiece of Ghanaian journalists. Like the media houses under various governments, the GJA suffered many external interferences and internal upheavals, which contributed largely to repeated changes in the names of the association. For instance, the GPC survived until the Convention People's Party (CPP) government of the First Republic in 1960, was overthrown by the National Liberation Council (NLC) Government in

1966. The NLC government associated GPC with the CPP government, therefore took over its premises, calling it “mischief-makers.” Abrefa Busia’s government during the Second Republic created a conducive atmosphere for the Association to bounce back (Ghana Journalists Association 2011). However, this cordial relationship between the Association and government was short-lived as it was faced with rampant transfers and dismissals. The Association was not spared of its woes during General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong’s regime between 1972 and 1977, again through transfers and dismissals. Another turbulent period for the Association occurred during the June 4, 1979, and December 31, 1981, revolutions (Ghana Journalists Association 2011). “The association took a major step towards legal recognition when in January 1989 it got registered as a professional body in accordance with the provisions of the Professional Bodies Registration Decree, 1973 (NRCD 143)” (GJA 2011, p. 44). As indicated earlier, GJA has Code of Ethics. The key intention of the Code of Ethics is to provide for all ethical violations that have been associated with journalism practice in Ghana, and to guarantee that GJA members work with high ethical values, proficiency and conduct themselves skillfully while carrying out their responsibilities. Immense headways have been made towards the accomplishment of the Association’s aims and objectives such as the creation of a Code of Ethics in 1994. These efforts have raised the Association’s profile, independence and influence among its members and the general populace. All these achievements may be attributed to the 1992 Republican Constitution, especially, the provision for Freedom and Independence of the media. Of particular interest to this study regarding GJA is its Code of Ethics and issues having to do with breaches of the Code concerning publication of falsehoods, unverifiable stories, and displaying of commercials and publicity information as news.

The Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) was formed in the late 2000s by private or non-state broadcasters to take measures to protect their interests and to establish and maintain utmost broadcast ethics, especially to regulate the use of intemperate language on the airwaves. Therefore, as an abiding principle, members of GIBA are guided by a Code of Conduct, which has been drawn out as a guide for professional conduct (Lartey 2016). The practical challenge is the possible non-adherence by members to the Code to achieve its goals.

Generally, press freedom is thriving in Ghana although there are some lingering issues of intimidation and coercion (Lartey 2016). But regulatory bodies such as the NMC have advocated investigation of government actions or inactions towards the media and put these in the public domain. GJA has also put measures in place to promote and maintain press freedom and professionalism (Hasty 2005).

2.7 TRAINING IN THE MEDIA

It is important to examine the subject of training because, by and large, the choices the media or journalists make during their work may be affected by the values they imbibe during training among other factors. The implication of this is that the journalist serves as a compass-finger of the public's consciousness. So, the journalist is expected to produce media materials that depict the realities of the people about whom they are made, and for whom it must inspire. It is for this reason that the media person or journalist needs to be trained, either in school or on the job, to get his/her own orientation properly because what he/she produces influences the perception and lives of a mass of people (M'Bayo & Onwumechili 1995; Rich 2010).

Until about twelve years ago, four institutions offered formal journalism education in Ghana: the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), School of Communication Studies (now the

Department of Communication Studies³⁶) at the University of Ghana, Legon, National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) and African Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC), now the African University College of Communication (AUCC). GIJ, Department of Communication Studies and NAFTI are public-owned while AUCC is a private initiative. GIJ offered diploma and certificate programmes as well as in-service training in journalism and public relations (GIJ 1995).

Today, GIJ has three faculties and seven departments: Journalism (Departments of Broadcast Journalism and Print Journalism), Public Relations and Advertisement (Departments of Public Relations and Advertisement) and Communication and Social Sciences (Departments of Communication, Social Science and Languages). These faculties and departments offer programmes ranging from diploma through to master's levels. The Department of Communication Studies was founded in 1974 to give journalists postgraduate and master's-level training in journalism and mass communication. NAFTI was established by SMC Decree (SMCD. 151) dated 2nd February, 1978 (Mensah 1995, p. 12). The establishment of NAFTI opened new vistas towards meeting the peculiar training requirements for the film and broadcast journalism (television, documentaries, etc.) industry in Africa. The originators of the idea to establish NAFTI shared the view that the training of personnel for developing countries in certain areas of development is done initially within the environment. In this respect, training at NAFTI enhances the students' appreciation for the need to relate the environment to their creative work. Students' orientation as Africans are not disturbed by direct alien cultures or values which tend to subvert creative identity and individual self-confidence (Marshall 1995, p. 17; Mensah 1995). AUCC was established in 2001 to augment the training of communication professionals by offering courses in journalism,

³⁶ In September 2014, the University of Ghana abolished the faculty system and commenced the collegiate system. Therefore, the School of Communication Studies has become a department under the School of Information and Communication Studies of the College of Humanities.

public relations, and marketing, now the with expanded curriculum, but a strong focus on communication (Hasty 2005).

Aside from the earliest media training schools such as GIJ, Department of Communication Studies and NAFTI, there are many more public and private training institutions that train journalists. For instance, there are private institutions like AUCC, and non-governmental organisations such as the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) that train Ghanaian media professionals with emphasis tied to their aspirations. The FES invests in running workshops, seminars, and conferences for media practitioners on various subjects in the domain of democracy and development. There are also a few journalism training institutions with questionable curricula, structure, and management. Some of the ethical breaches in the media have been attributed to inadequate training offered by these institutions (Karikari 1994). Hasty shares her experiences in relation to training and journalistic practice in Ghana:

I was initially quite relieved to recognize a set of lessons very similar to my own journalism training in high school and college. In journalism schools all over the world, journalism students learn a set of specific professional techniques [...]. Familiar with these techniques, I felt confident enough to volunteer my services as a journalist to local newspapers. On the job at the *Daily Graphic*, however, I quickly learned that ‘teaching and practice are two different things,’ as one Ghanaian journalist explained to me. While committed to the universalized professional lessons they learn at GIJ, *Graphic* journalists deploy a completely different set of journalistic practices to routinely reproduce the distinctive ‘house style’ of the newspaper (Hasty 2006, p. 79).

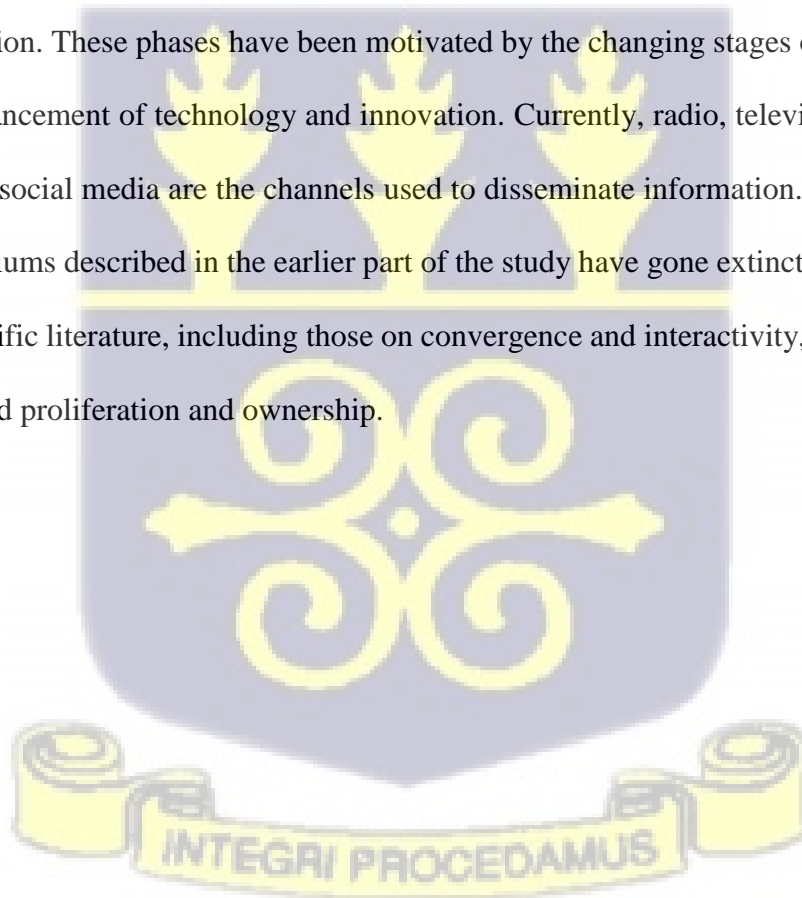
Hasty’s further enquiries proved that “Although Ghanaian journalists are trained in the same commercial realism as American journalists, the house style [...] relies on a fundamentally different logic of social meaning, a more constructivist imaginary based on the discursive power of persons to generate public and ideological meanings through events” (2006, p. 83). These contradictions are as a result of journalists using their discretion. According to Hasty, one journalist states that, “If you say you are doing what you were taught in class, you will always be

messing up. There are things you must take into consideration when you are compiling your report – national security, your condition, your personal relationship with sources of news” (ibid, p. 83). Hasty notes that “From the point of view of American mass communication studies, the style of journalism practiced at the *Daily Graphic* looks a lot like propaganda, the well-documented genre of news media associated with authoritarian power and societies at war” (ibid, p. 85). Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) maintain that “a respect for and adherence to the principles of truthfulness, an allegiance to citizens and community at large, and informing rather than manipulating – concepts that set journalism apart from other forms of communication” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001, p. 98).

Another way to look at these issues is to examine the process of journalism, the manner that news is produced by journalists through laid down structures - newsroom and judgements as to what news must go and which must not go at any given time. As Tuchman notes, “Most of those routines, structures and decisions are connected to – indeed, dictated by – the fact that journalism emanates from a newsroom, a place where journalists work together, located within a news organisation, a collective enterprise structured to streamline (and, typically, profit from) that work” (1978, p. 22). Under the newsroom condition, “Control over the individual journalist come from many directions, from subtle communication by peers about norms of acceptable behaviour to such institutional creations as beats and ways of both identifying and categorising events in order to turn them into something disseminated as “news”” (1978, p. 27). The newsroom accommodates not only reporters but also editors who make sure that what a reporter has as news has ethical values of accuracy, credibility, and avoidance of deliberate distortion. The newsroom excludes bloggers, who normally operate ‘alone’ and independently on the Web, ‘citizen journalists,’ devotees of information and new-sharing in the social media, and so on.

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined key historical and philosophical issues, regarding communication and the media, particularly, in Ghana. These issues were discussed under four broad themes: *precolonial, colonial, independence/post-colonial* and *contemporary*. Constitutional matters have been discussed in relation to information and news-sharing and training of journalists, raising questions of the degree to which ethics may be transferred to, and transformed by, a new media environment more and more overwhelmed by an unconstructed, networked, global form of communication different from any that has come before it. It has become clear, in this chapter, that communication and the media in Ghana, like in many parts of the world, have gone through many phases of evolution. These phases have been motivated by the changing stages of development of society, the advancement of technology and innovation. Currently, radio, television, newspapers, web portals and social media are the channels used to disseminate information. That is not to say the cultural mediums described in the earlier part of the study have gone extinct. The next chapter will review specific literature, including those on convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation and ownership.



CHAPTER THREE **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Neither modernity nor globalisation needs to lead to the fragmentation of community life and the erosion of our robust sense of community. We should not lose our sense of community and concern for others, for it will profit us nothing if we gained the whole of technological world and lost the essence of our humanity (Gyekye 2013, p. 174).

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews relevant literature on news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass media channels in Ghana. Largely, research on communication and media in Ghana have been carried out, focusing on a few areas. The main emphases as established in the literature have been on ethnography of communication; cultural foundations of free speech; communication with contemporary society; media and democratisation; and culture and indigenous communication. The rest are palace communication, etiquettes, and proprieties; media and feminist concerns; media ethics and the law; broadcast policy and regulations; tradition, audiences, and messages interface; and media, culture, and development. This chapter synthesises these literatures not only to comprehend the effects of information and news-sharing, using indigenous communicative acts, but also to establish a context from which to understand how contemporary mass media channels share information and news. The Chapter also critically analyses literature on convergence and interactivity, induced by new communication technologies, globalisation and glocalisation, and media proliferation and ownership, to find out how these paradigms impact news-sharing in the contemporary era. The literature is founded on subjects formulated from the objectives for the study.

The concepts of “culture” and “tradition” have been examined in Chapter One. The examination of these concepts is consistent with one particular interest of this study; an understanding that culture and tradition entail creation of meanings of societal pursuits. The meanings so created, are expressed through the media, performance arts, structural design, clothing, food, et cetera. The contents of every one of these processes communicate the beliefs, values, and behaviours of a particular culture. Perhaps, the media are major players in constructing, preserving, and transforming culture. To socially or collectively create culture signifies that every member of society belongs to diverse cultures or can be identified with varied cultures. For instance, national, ethnic, clan, family, and so on, cultures. Beliefs, values, and behaviours are components of culture (Hagan 2006). Therefore, it is important to segregate and examine these concepts, especially “values,” which is at the core of this study to enhance understanding of values that Ghanaians hold dearly, contravening of which may result in tensions or conflicts.

3.1 VALUES

In respect of values, Gyekye (2008) and Williams (1979) explain that values are benchmarks of desired inclination. Earlier in 1968, Rokeach states that values direct human exploits, inspire nurturing of thoughts and mindsets about circumstances, and provide motivation for moral judgement to be carried on individual and other members of a society (Rokeach, 1968). It follows that values are partly gained from the belief structures of societies and members of that society.

Samovar, Porter, and Stefani advanced the notions of ‘values’ by defining ‘cultural values’ as “a set of organised rules for making choices, reducing uncertainty, and reducing conflicts within a given society. They are usually derived from the larger philosophical issues inherent in a culture”

(1998, p. 15). Thus, while “Cultural beliefs are a type of cognitive information, [...] values [are] a form of affective information” (Borchers 2001, p. 193). Christopher provides succinct views on values and behaviours, saying, they are:

[...] characteristics of a person, object, behaviour, experience, or concept that imply intrinsic excellence, esteem, worth, or desirability. They are essentially preferences governed by individual choice, which, admittedly, is influenced by external factors. Personal values are constantly changing and adapting, and values that withstand fluctuations can become institutionalised by custom, tradition, or convention. Values might not be consciously articulated, but may strongly guide behaviours and conformity (2005, p. 78).

Christopher’s ideas are like Gyekye’s (2008) and are insightful in the manner that they provide information for understanding what occurs in society regarding sharing of information, which is a key part of this thesis. Sometimes personal values determine what individuals do in the media, especially, in social media as against the values of the Ghanaian society. This may often result in conflict of what must be shared and vice versa. To curtail mischief in society, norms have been put in place to regulate behaviour. Christopher (2005), similarly, describes norms as specific instructions, or rules, that guide human dealings or inherently established ways of behaviours that have become very normal to carry out. According to him, there may be situations where norms will be acquired instinctively, and in some cases, by means of deliberate formulation, therefore, it is essential how a norm is created or formulated for it to be adhered to. Christopher further explains that instinctively created norms may tend to benefit the society because individual members and society, at large, may constantly check itself. On the other hand, norms formulated deliberately are inclined to be centrally enforced. Gyekye’s (2008) affirmation is that for norms to be recognised and obeyed, they must normally benefit individual members of society, who in turn repeat them until they become established. In most cases, rules evolve to become part and parcel of the way individuals and societies behave, while the rule itself may be long jettisoned. It is important to draw a distinction between values and norms, on the one hand, and attitudes and beliefs, on the

other. Values and norms have normative judgements, while attitudes and beliefs do not. Attitudes deal with actions or reactions that manifest because of familiarity or knowledge, whereas beliefs represent well-considered, verified, and experienced views (Christopher 2005; Gyekye 2008). The examination of beliefs, values and norms is significant to this thesis as whatever is created by or for the media largely depends on an individual's or institutions orientation towards these components of culture. Moving away from beliefs, values, behaviours and norms, which, idealistically, somewhat preserved the Ghanaian society, is to proceed to examine the likely practical experiences that may lead to conflict in news-sharing.

Referring to the USA, Trujilo and Ekdorn observe that conflict is unavoidable in the American culture because it is created around self-motivated individuals and vibrant groups (Trujilo & Ekdorn 1985). In contemporary Ghana, the Western conventions appear to be the trend and almost acceptable in every aspect of Ghanaian endeavour. Gyekye (2008, 1990) argues that in the past Ghanaians have been critical of values that majority of the people subscribed to because not every person in a society considers the beliefs formulated by members in the majority to be accurate. As stated by him, culture can empower majority groups against minority ones, although the minority tie in with the norms of that culture or society. He contends that this is because the majority culture tends to influence the activities of cultural members. Gyekye emphasises that the Ghanaian culture in contemporary times seems to have been faced with a paradox around the basic features of its values. Hasty (2006) supports Gyekye's assertion and says, it could be deduced from how the media sometimes offer stimulus and rationality of its own, an impetus alienated from the imports of society in relation to public conversations. Hasty argues that this is because of the use of state power through the media to influence public discourse, and she likens it to how traditional rulers speak through *akyeame* in order to reach the people. It is important at this point to examine

what constitutes contemporary Ghanaian cultural beliefs and values a little further to contextualise how they may be influenced by the media. For the sake of convenience, transient effects will be looked at first, followed by unchanging societal beliefs, values, and behaviours.

3.2 CONTEMPORARY GHANAIAN CULTURAL BELIEFS AND VALUES

It may be argued that contemporary Ghanaian culture is inundated with transient cultural tendencies. This is because popular culture appears to dominate the Ghanaian society. Popular culture, unlike conservative culture, is immediately accessible and easily digestible, in the form of commercialised mass culture. Conservative culture has an educating and a cultivating pursuit to preserve and pass down nuances of culture itself. Therefore, conservative culture attracts a limited but mature and elderly audience. But popular culture is “the culture of the people,” usually informal and transient (Goebel 2010; UNESCO 1983). An example in Ghana is the emergence lately of dance performance groups that partly and often deviate from the indigenous dance forms and beliefs they claim to propagate. In a multiethnic society such as Ghana, these groups could be described as representing pseud social experimentation of altered forms of culture.

Thus, there are trends of beliefs, values, and behaviours in Ghana (Nukunya 2016). Trends represent instant and temporary inclinations (feelings, predispositions, etc.) that are popular at a certain point in time and are considerably believed by cultural members as truth without verification (Friesen 2014). Many examples of trends abound in fashion, pop culture and entertainment in Ghana such as *Adwoa Yankee* and *Otto Pfister*. *Adwoa Yankee cloth fashion* originated through the release of a song by C.K. Mann (Charles Kofi Amankwaa Mann), a Ghanaian musician, titled “Adwoa Yankee.” The musician worn a locally produced tie-and-dye textile during a musical show/release of the song, therefore the textile was nickname *Adwoa Yankee*. In the 1980s in Ghana, batik and tie-and-dye were considered the fabric of the poor,

probably because it was mainly produced in poor communities such as Nima Gutter, in Nima, a Zongo suburb in Accra (Sesenu 2014; <https://www.last.fm/music/C.K.+Mann/+wiki>; <https://africashowboy.tumblr.com>). On the other hand, *Otto Pfister pop culture and fashion fad*, represents the dressing style of the coach of the *Black Stars*, the Ghana national football team, which became a fashion craze among Ghanaian young men. The coach, Otto Martin Pfister, always lowered his pair of trousers, especially at the back, below the waist level with his underwear showing. The coach's popularity among Ghanaian football enthusiasts made his fashion style catch on easily with the youth of Ghana and beyond. The coach was also in the limelight as one of Germany's most successful coaching exports, voted *Africa's Manager of the Year* in 1992 (FIFA.com). From the presentation on transient cultural tendencies and trends, with examples, it should be clear that in the absence of deep-rooted cultural or traditional beliefs, values and behaviours, society relates instantly to trends, turning them into cultural trends, because associating with trends requires minimal knowledge of them (Rothstein 1996, pp. 1 & 28).

As may be noticed, culture comprises multi-layered mixtures of past and present habits. Even though the Ghanaian culture, like other cultures, is continually transforming, it is still possible to locate its foundational values through past influences of its construction (Gyekye 2013; Wiredu & Gyekye 1992; Sarpong 2012). McElroy developed a set of cultural beliefs in the context of the USA, that he deems has shaped and differentiates the American from other people and are relevant to this thesis for the purpose of illustration. These are primary beliefs, immigrant beliefs, frontier beliefs, religious and moral beliefs, social beliefs, political beliefs, and beliefs on human nature (McElroy 2000; see also Borchers 2001, p. 198). McElroy's (2000), taxonomy of beliefs is like those written about, forcefully, in connection with Ghana (Africa) by Dzobo (1992), Engmann (1992) and, Wiredu and Gyekye (1992). For instance, McElroy's "primary beliefs" relates to work,

and comprises three main beliefs rendered in adages such as “Everyone Must Work, People Must Benefit from Their Work, and Manual Work Is Respectable” (McElroy 2000). Dzobo (1992), Engmann (1992) and, Wiredu and Gyekye (1992), and Gyekye (2013; 1992), in looking at the Ghanaian situation, appear to have accentuated their works on ‘belief in knowledge acquisition,’ ‘belief in truth telling,’ ‘belief in person and community,’ and ‘belief in nature and moral thought.’ But the cultural inclination of the Ghanaian seems to have always been influenced by spiritual and moral beliefs. Almost every Ghanaian believes that there is an almighty being (God) who is responsible for the creation of the universe and everything therein (Nukunya 2016, 1997). The *Ghana 2019 International Religious Freedom Report* approximates Ghana’s population in July 2019 to be 28.7 million. Out of this population,

approximately 71 percent of the population is Christian, 18 percent Muslim, 5 percent adheres to indigenous or animistic religious beliefs, and 6 percent belongs to other religious groups or has no religious beliefs. Smaller religious groups include the Bahai Faith, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Eckankar, and Rastafarianism. Christians reside throughout the country; the majority of Muslims reside in the northern regions [Upper West, Upper East, North East, Northern and Savannah] and in the urban centers of Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi. Most followers of traditional religious beliefs reside in rural areas (pp. 1-2).³⁷

The above data indicates that there is no significant association between ethnicity and religion, but geography is often linked to religious identity in Ghana. It could be inferred from the data that religious bodies having the largest population, will define most of Ghanaian moral and religious values.

³⁷ Christian denominations include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, Eden Revival Church International, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seventh-day Adventist, Pentecostal, Baptist, Eastern Orthodox, African independent churches, the Society of Friends, and numerous nondenominational Christian groups. Muslim communities include Sunnis, Ahmadiyya, Shia, and Sufis (Tijaniyyah and Qadiriyya orders). Many individuals who identify as Christian or Muslim also practice some aspects of indigenous beliefs. There are syncretic groups that combine elements of Christianity or Islam with traditional beliefs. Zetahil, a belief system unique to the country, combines elements of Christianity and Islam (*Ghana 2019 International Religious Freedom Report*).

In general terms, a belief is a notion a society developed about what is factual and deceptive. So, societies, including Ghana, develop beliefs founded on their culture (cultural beliefs) to safeguard the culture and society (Nukunya 1997). For instance, Ghanaians' belief in the value of hard work in hunting, fishing, and farming could be associated with their predecessors' craving to defeat hunger (Impraim-Swanzy 2015; Osabu-Kle 2015). To most Ghanaians, this belief is profound and indispensable to the extent that, it is depicted in majority of cultural festivals such as *Tedudu Za* or *Te Za* (Yam Festival) of the chiefs and people of Asogli in the Ho Municipality of the Volta Region, *Agbeli Za* (Cassava Festival) of the chiefs and people of Avenor in the Volta Region, *Aboakyir*³⁸ Festival celebrated by the chiefs and people of Effutu-Winneba, in the Central Region of Ghana and *Homowo Festival*³⁹ of the chiefs and people of Ga, in the Greater-Accra Region (Addo 2011; Agbodeka 2000; Amlor 2016; Impraim-Swanzy 2015; Osabu-Kle 2015).

It is important to examine practical experiences that may influence members of society to flout institutionalised protocols of that society. As noticed in earlier paragraphs, in every society, the Ghanaian society inclusive, some minority groups hold beliefs, attitudes and values other than that of the majority. This means, while cultural beliefs may seem to be largely acceptable, not every member of the society sticks to them. Also, the Ghanaian culture, for better or worse, has been modified by European involvement in the affairs of the country (Gyekye 2013). According to Spindler and Spindler (1990), mainstream culture denotes the essential beliefs, values, and behaviours that dominate the discourse of a society at its inception and have been that society's conservative construction of culture. Evidently, Spindler and Spindler observe that dominant culture has the tendency to be exclusive (high-class and unable to make room for everyone) to minority of members of a culture. Borchers notes that "Despite [mainstream culture's] inability to

³⁸ *Aboakyire* interprets as 'hunting for game,' therefore 'hunting for game festival.'

³⁹ *Homowo Festival* is celebrated to commemorate planting of crops and to 'hoot' at food scarcity.

capture the beliefs, values, and behaviours of all, [it] tends to dominate what [the people] believe, value, and do in [their] culture.” Borchers further explains that “The dominant culture selects from all the available beliefs, values, and behaviours, those that best serve its interests” (2001, p. 194). This explanation reinforces Williams’ assertion that “no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy and human intention” (1977, p. 125). In the Ghanaian context, mainstream culture includes, to a certain degree, amalgamation of cultures of the various ethnic groups and beyond (Cultural Initiatives Support Programme Manual for Journalists on Reporting Culture 2010).

It is appropriate at this point to present some fundamental Ghanaian traditional formations, which suggests that family and community commitment had been the custom. Family and community obligations were reflected in work, especially in farm labour support, et cetera. The evidence of family and community commitment can be found in traditional *adinkra* symbols such as *Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunefu*, *Bi Nka Bi* (Nobody should bite another) and *Akoma Ntoaso* (The joining of hearts or United hearts) (Willis 1998; <https://www.adinkrasymbols.org>). Similarly, *Ubuntu*, the “endogenous philosophical perspective of South African peoples connotes a “collective responsibility” among human beings to distribute naturally and spiritually the life force for common benefit” (Christopher 2006, p. 77).⁴⁰ In other words, Christopher indicates, *Ubuntu* is premised on communal values, the virtue of humanity (humanness), compassion, ethics, respect and, above all, the development of society. He thinks the notion of *Ubuntu* is at the core of African, for this matter Ghanaian, philosophies of culture.

⁴⁰ *Ubuntu* is a life force that helps to maintain the equilibrium of forces natural, spiritual, and human in the community. *Ubuntu* is something that is internalised and should manifest itself in activities and attitudes such as respect, love, care, sharing, accountability, and responsibility. Due to the centrality of the other person in my own existence, it does not discriminate based on race, gender, ability, or handicap (Seleti 2003, cited in Christopher 2005; see also Lutz 2009). *Ubuntu* stems from *ntu*, ‘the life force that causes things to happen,’ in the Bantu family of languages. Literally translated, *ubuntu* means ‘collective personhood.’ Its meaning is captured by the Nguni proverb ‘umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ (I am because we are) (Christopher 2005, p. 77).

Although the Ghanaian traditional values of family and community commitment and its counterpart, the South African idea of collective responsibility among human beings still pertains in some communities, many individual Ghanaians have worked relentlessly to achieve success in contemporary time. As a result, the shared standard of the Ghanaian in ascertaining success has been altered from the family-community disposition to what one becomes by way of individual effort (Nukunya 2016). Borchers summarises McElroy's positions on American social beliefs as (i) Society is a collection of individuals, (ii) Every person's success improves society, and (iii) Achievement determines social rank (Borchers 2001; McElroy 2000). Comparable to Borchers' and McElroy's opinions, Gyekye (2013) and Nukunya (2016) believe that the rather new societal focus of Ghanaians gives rise to these three convictions. Nukunya (2016) notes that while contemporary Ghanaian social and cultural ideals may advance the society because success of individual members would benefit society in various ways, a situation of self-interest and absence of sense of family and community may also be created.

Gyekye further observes that Ghanaian cultural values seem to have changed frequently. The highest place in the social order is awarded to those individuals who are successful, by whatever means. Eddy affirms Gyekye's view, saying that "Our culture measures worth and assigns respect based on credentials, money and possessions ranking highest among them. People matter more when they have more" (Eddy 2020, p. 94). Thus, societal values can be promoted if the right individual achievers are recognised or awarded (Eddy 2020; Gyekye 2008).

The Ghanaian contemporary cultural behaviour cherishes change that brings positive development in the lives of people. Therefore, many Ghanaians are always striving to achieve a better future (Nukunya 2016).

It should be clear, up till now, that the Ghanaian culture approves specific ways of doing things and reasoning. As explained from the beginning, Ghana has no single culture. The various ethnic groups have unique cultures. What is referred to in this study as Ghanaian culture symbolises the dominant culture, which can be said to be the aggregation of various common elements of majority of the ethnic groups. The question of hegemony then arises. McElroy explains hegemony as “the domination of culture by one particular cultural group, resulting in the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs, values, and practices over others” (2000, p. 207). The Ghanaian situation cannot be referred to entirely as hegemonic, although in relation to protocols of news-sharing, the cultures of the Akan seem to stand out and therefore dominate. It could be argued also that the Akan-speaking ethnic groups form majority of the Ghanaian population, hence this situation (See, 2010 Population & Housing Census, Summary Report of Final Results, Ghana Statistical Service, May 2012).

The evidence of cultural beliefs and values, and other historical proofs indicate that Ghana/Africa has effective knowledge systems to cope with all aspects of life including communication. This is contrary to the views of earlier European scholars such as Hegel (1991) and Kant (1991).⁴¹ Nkrumah notes that “Our highly sophisticated culture was said to be simple and paralysed by inertia, and we had to be encumbered with tutelage. And this tutelage, it was thought, could only be implemented if we first subjugate politically” (Nkrumah 1970, pp. 62-63).

While colonialism may have accounted for the seeming lack of recognition for African cultural traditions, antecedents of post-colonialism cannot be ruled out, too (Greffrath 2016; see also Blunt & McEwan 2002). Although explicit colonisation was terminated in the twentieth century, the twenty-first century’s interventionism and the ‘global village’ conundrum

⁴¹ These issues were highlighted and re-examined at the Toyin Falola@65 Conference held in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, under the theme “African Knowledges and Alternative Futures,” January 29-31, 2018.

reestablished colonial “inequities and structures of power, epistemology, subjectivity, and visuality” (17th Annual Africa Conference, March 31-April 2, 2017).

Nkrumah, therefore advocated for his cultural ideals through the ‘African Personality’⁴² endeavour to liberate the minds of Africans from colonial and post-colonial impediments (Nkrumah 1963). Essentially, the ‘African Personality’ concept comprises “the modes of thought, communication, ideals, values, attitudes, and manner of behaviour that distinguish an individual or a group from others. These clearly make [the African] distinct, irrespective of colour and physical features” (Nkrumah 1963, p. 5; see also Cultural Initiatives Support Programme-CISP 2010, pp. 18-20). Nkrumah’s ideas are to indicate that Ghanaian and African values and cultural traditions are deep-rooted and are effective in contemporary times. To be able to apply them, means that cultural hegemony must be rejected, while cultural expressions that are relevant to the time are promoted (CISP 2010).

Having, generally, examined culture, and particularly in the Ghanaian context, the next sections will discuss media and cultural beliefs and values.

3.3 MEDIA AND CULTURAL BELIEFS AND VALUES

As noticed in the previous section, mainstream culture in Ghana may be said to comprise a mixture of cultures of the various ethnic groups. However, it appears that diversities in social class, rather than ethnic distinctions and sensitivities are the creators of conflicts in news-sharing at the interface between traditional protocols and the modern mass media. This is evident in the way “mainstream culture measures itself against a subgroup of the mainstream: the referent class” (Spindler & Spindler 1990, p. 38). The referent class, according to Spindler and Spindler, refers to

⁴² The ‘African Personality’ refers to total harnessing of the potentials of the African, and a showcase of the ‘Africanness’ to the rest of the world.

“an urban professional and business population, college educated, and increasingly characterised in the younger age groups by double incomes” (ibid). In Ghana, like in most countries, the referent class occupies high-ranking positions such as in corporate levels and in politics. This class also includes celebrities in show-businesses (actors, presenters, musicians, comedians, etc.) and sports. Some members of this class self-brand themselves in a way that violates societal norms through forms of speech, fashion/clothing, wittiness and absurdity, properties, et cetera. For example, it is not unusual in Ghana for some women celebrities to publicly attribute their wealth to having multiple sexual partners who financially sponsor them. Moesha Buduong, a Ghanaian television presenter, actress and model, caused a stir in April 2018, after she granted interview to Cable News Network (CNN) reporter Christiane Amanpour, which suggested that women in Ghana were dependent on successful men to make ends meet. She says, “In Ghana, our economy is such a way that you just need someone to take care of you because you can’t make enough money as a woman here” (Moesha Buduong’s full interview with CNN’s Amanpour 2018, www.ghanaweb.com). Moesha Buduong’s comment received harsh criticism from both men and women who felt she was painting a negative picture of Ghanaian women. Others also felt the criticism was unjustified because the comments reflected reality of Ghanaian life (www.ghanacelebrities.com).⁴³

Nyamnjoh (2009) argues that self-interest over community pursuit may be extended to the media thereby people post media text or make vulgar utterances without first considering community sensibilities. According to Hagan (2006), the media have changed many facets of contemporary civilisation in the media-age by permitting the manifestation of different viewpoints, altered society’s perception, and constructed various benchmarks for truth and information-

⁴³ Celebrities such as John Dumelo, Lydia Forson and Afia Odo shared their view on Twitter, condemning Moesha Buduong’s comments. On the other hand, radio host, Captain Smart, commended her and entreated Ghanaians to applaud her for speaking the truth.

sharing. Hagan's position has been corroborated by Gyekye who indicates that the Ghanaian media, theatre and film inclusive, sometimes do not tell compelling stories whose underlying values are rooted in African traditions and societal value systems (Gyekye 2008). These assertions are pertinent to this thesis in the ways that Rao and Wasserman indicate about Hollywood (USA). Both argue that Hollywood is in the business of creating films whose central messages are about the beauty of the American dream and values. These films are exported to the rest of the world, whose citizens are busy dismantling the values of their own societies and creating great big holes ready to be filled (Rao & Wasserman 2007; Wasserman 2011).

Some media scholars such as Owusu and Osei-Appiah have explained that interventions at the home front have failed as too many Ghanaians see films and television series from the West and imbibe the stories and their values because they are living in a vacuum at home (Osei-Appiah 2019; Owusu 2011/12). It has been suggested that the target audiences have been missed or the messages have not been packaged properly. Or, the messages were not realistic enough. But the Ghanaian media have the responsibility to provide the citizens with value-oriented information, education and entertainment that may guide their lives (Gyekye 2008). Gyekye also asserts that the importance placed on a reasoned, systematic approach to work, and on the standards of competence, which used to be the norm in most media houses are somehow lacking now.

The notion that Ghanaians are always determined to have a better life ties into their obsession for new things, and new communication gadgets and technologies are no exception. As a result, Ghanaians may see progress in innovations in communication technology. This may lead to potential abuse gadgets and technology in their applications to news-sharing (Gyekye 2008; Sey 2011). As Nukunya indicates, Ghanaian contemporary culture celebrates individual efforts and may consider every member in society's opinions as distinctive and noble to the societal course

(Nukunya 2016). In relation to the media, Wasserman notes that if every member of society's view is considered as unique, it implies that in the media age, a technologically rich world, an individual can share news at his or her judgement and pleasure for the benefit, or at the detriment to society (Wasserman 2011). The Ghanaian culture may not have suffered much in terms of transformation over the years mostly because of cultural content of oral tradition (storytelling, singing, rituals, festivals, funerals, etc.) (Gyekye 2008; Sey 2011). Sey further explains that nowadays, culture is maintained mainly through various mediated means such as the media, conventional organisations, artifacts and carvings, literature, et cetera. Transmission of culture through media sources is significant to this study.

From the preceding examination of Ghanaian beliefs, values, and behaviours, it is useful to provide some normative strategies suggested by Hagan (2006, pp. 8-9) for the modern mass media in Ghana to adopt as a cultural framework in news-sharing:

- (i) The media (conventional and social) to acknowledge and submit to the self-worth of every individual. This entails the media to appreciate the uniqueness in culture and belief systems of their society.
- (ii) To make possible for society to abolish undesirable beliefs and values, the media have to disseminate information on constructive cultural philosophies.
- (iii) The media have to come to terms with combined effects of multiethnic experiences in order to appreciate cultural differences and characteristics.
- (iv) The Ghanaian media have to acknowledge that the standards of honesty and accuracy, juxtaposed with sensitivity and the obligation to establish what society stands to gain, will determine the suitability of time of release of information, the manner in which it is released and context of disclosure.
- (v) The media foster consciousness of citizenry by using indigenous insight into cultural systems of society to create true and accurate account of events.

The above recommended framework signifies that there are strong implications for reporting on culture in Ghana (and in Africa). It is in this context that the media person is seen as a reflector of cultural values and a developer of communal values. Therefore, he/she is expected by society not to engage in propagation of negative attitudes that may portray Ghanaian values as inferior (Karikari 2017). According to Hagan, a media-grown approach of dealing with Ghanaian cultural

issues, especially those regarding the media cannot be overstated since this is needed to capture the involvement and the creative nature of the people. Hagan also believes that the media may, effectively, be said to be at the forefront of the solution of Ghana's defining moment of collective consciousness. The media's dilemma, perhaps, is being perceived as the 'problem' at the same time as the 'solution' (Hagan 2006).

Having examined media and cultural beliefs and values in Ghana, the next sections directly review literature on indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass channels to accentuate their roles regarding information and news-sharing.

3.4 INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATIVE ACTS

This section focuses on review of literature on information and news-sharing in indigenous communicative acts, particularly, in Ghana. Attention has also been focused on literature from other parts of Africa. Review of literature on African tradition and the right to communicate, has been carried out first, followed by Ghana, and literature from elsewhere in Africa. The apparent transition from indigenous communication to the modern mass media has been explored. This line of presentation is important to enhance a systematic assimilation of the issues.

3.4.1 African Traditional Values and the Right to Communicate

Blake (1993) examines the nature and classes of the speech act in traditional African settings against the background of African traditional values and the right to speak. He attempts to portray certain aspects that could be viewed as planks to form bases for a classification of a folk system of communication in Africa, which he terms as African rhetoric. Blake points out that the objective of the paper is to show how traditional African values are critical to the efforts to understand communication philosophies, ethics, processes, structures, and genres in traditional African

settings. He presupposes that African societies share certain fundamental values that guide the day-to-day life of inhabitants in traditional African settings. The values of interest here are mainly those that guide the various processes of communication. There are, for example, certain “rules” that guide discourse in the deliberative, forensic, and epideictic genres. The “rules” are grounded in values such as respect for elders; acceptance of the supremacy of hierarchical structures; performance of certain rituals in respect for ancestors; performance of rituals for various occasions ranging from farming to death and burial ceremonies; sibling relationships, et cetera. Blake associates communication with rights, levels, and realms in Africa. The focus is mainly on the realms of communication. In this context, he is interested in the right to speak, to communicate through various channels, and the ability for Africans to express themselves freely. He added that the rights that govern speech act, guaranteed in international declarations, have their roots in the traditions of African societies. Traditional values become an important point of departure in any form of mass communication studies, which is also emphasised by Arendt (1960).

Blake notes that African tradition and history are replete with cases of “rights” being exercised and/or demanded which translates into the communication patterns of Africans. For example, despotic leaders at the Chieftaincy level and higher are challenged and deposed because of popular up-risings. Also, women, who in contemporary literature are portrayed as “rightless” (which incidentally is true in so many instances) have exercised their rights within traditional contexts, ranging from the right to divorce to the right to rule. In West Africa, there have been several women who were chiefs and paramount chiefs of their chiefdoms such as Amina Zazzau of Zaria, Nigeria, and Nana Kofi Abuna V of Essipun, Ghana. There are many of them today still holding chieftaincies. The communication patterns of the ‘right’ and ‘rightless’ differ. The issue of rights, therefore, is one that is not strange to African tradition and value systems. What perhaps,

Blake did not discuss is how one goes about exercising these rights and/or seek redress when these rights are flouted. He indicates that at the level of communication, the issue of rights within African traditional contexts and value systems is discernible in several loci of African society. Blake further observes that there are certain conventions that serve as guides for the exercise of such rights. As an example, he mentions guidelines that dictate the approaches that people who communicate wrongly to those with right must utilise to make a case. According to him, forensic occasions are plentiful in traditional society and are a pleasure and delight to observe. The African forensic tradition is documented in journals of western explorers since the advent of western contacts with the continent.

In reading novelists like Chinua Achebe, one can also observe a clear and rich African rhetorical tradition, which he depicts through making his readers understand African traditional values, communication philosophies, ethics, processes, structures, and genres in traditional African settings. Blake also discusses what could be viewed as stages that form the bases for a classification of a folk system of communication in Africa. The rationale for the discourse is grounded on the need to understand the sources of African rhetoric and, secondly, to determine how traditional African values treat the issue of rights of the individual to communicate. This is because an understanding of those forms could assist in utilising them effectively to communicate innovations within a context that the rural African would readily grasp. Blake concludes the study by saying that, as it stands, not only are the rhetorical structures, traditional values, and knowledge systems of the Euro-American (white) world known to Africans but they have also been proselytised as the norm for human and societal conduct to the extent of defining others to the detriment of rights, norms and values of the African continent. Conformity or non-conformity to those norms could result, at times, in blatant aggression against weak non-western states. Based

on the findings, Blake believes that there is still a lot to do on the issue of rights whether within the realms of communication, politics, religion, law, or any realm of a researcher's choice. Blake also calls on researchers to explore further into how traditional communication can be used in more spheres of modern living such as in politics, sports, entertainment, and so on. He argues that it is worth investigating to know what aspects of indigenous channels are amenable to modern politics and rural development as it is an area.

The studies of Ansu-Kyeremeh (1994, 1997) centered mainly on the use of indigenous communication in rural education and in combination with mass media. Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998, Vol. I and II) offer an extensive corpus of research and explain the role of indigenous communication to information and communication technology and alludes that Africa's technological development will be more operational on a comprehensive level if indigenous communication methods are applied. He examines various aspects of indigenous communication such as radio soap operas. Volume II continues from where Volume I ended by interrogating topics such as "Mass Media: Finding the Right Mix" and "Akan Political System in Ghana, and Traditional Communication." Ansu-Kyeremeh also offers the Akan Political System as a theoretical framework from which he makes his arguments. One of the key conclusions Ansu-Kyeremeh draws in his book is that "indigenous communication systems appear more outdated now than in the early 1990s" (1998, p. xi). This conclusion is an important one because it underscores the basis of this thesis that the Ghanaian society is overwhelmed with new communication technologies and new mass media platforms.

On the other hand, Ansu-Kyeremeh's conclusion contrasts with the basis of this thesis when he ascribes lack of advancement in technologies to indigenous communication. This conclusion suggests that Ghanaian cultural elements are unfavorable to technological

advancement. In situations where the society thinks that frameworks for communication in developed societies can supplant their culture, they will resist it. Even so, Ansu-Kyeremeh advises that the indigenous media or communication and that of the modern mass media should be integrated. He emphasises this position, saying, “any policy which does not address itself to this dualist approach is bound to compound Africa’s communication problems even more” (1998, p. 243).

Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005) provides general theoretical frameworks for indigenous communication. The publication discusses the structure, form and content of indigenous communication, the social environment of communication in traditional African society as well as oral communication in traditional African society. The study also takes up the role of song, proverbs, riddles, narratives, myths, folktales, as well as the limitations of oral tradition. Ansu-Kyeremeh views indigenous communication as a way of life, originating in the local African cultures. He also observes the continuities of indigenous communication from the pre-colonial social, political, family/clan structure and the time-honoured socialisation practices. Ansu-Kyeremeh’s theoretical framework clarifies many of the attributes of indigenous communication in terms of opposition to injurious, degrading Western influences and the protection of communities from the unfair colonial and post-colonial state system. The study also reveals indigenous communication’s participatory, comprehensive, and comparatively adaptable, spontaneous characteristics in small communities. Ansu-Kyeremeh contends that the top-down development endeavours of the state system, regrettably, pay no attention to indigenous communication and are therefore, essentially ineffective. However, research works and publications by Ansu-Kyeremeh highlight the importance of indigenous communication in the present democratic dispensation in Africa.

Ansah (2005) links traditional communication to the political process in Africa. Also, the love of words in conversation and the centrality of performance in African everyday communication has been underscored by Morrison (2005). Morrison observes that it is common to see people gather in villages and public places in apparent unceasing conversations interlaced with rhythmic poetic speech, and interspersed with oratorical proverbs, storytelling, and witticisms. She asserts that all African adults become part of the community in song, dance, drama, and allegorical sharing of opinions and news. These interactive meetings are the main mode of teaching, learning, and expressing values, but also means of interrogating tradition and maintaining on personal respect and rights. A number of the studies reported in various chapters in Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005) indicate that traditional communication is very much alive today and growing in Ghana, Uganda, Burkina Faso and other various parts of Africa. The section is partly anchored on Yankah's (1998) assertion that "[...] the modern nation state is thus confronted with competing norms and faces a choice between the wholesale adoption of modern institutions and media with all their associated norms and operating foreign institution within a cultural frame of reference" (1998, p. 29). Yankah believes that modernisation stifled and dislocated traditional modes of communication. This statement dovetails into the generally held view that space-time parameters, language and nature of public discourse have been changed by the advent of the modern mass media in Africa (Ghana) (1998, p. 1).

Digesting Yankah's (1998) claim in relation to recent 'tradi-media' episodes of violation of culturally acceptable ways of news-sharing by the modern mass media only illustrates the difficult choices Africa (Ghana) must make towards 'change and continuity.' He stresses that change and continuity is to draw on cultural traditions to welcome modernisation and globalisation. It is about breaking barriers and building bridges of cultural inclusion, it is about a

struggle by minorities to belong and dream the same dreams with the majorities, and not about modernity encroaching on the culture of the minorities. Yankah (1992) argues for the use of African traditional collective knowledge and wisdom in news and information dissemination. He cautions against “trivializing the indigenous sources of knowledge” (Yanka 2000, p. 21), and further calls for a greater commitment by African scholars and institutions to their local academies and epistemological systems to rediscover and adapt local paradigms of scholarship to mainstream or dominant patterns. This infers those African scholars and leaders must not present indigenous traditions as the ‘other,’ but rather retrieve and save them to inspire visions and relevance of contemporary decisions. According to Yankah, the search would be for indigenous knowledge systems that address local needs, and for scholars who would be committed enough to seek to facilitate the synchronisation of indigenous knowledge with dominant knowledge. The Ghana National Commission (GNC)-UNESCO, Ghana Culture Forum (GCF), National Folklore Board (NFB) and the National Commission on Culture (NCC), support Yankah’s assertions in a Virtual Panel Discussion on the theme, “Promoting and Mainstreaming Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices for Sustainable Development.” Anyidoho (2003) asks a rhetorical question to conclude the debate on employing indigenous knowledge to present-day pursuits; “How can you know where you are going when you do not know where you are coming from? [...]. It is onto the old ropes that new ones are woven. Our dialogue with the future must begin with ‘The back without which there is no front’” (p. 17).

Literature on communicative acts from other parts of Africa is reviewed here, having discussed literature on Ghana. *African Communication Research (ACR)*, Vol. 1, No. 1 of May 2008, has been dedicated to research on grassroots participatory communication. The journal was published by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communications at St. Augustine University of

Tanzania as a service to communication research in Africa. Although there are other pressing issues facing the African continent, the editors of *ACR* think that Africa presents its own indigenous problems and aspirations for humanly and socially rewarding communication. African cultures face the common problems of a postcolonial society, the growing oppression of a power elite and global dependency. The study believes that African theories and methods should be enriched by genuine encounters with people from all parts of the continent by working on questions and problems the African communication landscape faces. The kind of landscapes of communication research being advocated is opening to in this study are close to the approaches that the late James Halloran, long-time president of the International Association of Mass Communication Research (IAMCR), continually emphasised. His famous statement, ‘If you ask silly questions, you will get silly answers,’ may have bordered too much on the sarcastic, but this does point to a task that communication researchers must keep in mind. Halloran says that it should be possible to evaluate the directions of the field, the questions that are being taken up and the priorities for research.

Many African scholars have contended that traditional communication, as does Wilson (2008), is equally or more important in the African context, and that there is an intimate relation between the grassroots and the oral, and the way African media institutions develop. The argument that African cultures are more communalistic, communitarian and oral is made in Des Wilson’s study in the *ACR* and defended. The study calls for research to be opened to a wide variety of forms of communication that constitute the cultures of African societies. The study reveals that there are significant theoretical perspectives on the variety of forms of communication that have developed among African communication scholars, a great many very specific empirical studies have come out of Africa, but rarely have these been given a broader theoretical foundation. The

study lists some communication and media researchers in Africa, the theories being developed and used which suit the African situation. Such studies include Akpabio (2003, 1997), Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998, 1997, 1994), Emenaku (2003), Konkwo (1997), Nwanne (2006), Nwosu, Aliede and Nsude (2005), Uko (2000), Wilson (1998, 2005), and Yankah (1998, 1992). According to the research, a good theory ‘brilliantly’ clarifies a lot about communication in the sense that it throws light on a broad range of empirical realities. This, for example, was the significance of the theoretical ground-breaking of Stuart Hall and his colleagues in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the United Kingdom.

Wilson (2005) created a taxonomy that has served as a template of other taxonomies of indigenous communication. Wilson describes how indigenous communication can be significant in development communication. As many scholars, including Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) have mentioned, the development directives from state organisations in African countries have flopped in their development communication because they tend to disregard and discard the networks of indigenous communication that are the means of African communication at the grassroots level. Wilson (2007) contends that indigenous media should play integral part in modern communication systems. But he also observes that there has been debates in recent time about the issue of relevance of African indigenous communication systems in an era of innovations in communication technology. He, again, states that misgivings have been articulated as to whether the new forms of communication would be effective in an essentially traditional society. He concludes by suggesting that intellectual resources be directed at finding ways in which to integrate the best resources of indigenous communication systems and new forms of communication into a dynamic cultural experience and not on probing for differences and shortcomings. Wilson’s conclusion dovetails

into the purpose of this study, to suggest ways that the values of indigenous media can be incorporated into modern mass media practices with a specific reference to Ghana.

Like Yankah (1998), in respect of using indigenous communication means in policymaking and solving everyday issues of African societies, Konkwo in 1997 strongly advocates for a guidebook for teaching communication courses in tertiary institutions in Africa, particularly in Nigeria. Also, like Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998), Konkwo discusses the structure and content of indigenous communication and the social conditions of communication in traditional African societies. Uko (2000), on the other hand, examines various forms of indigenous communication, verbal and nonverbal, found in Anaangland (Akwa Ibom, South-South Nigeria). She discusses the challenges and possibilities of indigenous communication in the era of new communication technologies. Emenaku (2003) also analyses the aesthetics of Igala communication systems, in Nigeria and suggests how the forms, aesthetics and contents of this special system can be made significant to the social needs of the people in the age of globalisation.

Akpabio (2003) covers aspects of others' works such as Ansu-Kyeremeh's in terms of classification, identification, and designation of functions of indigenous communication. In his edited book titled, *Communication and Social Action* (1997), Wilson published three articles by Akpabio in his edited book in 1997. The first article explores the relationship between oramedia and human communication, and the other two examine development communication and promotional activities using traditional media regarding the roles of market women's association, respectively.

Nwabueze (2005) explores career opportunities in traditional communication in an edited collection by Nwosu, Aliede, and Nsude (2005). She argues in the article that indigenous communication is an area comparable to public relations, advertising, and journalism in which a

career can be derived such as indigenous media consultancy, indigenous media research, indigenous media management, indigenous media practice and trado-modern communication, et cetera. Nwosu and Nsude (2007) discuss indigenous communication issues but also some modern media issues. The chapters in the book comprise, “Synergizing the Traditional and Modern mass media for Sustainable development communication in Africa” by Nwabueze (2007), “Proverbs as the language of social communication in traditional African society” by Enighe (2007), “The interface of traditional African communication and the modern mass media” by Chukwu (2007), “The traditional media: Forms, contents and roles” by Ngwu (2007), “An examination of the application and relevance of Wilson’s (2007) taxonomy of traditional media systems in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*” by Odunlanri (2007), and “Traditional communication: The encoding and decoding processes” by Wilson and Itek (2007).

The apparent change from indigenous communication to the modern mass media has been explored. Although Oduko (1987) focuses on Nigeria, its perspectives are relevant to Ghana. He discusses the development of modern mass media as a necessary attribute of the evolution of an integral Nigerian nation out of the many traditional ethnic communities. He shows that the indigenous media, which were the precolonial channels of communication have now become limited in the conduct of national commerce, religion, education, politics, and government. Oduko, however, contends that the potentials of the indigenous media have not been fully explored. Thus, the limitation and calls for research to establish what roles indigenous media can play in modern politics, and in grass root development, generally. Oduko (1987) examines indigenous media before precolonial times, through to the colonial times up to the period after independence and the influx of newspapers, television, and radio and how they have affected the indigenous means of communication and consequences thereof. He concludes that mass media is a major instrument for

political competition. The political parties used and abused broadcasting to win supporters nationally. At the local levels, political parties used indigenous communication systems, along with radio announcement, to summon people for campaign rallies, for example. Nonetheless, the potentials of the indigenous media have not been fully explored. Beyond that, the place of indigenous communication is not valued.

Wefwafwa (2014) establishes that rural peoples consider modern communication systems as frivolous and impotent in addressing their deep-seated cultural issues. According to Wefwafwa, the people argue that they seek genuineness in communication rather than artificial and lack of value communication of television and radio. To them, metaphors, village dances, and folk songs deliver messages far more effectively. Therefore, modern communication systems alone cannot tackle issues relating to culture. The two communication systems, indigenous and modern, need to be integrated to create a fusion of communication system(s) that can usefully engage the way of life of most African people.

3.4.2 News-Sharing as a Power Transaction

This section examines the idea that communication involves power transaction for which reason the respect of the interest of those engaged in communication and their duty to keep the communication active is paramount.

Nyamnjoh's (2009) research is relevant to this thesis in its attempt to emphasise the interconnectedness of culture, traditions, and the mass media. He stresses that this relationship is strong to the extent that neither can do without the other and makes their role in communication very significant. Nyamnjoh further explains that the media would do no good to a people it provides a medium for communication, education, and entertainment without considering the

beliefs, philosophy, the language, traditions, values, the economic interests, and political and institutional life of the people.

Karikari (2017) asserts that the mass media has always aided the attainment of every meaningful societal enterprise all over the world, serving as channels of mass information, education and impacting public insights and views. To support his assertion, Karikari describes the mass media as “[...] vital for the promotion of cultural objects such as literacy and general social enlightenment, as they are indispensable for the promotion of social justice and political inclusiveness and popular participation” (p. 4). According to him the mass media space in Ghana is expected to engage itself with this overall model of the media’s function, thus, the culture of a people would, manifestly, influence the purpose, content, communication, and business culture of the media. These significant roles of the media, Karikari notes, account for contestations of its ownership and control by both political and social players, and the reason why the media so often become targets of suppression and restraint by varieties of social and political forces whose interests may be threatened by the media’s work, one way or another.

It may be right to say that information communication and mass communication entails power transaction, and it is rooted in Ghanaian tradition. This is noticeable in news-sharing relationship between traditional rulers and their subjects. The *okyeame* (linguist or professional orator) plays a major role in this power transaction. He brings oratory and mediated communication, cherished in Ghana, to assume a “performative power of public discourse.” Gbormittah (2016) notes that “Africans [...], admire the artistic and creative use of language by talented and skilled people such as griots, narrators, tellers of tales, poets, composers, [...]. Oral culture is deep-rooted in Africa to the extent that globalisation and its associated technological advancement has not consumed its practice completely” (p. 21). According to Yankah (1991),

traditional rulers, especially, in Akan communities are always obligated to channel official communications through *okyeame*, rather than directly to their subjects. Yankah states that as a tradition and duty, the *okyeame* does not convey a message in the ‘ordinary’ words of a ruler to his subjects. Instead, the *okyeame* embellishes the message, using linguistic and rhetorical expressions such as metaphors and proverbs that establish the message in time-honoured experiences of the people. Yankah also indicates that “Apart from speaking for the king, and receiving messages meant for him *in situ*, *akyeame* were also lords of diplomacy as well as ministers of foreign affairs who carried messages from the executive to other states” (1991, p. 5). He further elucidates on the office and work of the *akyeame* in the traditional governance system.

akyeame, [...] were specifically appointed [with] clearly defined [roles], and there was a prevailing system of co-ordination to minimize misrepresentation. The likelihood of inaccurate interpretation of the chief’s word, was not impossible though, but that often led to severe sanctions, or instant withdrawal from foreign missions. In any case, a commitment to adhere to the chief’s word, and never to subvert it, was part of the oath the spokesman swore on his formal installation. But diplomats were not mere parrots; they sometimes exercised personal discretion in negotiations, based on previous experience and their rich knowledge of foreign policy and history, as well as traditional logic and oratory. Whether or not discretion was exercised, the thrust of the royal word or message was not undermined without sanctions, since an error could have implications for war (1991, pp. 4-5).

Another way that power transaction is evident in indigenous mass communication is in a situation of an ordinary funeral announcement. In this case, manifestation of power transaction is between an ancestry, establishing the root of the deceased, and other members of the ancestry responsible for its communal and ritual duties. So, among the Aŋlo-Ewe of southern Ghana, announcement of the death of an ordinary citizen was the duty of the patrilineal family of the dead, unlike in the Akan communities where the matrilineal family is responsible. Hagan’s (2006) reveals that in whichever case one looks at it,

It was thus the responsibility of the family head to determine when the event should be announced. Tradition demanded that the news should be given first to certain categories of persons: spouses, children, in-laws, some leading members of the community including the head of the community. It was after this that the news was then given to all other citizens (2006, p. 3).

Hagan (2006) further explains that the death of a traditional ruler is not usually announced to the public for an unstipulated period for major participants to be informed, so they can secure important sites (traditional places of reverence, monuments, and installations, etc.) and ensure that security and public order is preserved. The ownership of information (news, gossip, rumour, hearsay) and of the channels of mass communication (gong, drum, newspapers, radio, etc.), consistent with Hagan, are other ways of seeing communication as a power transaction. Hagan's findings are significant to this thesis because they help in understanding that the channels of mass communication are intimately linked to the holders of power such as traditional rulers, politicians, et cetera, to serve their interest.

Hasty (2006) makes an analogy which demonstrates the information, ownership, and power paradigm. She notes that "Those who seize power in a coup often seek to seize the instruments of mass communication as their first step. With this, a handful of people can effectively control a whole state virtually unchallenged" (p. 86). Deducing from Hasty's analogy, it may be appropriate to say that in a democratic dispensation, where power is derived from the people, there has always been the tendency for interest groups such as civil society, political parties, churches, or religious groups, and so on, to own media organisations. She asserts that this brings about power distribution and structure of society to be influenced in terms of control, content, journalistic quality, and so forth, all geared towards achieving the objectives of owners of media. Hasty (2006) believes this development in the media is "a collaborative, theatrical performance between the sovereign, his mediator, and the public" (2006, p. 86). The conclusions arrived at by Hasty are useful to this thesis in the following ways: Firstly, it is noteworthy to juxtapose the situation of the conventional mass media with how the power relationship between it and the people has been altered because of new technologies of communication, which have evolved broadcasting and empowered the

audience members to share news and information freely. Secondly, during the ownership issues and multiplicity of free channels of mass communication, it is expected that there would be some underlying unifying factor of cultural ideology or framework. Some argue that this cultural ideological factor is what state-owned media provide. However, this seems, largely, not to be the case.

The literature reviewed give evidence that indigenous media and communication remains, mainly, the means of communication among Africans, including Ghanaians, and that the indigenous and the modern mass media are interacting in the lives of most people. But there seems to be a growing anxiety that sooner or later the ever-expanding forms of new information and communication forms and technologies may override indigenous media and communication. However, it is also clear that the modern mass media and technologies have not been indispensable in the lives of people. As the literature reveals, this conviction has strengthened the confidence of most researchers that indigenous media and new communication technologies and practices could exist together. The literature revealed that all the media and interpersonal channels, which have formed a dynamic force for meaning-exchange and sharing, must be properly utilised to bring about success in communication efforts.

3.5 CONTEMPORARY MASS MEDIA CHANNELS

This section reviews literature on information and news-sharing in contemporary mass media channels in Ghana. Where necessary, reviews of literature on other jurisdictions are carried out to provide contexts for comparisons. The mass communication domain in Ghana, in recent time, has produced a few marked characteristics. Most important of these features are, the upsurge in newspapers, radio, and television stations; private ownership of these stations and specific purposes assigned to them by their owners; and most programmes carried by these stations are

interactive. These stations must measure up to competition for audiences, advertisements, and so on. In their bid to attract audiences, they appear to engage in embellishment, exaggeration, and indecency (Aja 2011). In terms of ownership, there are political, religious, ethnic, and regional preferences.

Depending on who owns, funds, or even manages a media organisation, news reportage may take a particular direction. The ideological leaning of the owner, be it political, religious, et cetera, may come into play in news gathering and dissemination (Hagan 2006). The media organisation may operate solely as a business, in which case constitutional provision of freedom of expression may not be entirely adhered to. This may apply in the case of public funded media houses too, due to an individual manager's inclination to a particular ideology (Aja 2011). Interactivity opens the flood gates for everyday citizens to put out information and to communicate their opinions on issues in their precise ways and words. These are warning signs that people may use language and articulate views that might incite disagreements or unrest in society (Karikari 2017). The concern has been how these constructive expansions in press freedom and free speech can help the national agenda of a vibrant media in a country at peace with itself (Hagan 2006). According to Aja, another major characteristic is the emergence of social media applications and platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and so on, and online platforms like www.myjoyonline.com, www.ghanaweb.com, blog, et cetera. He asserts that these platforms are not necessarily run by journalists or trained people, therefore, may not adhere to journalistic and news-sharing standards.

Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari (1998) provides information on Ghana's mass media system and an overview of Ghana's technological growth and progress through mass media. In detail, the book outlines a history of mass media, the state of the media in Ghana, present media practices,

language of the media and technological intricacy, access, and the information gap. According to Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, the reason for the book is to collect “information about the various media systems [...] and supporting institutions involved in making the media systems functional” (1998, p. 1). The authors revealed that Ghanaians are incorporating mass media (social media) into their daily activities. This revelation indicates that mass media use in Ghana may be abused, and it supports this thesis’ premise. However, it is also clear that Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari did not do detailed evaluation about the increased use of mass media, innovations that have come about, and what effects must have resulted. Additionally, there has not been detailed information on how the mass media will be integrated into the Ghanaian society in the future, and whether this will affect the culture of the people. Without these details, the conclusion can be said to be speculative.

Hagan (2006) notes that the modern mass media has always been perceived as a ‘problem’ and as a ‘solution’ to society’s pursuits, including development, peace, and democracy. He explains, however, that the media’s predicament of being a setback at the same time an answer to society’s interests is not peculiar to Ghana.

Balnaves, Donald and Shoemith (2009), observe that early approaches to communication and development assumed that the modern mass media transformed cultures and led them to economic and cultural prosperity. Lerner (1958) proposed a theory of ‘rising expectations’ because he thought that media fast-tracked development. According to him, when he, and later Balnaves, realised this was not the case, he proposed a theory of ‘rising frustrations,’ which Balnaves associated with. This thesis recognises the notions that there, still, is rising expectations as well as rising frustrations as the modern mass media impacts society.

Wallerstein (1974) argues that “there is a global centre and periphery that affects communication, culture and economy” (p. 21). He contends that core countries, like the United

States and Britain, had other countries dependent upon them, but in different stages of exploitation. He suggests, for instance, that in the days of colonial expansion, core nations took the resources of peripheral countries that had been conquered or occupied, and possibly changed (or destroyed) the indigenous cultures as a result. According to O'Connor (2012), the initial motivation for many journalists of his generation for working in the media had been "[...] born of the turbulence and ferment of the 1960s [...] to do something about the problems of the world" (p. 12). He submits that

Soon, however, I came to realize that the media was one of the problems of the world. [...] Let's be frank, after all; we live in an age of media scams and scandals and rented opinions, of 'information dominance' and of fake news and staged events. [...], examples of mainstream media make-believe abound (O'Connor 2012, p. 22).

3.5.1 New Communication Technologies, Applications and Platforms

Sey (2011) indicates that although internet technology arrived in Ghana between 1989 and 1990, its use for delivery of news and other information became prevalent in 1994. According to her, in 1994 Ghana was said to be the first African country south of the Sahara, in exception of South Africa, to commence its own internet facilities. The article reveals that internet connectivity caught up very fast with the people by the establishment of internet centres in almost every community. Ghana was then hailed by the *Wall Street Journal* as among five countries capable of using Information Communication Technology (ICT) to reduce poverty, improve education and give opportunity to her citizens to contribute to local and international affairs (Sey 2011). The advent of the Internet or the Web is not the only transformation that had occurred in the media environment, but also the influx of 'citizen journalism' triggered by years of decreasing newspaper circulation (Rich 2010, p.10). Bowman and Willis view the activities of citizen journalists as providing "independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging, and relevant information that a democracy requires" (Bowman & Willis 2003, p. 17). Although Bowman and Willis may be right

with their assertion that citizen journalism ‘brings glory’ to democracy, questions may be raised about the lack of professionalism in news and information dissemination.

Some media observers such as Karikari have attributed the decline in newspaper circulation in Ghana to review of newspapers in the electronic media (Karikari 2000). Nyarko (2016) observes that *Newspaper Review Segments* carried in-between *Morning Shows* by the electronic media such as the *Super Morning Show* on Joy 99.7FM; *Kokrokoo*, Peace 106.3FM; *Breakfast Show*, Ghana Television (GTV); *Good Morning Ghana*, Metro TV; and so on, seemed to have brought conflict between newspaper companies and the electronic media establishments. According to Nyarko, these programmes review topical subjects in newspapers, mostly with studio panels, augmented with phone-in calls from the public. He asserts that “this practice has been widespread in the Ghanaian media, and it would not be farfetched to say that it has distressed newspaper circulation and income to press houses” (Nyarko 2016, p. 2). Nyarko also believes that the element of search operation peculiar to the Internet also permits advertisers to easily connect to their clients and vice versa, denying newspapers needed revenue. However, Rashid notes that a year after *The New York Times* entered the Web or began online publication, its monthly audience increased by 33.3 per cent, and global audience grew to almost 70 million, and revenue growth from the site attained 50 per cent. Rashid further states that the newspaper cut costs for newsprint, delivery and labour and became a primary information provider in the computer age (Rashid 2017).

In terms of mobile telephony, “Ghana has the highest mobile penetration in West Africa and already outperforms many of its regional peers. By the end of 2019, mobile adoption stood at 55 per cent, higher than the regional average which is at 44.8 per cent” (Omondi 2020). This high use of smartphones in Ghana could also be the reason why media houses and web portal owners have created information pages on three major social media platforms. The three predominant

platforms are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and they have very high followings. These pages are updated many times within the day before the final bulletins are presented on the traditional spaces. For instance, Citi 97.3FM, the second most patronised radio station in Ghana after Peace 104.3FM, had updated its pages 21 times with information as at 3:37pm on October 14, 2020 (Omondi 2020).

3.6 MEDIA CONVERGENCE AND INTERACTIVITY

This section examines literature on “convergence” in news-sharing. For Jenkins, media convergence is:

[...] where old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways. [...]. Convergence does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they may become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others (2006, p. 2).

Jenkins’s position establishes a relationship between three concepts. These are media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence. Levy (1997), particularly, spoke about ‘collective intelligence’ in relation to media consumption. His idea becomes forceful as media participation is gradually becoming a collective process. With participatory culture, producers of media content and audience as participants, interact with each other instead of talking about them as occupying separate spaces. However, Vujović & Obradović (2017) argues that convergence manifests in three major ways: through communication technologies, content and ownership or possessions.

Vujović and Obradović (2017) states that convergence impacts the media in the digital age because it characterises cultural change. The cultural change, according to Vujović and Obradović, is on account of patrons of the media being able to obtain up-to-date news, and experience information in varied forms through the media, and not simply about integration of various media technologies of digitalisation and electronics, which enabled voice, video, and data to be contained

in one mechanism or system. Both also believe that the cultural change is like what had occurred when there was a shift from print to electronic media, which had changed the content and meaning of public discourse. For example, it is believed that the epistemology created by television is inferior to that of print for truth telling and rational public discourse (Ong 1982). Also, “integrated media offers a forum for the trading of views, mindsets and manners, thus, a thriving platform for intercultural interaction” (Vujović & Obradović 2017, p. 57). Previously, audiences received news from radio, television, and print media autonomously. Each of these media stood as independent ‘creatures.’ The inception of the internet came with it, new technologies which enabled creation of broadband mediums (Baldwin, McVoy & Steinfeld 1996). Convergence is also about the coming together of ‘old’ and ‘new’ media, “where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways” (Jenkins 2006, p. 2). Media convergence comes with it a certain inclusive-interconnectedness of society, which resembles the indigenous Ghanaian culture of “common benefit,” similar to “collective responsibility,” Christopher (2005) spoke about with reference to South Africa, earlier in this chapter. Jenkins clarifies further that convergence is about

the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want, [it] is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who’s speaking and what they think they are talking about (2006, p. 2).

In effect, convergence makes it possible for audiences to obtain television and radio broadcasts via the internet, and newspapers and magazines are received online, leading to smudging of media boundaries – a convergence of competencies (Jenkins 2006). “It is now impractical to discuss print media and electronic or digital media as if they were completely segregated forms” (Campbell 1998, p. 53; Chao-Chen 2013). Chao-Chen situates ‘convergence’ in developmental classifications of “economies, technologies, governments, businesses, laws and societies” (2013, p. 189). But he

also affirms that “While the term can be defined to take account of diversity, it has now become a major notion in the measurement of media development” (p. 189). According to Gordon (2003), Ithiel Pool was the first scholar to employ “convergence” in 1983, in connection with the media, in his work, *The Technology of Freedom*. In this work, Pool illustrates “the convergence of modes” in relation to “digitalisation and storage of content in the future, its transmission via the Internet, and its application through electronic equipment” (Gordon, 2003). It is likely that Pool’s work gave impetus to latter arguments advanced by other scholars such as Baldwin, McVoy and Steinfeld (1996) in relation to the creation of broadband mediums.

Unlike Karikari (2000) and Nyarko (2016) who believe that new media has changed the cultural, social, and ethical operations of the conventional media, Chao-Chen argues that the new media only serves as a channel of information through which news passes instead of being “the originator of the news agenda or platform for expressing public opinion,” and that, regardless, “the use of new media is driven by commercial considerations” (Chao-Chen 2013, p. 183). Ju, Jeong and Chyi support Chao-Chen’s position by suggesting that in comparison with the conventional media, new media is conduit-implied than agenda-setting-oriented (Ju et al 2014). Chao-Chen and Ju et al’s assertion is compelling as social media has been known to direct business to news sites with Facebook rated as the most effective in this regard (Hopkins 2010). Zeigler and Philips also believe that although Twitter leads in news-sharing, it has also been established that Facebook thrives both in news-sharing and business engineering to its devotees than Twitter (Philips 2010; Zeigler 2009). This may be due, as Ju et al indicate, to options Facebook provides ranging from “playing games, posting/viewing photos or videos and so on” (2014, p. 12). The explanation by Ju et al may be plausible in the Ghanaian context where most people are likely to view Twitter more as elitist, or sophisticated in concise text composition and posting of tweets. By its characteristics,

Twitter is a social media, “more news-oriented, or more “newsful”” while Facebook is a social network (Chyi & Chadha 2011, p. 437). Although this argument may be irrefutable, it is a generally held fact that new media has its own communication culture. For instance, Dimmick, Chen and Li, and Perez-Pena note the time differential in digital and print newspaper releases, with digital newspapers almost using real time (with some free online), which explains the perceived attrition rate of circulation of print newspapers (Dimmick et al 2004; Perez-Pena 2009). It was also found out that the majority of those who access newspapers online, anyhow, read print copies of the same newspaper (Chyi & Lasorsa 2002; Chyi & Huang 2011; Gentzkow 2007; Waal, Schönbach & Lauf 2005). The communication culture of new media is also realised in its participatory nature, which clearly distinguishes it from old ideas of non-interactivity of audienceship. So, in the era of new media, news producers and news consumers have become participants in news dissemination (Chyi & Huang 2011). Likewise, with new media, news “Consumption has become a collective process [referred to as collective intelligence]” (Levy 1997, p. 20), also considered to be “an alternative source of media power” (Jenkins 2006, p. 4). This power, according to Jenkins, manifests in daily interactions with one another in the context of convergence culture (2006, p. 4; Levy 1997, p. 20). This reinforces Chao-Chen’s notions that convergence goes beyond media appliances, and covers, economies, technologies, governments, businesses, laws, and societies (Chao-Chen 2013). Jenkins, specifically, associated convergence to how the individual consumer of media perceives news, using his/her brain power vis-à-vis collective interfaces with others, arguing that “Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments of information extracted from the media flow and evolved into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives” (Jenkins 2006, pp. 3-4).

Pavlik has identified four aspects in which new media have transformed news-sharing. He refers to:

the revolutionising character of news content due to developments in new media technology; the altering of journalistic principles in the era of digital news-sharing; the remarkable structural revolution undergone by media organisations and news studios or newsrooms; and the relational changes between and among media establishments, reporters, and the society, viewers and listeners, informants, advertisers, et cetera, as a result of new media (2010, p. 5).

To Boczkowski, new media came about by means of a combination of “socio-material infrastructures and novel technical capabilities” (Boczkowski 2004, p. 12). This implies that the development of new media has been occasioned by underlying forces of expanded communication craving of societies coupled with possibilities of technological advancement. So, with new media, the people can communicate in a manner that they can interact easily. For the journalist and the public alike, networked media or convergence ties together the old media and new media divide, at the same time keeping the importance of the substance of news. It has also enlarged the necessity for news and its significance in society through interactivity. Chao-Chen holds the view that convergence has caused vital questions to be asked about the operation of conventional media and the dwindled function of journalists (Chao-Chen 2013). At its inception, convergence was seen as remarkably furthering social discourse and a platform for participatory democracy among the general public. It was also observed that it can be used for undesirable activities such as crime, speculating and even fascistic control (Storsul & Stuedahl 2007). In this way, convergence could be said to have distorted or diminished and increasingly made indistinct, professionals and nonprofessionals, journalism and news, and audiences and creators of news.

With regard to interactive news practices, particularly, user-generated content approaches such as citizen journalism, et cetera, promoted by technology and convergence culture, Friend notes that audiences’ contribution to news story is an old phenomenon, which “has long been built on witness reports, person-on-the-street interviews, letters to the editor and the likes” (Storsul &

Stuedahl 2007, p. 154). Friend's assertion has been corroborated by Tom Curley, the president of the Associated Press (AP). Tom Curley, according to Friend, has indicated that the AP "accepted the importance of citizen journalism for more than a century, citing a collection of historic news photos taken over the decades by amateurs and distributed by the wire service" (Friend 2007, p. 152). Although Friend and Curley seem to have advanced a common position, the current trend of citizen-created content is never quite in line with what both have described. Citizen-created content exemplified by Friend and Curley was occasionally generated and formally-guided compared to the ever-present and boundless content created nowadays. It is for this reason that Curley attempts to strike a distinction, saying "The only difference now is that amateur and witness content is more ubiquitous, [...]" (Friend 2007, p. 152).

The media sector has always been the most technologically concentrated of the communication arts. It requires technology to build equipment such as cameras, audio recorders, lights, transmitters, computers, et cetera, to record image or sound, type words and transmit, and even receive signals (Owusu 2011/12; Wasserman 2011). The camera, for instance, has undergone changes that have happened from the invention of the older analogue types and newer digital ones that have suggested a comparative enquiry about how the range of camera does not only impact the look of a photograph, but influences which notions are preferred and possibly achieved. The list of technological changes is long and it is growing rapidly, with the high technology of the Internet, television, radio, mobile phones (Wasserman 2011). Constant changes in technology have brought about changes in news delivery. News is delivered via Blogs (weblog), Podcast, Aggregator and so on (Rich 2010, p. 8).⁴⁴ Therefore, online news has changed the nature of news

⁴⁴ A blog can be a personal journal or brief commentary about a topic in audio or video posted on the Web, particularly in free social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace. Podcast is digital media information in audio or video form distributed over the Internet for use on a portable media player such as iPod. Pod is 'portable on demand.'

to other forms. For example, the following elements have been produced: continual deadlines (updates of stories throughout a day); interactive content (ability to interact with readers); related links (accompaniment of links to related information); nonlinear structure (readers may access content in any order they choose unlike beginning to end reading or hearing of print and broadcast news); databases (offers readers opportunity to search for information); personalised journalism (online news sites ask users to contribute personal stories, personal narratives); et cetera (Rich 2010, pp. 8-9). So, convergence is about hybridity of communication networks. This gives both the professional media person and non-professional people more high-level choices of interactivity, and to a development often referred to as ‘citizen journalism.’ This is a means of reporting that comprises readers, listeners and viewers in conceiving and planning the news based on their concerns. Friend and Singer note that “Citizen journalism involves ordinary people playing an active role in collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating information – activities that previously were the domain of professional reporters” (Friend & Singer 2007, p. 122).⁴² Friend identified four main initiatives that mainstream media employs to integrate citizen-generated news into its broadcast:

Citizen blogs on mainstream news sites – [news media incorporating] citizen blogs on their Web [...]; Citizen reporting – Setting up reader and viewer tip lines [...] to tap into the reservoir of citizen expertise [...] to engage citizens more deeply in the news-gathering process; Citizen sites set up by traditional news organizations – [creation of distinctive citizen journalism sites, which are operated by media houses]; Independent citizen media sites – [news sites not linked to media entities, which solicit news of a particular community from the people] (2007, p. 154).

Aggregator is software that compiles or collects certain Web sites that one wants delivered to him/her regularly and pushes them via e-mail or automatically downloads them into a portable media player (Rich 2010, p. 8). “Citizen journalism” has also been called in various ways as ‘public journalism,’ ‘civic journalism,’ ‘participatory journalism,’ ‘grassroots journalism,’ ‘bottom-up media,’ ‘user generated, or citizen created content’ (Friend 2007). However, they are movements

and frameworks that carry different connotations although they may together be placed under development journalism (See, Ali & Amiruzzaman 2010; Bro 2019; Haas & Steiner 2006; Rish 2009; Rosenberry 2010; Thurman & Hermida 2010). In general, the concept of development journalism is reporting on topics and themes that seek to endorse improvement of the living conditions of people in developing nations. Usually, development journalism is conceptualised in contrast to the established Western theoretical and ethical perspectives on journalism (Chattopadhyay 2019).

In effect, through interactivity, citizen journalists contribute to influencing public opinion by posting alternative views on issues put out by mainstream media. As Friend again alludes, “[Citizen journalism] strives to give the “former audience” a say in deciding what constitutes news at a time when citizens are skeptical or distrustful of professional journalists.” (Friend 2007, p. 152). O’Connor notes that “Technology will continue to do a lot to bring order to the chaos of information on the web, [...]. Aggregating the news judgment of users and of news professionals is one way to cut through diverse amounts of information and create credible streams of content” (2012, p. 118).

3.6.1 Convergence and Democracy

It is always the notion that democracy thrives through citizens’ participation within a social system. The media play a vital role by serving as a channel in getting news on civil processes and events to the public, thereby motivating the people to uphold their democratic services and activities to their societies (Osei-Appiah 2019; Wasserman 2011). Convergence, encouraged by new media, therefore enlarges the entrenchment of democratic principles through a dynamic engagement of the public. For instance, in Ghana, the public landscape has seen an increasing manifestation of the media to effectively circulate information to the people, and present alternative viewpoints on

issues. Therefore, the void created by lack of public conventional media to communicate issues that are likely to inconvenience state authorities and serve as a check on power, has been filled by new media. Considering that the private conventional media are in operation mainly to make profit, the thorny issues of society turn to ‘escape’ their coverage as well (Osei-Appiah 2019; Wasserman 2011). The watchdog role of the media is displayed in democratic dispensations in the manner that they can watch over and hold officialdom to task by disseminating information about their shortcomings to the people. Based on this information, the people push for changes to be carried out in various sectors of public life. This reinforces the connection between the media and democracy, and the point that there should be freedom of the media and the media should work without regulation or under limited regulatory framework, possibly work in internal or self-regulatory system (Osei-Appiah 2019). This form of inevitable relationship between the media and its interfacing with the public and political power is what Hackett and Zhao refer to as “regime.” They may be alluding to a generally known truth that the more that people consume news, the more involved they are in the democratic process because they have enough information that can make them free and independent (Hackett & Zhao 2010). Convergence, therefore, has come to enlarge the media’s role and its interconnectedness to democracy. But absolute freedom of the media and of expression can create really serious information gathering and dissemination problems for society, particularly in matters of sensitive nature (Wasserman 2011). The next section examines how convergence affects media ownership.

In terms of new media’s contribution to the democratic process in Ghana and the world at large, it has been noted that when a news portal puts up an item, followers can instantly “tag or mention” the person involved and demand answers or share their opinion without going through any cumbersome process, thereby heightening the democratic process. Bokor confirms this by

observing that “The new media have proliferated and opened up the political arena, making the people more informed, empowered, and motivated to demand a say in the management of national affairs” (Bokor 2014, p. 1). Juxtaposing the contribution of new media with conventional media, and with particular emphasis on the democratisation process in Ghana, Bokor argues that

[...] old media (state-controlled print and electronic media) have serious limitations such as the unidirectional model of information flow from the producers of the media content to the audience as well as censorship by the government, which works to ensure the survival of the status quo. Digital media neutralise official control and open users to multidimensional, multidirectional, and multipurpose functionalities to galvanize themselves toward influencing political decision making (Bokor 2014, p. 1).

3.6.2 Convergence of Media Ownership

Convergence manifests in media ownership itself and in business strategies of media organisations. According to Herman and Chomsky, this occurs in instances where media organisations come together or “synergise” to direct their interest and resources to cross-produce and cross-broadcast a programme (Herman & Chomsky 2002). Another form of convergence in media ownership comes in the form of cooperation between two or more different media organisations in terms of operation or function (Chao-Chen 2013, p. 188). For example, newspapers are compelled nowadays to collaborate with television networks to broadcast newspaper banners or captions. In the same way, inter-bank and commodities rates of television stations are published in newspaper business columns.

Thus, Vujović & Obradović emphasises that convergence is an all-embracing and multipart experience that entails engagement or harnessing of entirely every aspect of media through technological means. This manifests in three key areas of the media: technologies, content, and ownership. By these means, convergence can bring about improved online operation, elimination of constraints and boundaries, varied and increased content, reduced user prices, establishment of multiplicity of tasks, and most of all the institution of globalisation (Vujović & Obradović 2017).

Whereas from the perspective of interactivity and multi-tasking, convergence is an opportunity to bring people and cultures together to work to leverage social disparities, convergence can be seen to be a misfortune in respect of easy access to communication technologies, leading to boundless, uncontrollable availability of fake news. Therefore, whatever way one looks at it, the befalling of the ‘undesirable’ necessitates experiences to be gained to inform the attainment of the ‘desirable.’ (Rish 2009; Vujović & Obradović 2017). Change is essential in the development of the world. In effect ‘change and continuity’ is a matter of striking a fine balance between modernity, globalisation, and preserving the culture and traditions of a people or society. It is also about being tolerant or amenable to changes (Nyamnjoh 2009).

The flow of content among numerous media platforms, the partnership between several media networks, and the drifting behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of media content referred to as ‘convergence’ places the media’s role in society in the front burner. In the situation of media convergence, every important story gets told, and every audience gets persuaded across multiple media platforms. It is therefore important at this instant to engage literature on globalisation, glocalisation and communication.

3.7 GLOBALISATION, GLOCALISATION AND COMMUNICATION

This section focuses on globalisation, glocalisation and communication within the context of how news-sharing and consumption have become a critical concern to media audiences. The section also examines the developments and influences of globalisation that have defined various aspects of the global sphere. It highlights the interdependencies between cultural and social factors, the establishment of power, exchange and interconnection of ideas, people, and cultures. It is an attempt to provide explanation to some media experiences in Ghana.

The inevitability of globalisation and its effect on societies, peoples, and cultures, is a continuing area of thought to researchers of varied specialties (Sinclair 2015). According to Pieterse (2004), three schools of thought can be deduced from available literature on globalisation of cultures. The first school of thought was espoused by Huntington and has to do with divergence in philosophies of civilisations or what is referred to as “clash of the civilisations” (Huntington 1996). This has to do with zonal aggregation of civilisations, which are founded on religion and historical antecedents. As a result of religious conflicts among such civilisations, emphasis on globalisation is often consigned to the backburner. Ritzer championed the second school of thought, which stresses the presence of one dominant global civilisation, a homogenous culture. It is therefore argued that globalisation caused the integration of the world, stimulated by new communication technologies, et cetera. So, issues of global dimension turn to be promoted over local issues (Ritzer 2000).⁴⁵ The last school of thought advocates for fusion, mixture, or adaptation of cultures of two opposing civilisations (Featherstone & Lash 1995), a heterogeneity of cultures or ‘cultural exchange.’ The above viewpoints signify the intricacies of globalisation. These perspectives may well be understood when placed in a historical context.

The era immediately following the Second World War through to the end of the Cold War witnessed two different, yet interconnected methods of investigating issues of the emerging discipline of African studies. Firstly, “the division of the world into areas gave birth to area studies, eagerly supported by governments that sought to extend their political influence in cold-war geopolitics”; secondly, “modernization theory as developed in the social sciences provided many of the analytical tools employed in research [...]”; and thirdly, postmodern insights of the 1980s provided new and multicultural approaches of perceiving the world. So, African issues are rather

⁴⁵ Ritzer refers to this occurrence as “McDonaldization,” in reference to one of the world’s famous American fast food brands, *McDonald’s*.

now viewed with uncertainties compared to the certitude approaches adopted in the modernisation era with its supremacy in world affairs (Spies & Seesemann 2016, p. 133). As a conservative approach, modernisation theorists turn to have progressive, advancement, and regulatory standpoints. In other words, they believe in the natural course of phenomena or occurrences. On the other hand, “dependency, or revolutionary, theorists [...] have been critical of all traditional institutions” (Nyamnjoh 2014, p. 16). In whichever way these viewpoints are considered, both lines of theories have been rigidly modernist in their approaches as to neglect traditional arrangements, values, and beliefs of African societies. Globalisation has been described and highlighted by scholars of the “Third World”⁴⁶ or the Global South as a colonial-dependency agenda by ‘developed’ nations, with the USA as its powerhouse, to continue and perpetuate indirect political, economic, cultural, and technological control over weak nations (*Africa Today* 2016). Pope John Paul II defined globalisation as “a process made inevitable by increasing communication between the different parts of the world, leading practically to reducing distances, with evident effects in widely different fields,” and “ruled merely by the laws of the market solely outlined by the powerful” (John Paul II 2002). Indeed, unity may bring about disunity, especially in global scheme of things, where accommodation of diversities deteriorates. It is for this and other reasons that globalisation may be seen as hostile to indigenous cultures and value systems, which embody the ‘soul’ of the people. These instances abound when the “global” is constructed in terms of borders and countries instead of systems, exchanges, developments, and availability of resources nations (*Africa Today* 2016). The Cultural Policy Document of Ghana gives a direction as to how Ghana must engage with the world in terms of her cultural traditions:

In the era of globalisation and contemporary technological challenges, the people of Ghana must recognise that their culture is the basis of, and the most important factor in the nation’s

⁴⁶ Africa, Latin America, and the developing countries in Asia are referred to as “Third World countries. Also, “developing countries,” “less developed countries,” and “less developed regions.” <https://www.google.com/search>

human and material development. Thus our history, cultural values and institutions must continue to exercise a deep influence on the nation's destiny and play a key role in governance and national life (National Commission on Culture 2004, p. 1).

The questions posed in *ÉLLiC* N°2, A Multilingual Journal (Study of Languages, Literatures and Cultures) CfP, although have been largely addressed earlier, are worth stressing.

If globalization in the recent decades calls for openness and plurality, how can we, in this case, define individual identity within the movement of human exchanges and interactions? [...]. Faced with a reality based on diversity, man needs to affirm his identity, belonging and culture. Yet, as a citizen of the world, how can he position himself towards the Other while preserving his self-identity? (*ÉLLiC* Journal N° 2, CfP, 2018).

Very pertinent to this study is the idea that globalisation, perhaps, draw attention away from indigenous cultures, thereby hindering their development and credence. This is not to suggest that indigenous cultures must be viewed as antagonistic to global or universal culture, rather they become critical ingredients of it. The notion of “glocalisation” or “area studies” focuses on heterogeneous relevance of civilisations or cultures, explained by Ritzer as “the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas” (Ritzer 2003, p. 193). Ritzer's ideas may be said to have dovetailed with the views of Deleuze and Guattari, regarding rhizome and diversity or heterogeneity/universality of varied but coexisting cultural manifestations and value systems (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 2015). In this regard, local culture may give impetus to a universal culture through the media's engineering. It is for this reason Kanu argues that every culture influences the universal themes of ideas, values, and so on (Kanu 2014). In other words, the world has become a global community in which local and global concerns are unrestricted to neither the local nor the global. Although, according to Spies and Seesemann, the methods of becoming a global community “may occupy the whole range from resistance, opposition, rejection, convergence, parallelism, acceptance, to appropriation” (Spies & Seesemann 2016, p. 136). This suggests that local or indigenous cultures should be given intense devotion and to be positioned to adapt to universal values that will promote the well-being of the

people and discard those which are likely to denigrate local belief structures. It further implies that globalisation and glocalisation may be deemed to be interrelated, or are bedfellows that can “[transform people] beyond their local cultural context, due to their travels and media exposure” (Burgh-Woodman 2014) rather than being oppositional to each other. Machado (2016) paraphrased Monson and Rupp (2013) to emphasise the point that

Africa has always been global. No matter how we define this spatial category – as a mode of connection, or a process of embeddedness within larger frameworks of historical and contemporary relation – Africa and Africans have engaged and shaped broader currents in the world (Monson & Rupp 2013, p. 7).

Machado, Monson, and Rupp explain their position to mean “multiple Africas,” in relation to “an understanding through the lens of diaspora and mobility to think about the continent and its peoples as constitutive of a world on the move” (2016, p. 88). This is captured in the concept of transoceanic circulations, which she uses to frame a discussion of the material and commercial linkages that tied different parts of Africa to translocal and transregional economic and cultural exchange (Machado 2016). Therefore, it may be argued that globalisation, perhaps, must not be perceived exclusively as an agenda of the global north but that various civilisations are always being animated worldwide in the contemporary era. Viewed along these lines, it may be said that glocalisation/globalisation or local/global or self/other paradigms offer constructive knowledge in dealing with media and news-sharing identities in a globalised world (Stephen 2013). It is therefore appropriate to investigate contemporary globalisation standpoint in relation to the media.

Pope John Paul II talked about the influence of globalisation of communication on media consumers. The Pope was concerned about how globalisation and social interaction may not promote the advancement of society, but “aggravate existing inequalities as the information and communications gap widens” (John Paul II 2002). However, the Pope was enthused about the connection between globalisation and information-sharing to the extent that he urged the Church

to employ the technology of the Internet and modern mass media to propagate the good news throughout the world (Anyidoho 2016). Perhaps the Pope's advocacy for use of new communication technologies is meant to confront the intricate underlying forces of the global digital environmental and economic transformation on contemporary human communication, and on societies and cultures to the Church's or one's advantage.

Cultural hegemony is a bane on African's development. As nations and societies become more closely linked through media participation, fears of cultural erosion have become a part of the debate about globalisation. Lerner (1958) makes two observations that appear to hold for all countries, regardless of continent, culture, or creed.

First the direction of change is always from oral to media system (no known case exhibiting change in the reverse direction). Secondly, the degree of change toward media system appears to correlate significantly with changes in other key sectors of the social system. If these observations are correct, then we are dealing with a 'secular trend' of social change that is global in scope (1958, p. 56).

Lerner argues that those who demean the traditions of old will not hesitate to appreciate their significances to the societies of their birth. Debates about cultural and media imperialism are complex. Pwono and Katuala observe that the modernist approach to development and strategies adopted by the colonial regimes identified African cultures with traditions that were static and backward. It is worth noting that after independence, many African officials and intellectuals continued to stick to this view of development, which prohibited the use of local knowledge, beliefs and customs, memory, collective imagination, and aspirations (Pwono & Jacques Katuala 1996).

Meanwhile, Baran (2004, p. 28) upholds the view that closely related to the concentration of media ownership is globalisation. It is primarily large, multinational conglomerates that are doing the lion's share of media acquisitions. Baran states that the potential impact of globalisation on the mass communication process speaks to the issue of diversity of expressions with distant,

anonymous, foreign corporations, each with vast holdings in a variety of non-media business, use their power to shape news and entertainment content to suit their own ends. Opinion is divided. Yet defenders of increased globalisation point to the need to reach a fragmented and widespread audience – the same factor that fuels concentration – as encouraging this trend. They also cite the growing economic clout of emerging democracies (and the need to reach the people who live in them and the increasing intertwining of the world’s economies as additional reasons why globalisation is necessary for the economic survival of media businesses.

McQuail (2005) opines that there is no sharp dividing line between media content that is “global: and that which is “national” or local. Mass communication, he says, is almost by definition “global” in character and only a few isolated societies can claim to have a purely domestic media supply. The United States produces much and imports little, but even in this case the content of American media culture is international by virtue of the fact that it is shared with the rest of the world and many foreign cultural influences enter the country through trade and immigration. Mc Quail states that it is also indirectly globalised by the orientation of much of its own production towards world markets.

Chalaby (2003) asserts that despite the many manifestations of media globalisation, there are few media outlets (channels publications, etc.) that address a significantly large foreign audience directly (even if the potentials in terms of households reached is large). At most, certain successful products, for example, a hit film or television show, a music recording a sporting event will receive a worldwide audience in the end. This implies that “exporting” countries still have a considerable capacity to influence the “national” media experience of “receiving” countries. According to Bilereyst (1992) as cited in Mc Quail (2005, p. 252) how far “foreign” content has been subject to “gatekeeping” controls at the point of import (for instance edited, screened, and

selected, dubbed, or translated, given a familiar context) has to be considered. It is worthy of note that the main mechanism of “control” is not usually policy or law, or even economics (which usually encourages imports), but the audience demand for their “own” media content in their own language.

The report of a study conducted by Branston and Stafford (2007, p. 319) shows that a major area of interest in globalisation and advertising practice lies in the usage of stars and celebrities in broadly cultural-ideological influence arising from their double presences, both on and off screen. Global stars/celebrities have always functioned as a key part of building trans-national relationships to broader capitalist structures especially in terms of advertising and marketing.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed and explained literature on the notions of “values,” “communication,” “indigenous communicative acts” and “contemporary mass channels” and what these mean in the context of this thesis. The premise that indigenous communicative acts are in a perceived conflict with the modern mass channels in Ghana has been discussed in detail through the analysis of the various indigenous forms of communication as well as the contemporary mass channels, and technological advancement. The literature reviewed in this chapter reveal that the values of indigenous forms of communication and the contemporary mass channels must be integrated to better serve the people.



CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

“[...] informing and imparting time-honoured wisdom by ‘traditional repositories’ or our old people to ‘modern’ scholars has always been regarded as manipulative. In this way, guardians of such knowledge have all the time been cynical and thought sharing may not accord them any monetary gains or recognition” (Okpewho 1992).

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Framework and Methodology have been featured in Chapter Four. The Chapter analyses Stuart Hall’s pioneering encoding/decoding theory of communication that reinforces the examination of news production practices, individual and collective behaviour of news-sharing, using indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass media channels in Ghana. The “Methodology” comprises the research design and explanation of methods used for sampling, data collection and data analysis. The suitability of the methods to the study have also been stated.

4.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employs the Interpretive Model, which traces its roots to Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey (Roth & Weber 1976), and the Critical Model, developed by Stuart Hall in 1982 (See also, Hall 1997a, 1992). These models became relevant to the study to enable examination of the basis for production of cultural texts, investigation of media texts or messages (video clips/excerpts, written texts, et cetera), and study of how producers and cultural participants perceive these texts. Both models are encamped in the epistemology of cultural/traditional and historical enquiries, political and economic perspectives, textual analysis and in media studies. The models helped to

analyse and clarify the tensions between media practices and ethics of news-sharing on the one hand, and indigenous or cultural acts of news-sharing on the other hand.

The Interpretive Model, also called the Interpretive Social Science Model, became popular in mass media research during the 1970s and 1980s and gained added visibility in the 1990s and in the new century. The model professes that there is no single reality. Reality is subjective and exists only in reference to the observer, and that human beings are fundamentally different and cannot be pigeonholed. These tenets of the interpretive model are relevant to the thesis in analysing the selected cases to understand what urges production of such texts and for what purposes. Cohen & Manion view the interpretivist/ constructivist paradigm as having the purpose of understanding “the world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion 1994). Mertens (2005) observes this to mean that “reality is socially constructed” (Mertens 2005). According to Mertens, “the interpretivist/ constructivist paradigm grew out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey’s and other German philosophers’ study of interpretive understanding called hermeneutics” (Mertens 2005).

The interpretivist/constructivist researcher tends to rely upon the “participants’ views of the situation being studied.” The constructivist researcher is most likely to rely on qualitative data collection methods and analysis or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods) (Mackenzie & Knipe 2006).

Hence, scholars engaged with this paradigm strive for depth and attempt to produce a unique explanation about a given situation or individual. The interpretive paradigm encourages the examination of an entire process, believing that reality is holistic and cannot be subdivided (Wimmer & Dominick 2006). It can be said that the interpretive approach shares naturalism’s epistemological framework and attention to specificities but looks in detail at people’s taken-for-granted ways of creating orderly social interaction. Weber’s description of this methodology as

‘interpretive understanding,’ means that he, Weber, desires to appreciate the actions and beliefs of societies by reconstructing their values, traditions, interests, and feelings to comprehend how ‘subjective meaning’ is expressed or communicated (Kalberg 2002). By ‘subjective meaning,’ Weber “seeks, throughout his sociology, to understand how persons view their own behavior and how they justify it to themselves or lend it “meaning” (no matter how odd it may appear to the observer)” (Kalberg 2002). It is suggested here that a re-assessment and application of Weber’s notion in this study may be constructive, principally for the purpose of interpreting particular ways in which vital questions about the past (traditions/modernities) and present (modernities/traditions) can be dealt with for the progress of society. Interpretive approaches drawn from social understanding of people allow for better description of the features of cultural products and experiences (Geertz, 1975, 1973d, 1973c, 1973a); (Turner, 1986); (Douglas, 2007, 1992, 1986, 1979) and (Levi-Strauss, 1977, 1968) and scholarly criticism (Burke, 1966, 1951, 1950) and (Barthes, 1964, 1963). This reinforces the choice of this model for this study, which is interested in how and why individuals produce texts and how other people experience these texts.

On the other hand, the critical model, which draws on the analysis standards used in the humanities, is adopted within the context that media do not necessarily tell us “what to think” (critical paradigm), but against the everyday perspective the media tell us “what to think about” (institutional model) (Katz 1987, p. S28). Alexander, *et al* (1987) and Cetina and Cicourel (1981) believe that:

Language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication belong to the micro-level of the social order. Power, dominance and inequality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro-level of analysis. There are several ways to analyze and bridge these levels, and thus to arrive at a unified critical analysis: Members-Groups, Actions-Process, Context-Social Structure, Personal and Social Cognition (Alexander *et al* 1987).

Hagan’s (2006) five “normative strategies” on adopting a “cultural framework in news-sharing” have been applied to make meaning of the texts and in examining the reactions of

respondents to them to provide a deeper analysis on how the case studies demonstrate the media's capacity to apply indigenous communicative ethos.

More attuned to this study's tenets is the 'Personal and Social Cognition.' This explains that:

Language users as social actors have both personal and social cognition: personal memories, knowledge and opinions, as well as those shared with members of the group or culture as a whole. Both types of cognition influence interaction and discourse of individual members, whereas shared 'social representations' govern the collective actions of a group (Fairclough & R. Wodak 1997).

Dealing with these different levels between the macro and the micro in relation to mediation, media practice becomes both a means of communication and interaction, and power-play. Examples of news report, news production and reading, news as a genre, and discourse in the mass media, generally, become relevant to these contexts.

Following what has been discussed so far, empirically acceptable critical analysis of social problems is usually multidisciplinary. Thus, despite the varied methodological frameworks available to this study, it embraces the interpretive and critical models, and normative strategies on adopting a cultural framework, in consideration of the purpose of the study: to critique the processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts in relation to contemporary mass media channels.

The presentation of this thesis follows the traditional research study format: problem, methods, findings, and discussion. Keyton (2001), for example, describes three separate styles, realist, confessional, and impressionist (Keyton 2001). This study adopts the realist styles which presents a dispassionate third-person point of view of the study.

Hall's (1982) encoding/decoding theoretical framework of communication has been applied in the study to deduce connotations, depictions and values from the publications and the news

shared. This is a social framework of communication that accommodates perspectives and systems of both production and consumption of media texts.⁴⁷ This communicative concept makes room for this study to establish what happens in indigenous media and in contemporary media when it comes to disseminating information on the three selected themes. Procter notes that “‘Encoding/decoding’ was primarily intended as a critique of mass communications research and its empirical claims” (2004, p. 58). Hall expresses misgivings about the established linear fashioned-movement theories applied to mass communication research: that is, the ‘sender’ through the ‘message’ to the ‘receiver’ (1980, p. 131). He argues that the conventional theories consider that the “sender creates the message and fixes its meaning, which is then communicated directly and transparently to the recipient” (ibid), instead of seeing the recipients as active audiences. Hall’s theory coordinates set of concepts (negotiated, oppositional and alternative readings; dominant and resistant ideologies) to describe and examine experiences such as perceived conflicts in the violations of traditional protocols of news-sharing in contemporary mass media channels. The encoding/decoding framework allows this study to deal with specific situations, procedures and activities that constitute the communication network of news-sharing in the media age. In these ways, Hall’s theory gives a specific impetus to the study.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

The study has been created in three main parts, in consideration of the research questions, the models employed in the study (Interpretive, Critical, and Encoding/Decoding) and the selected

⁴⁷ Media text – the basic element that fosters shot-by-shot, close reading (textual analysis) of media products. It contains codes such as shot duration, camera movement, and lighting that structure a particular act of communication, a message. The code must be shared by the sender and the receiver for the message to be understood (Corrigan & White 2004, pp. 423-424). Metz (1974a) defines text as “any finite, organized discourse intended to realize communication [...]” (Metz 1974a, p. 51). Media products are organised to enhance communication, therefore qualify as texts.

cases for study (sharing of the news of the passing of Paul Victor Obeng, sharing of a private conversation between Ebo Qaunsaah and his friend, and sharing of satirical image and publications about H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur), as follows:

Part One deals with the historical and political perspectives of each case, derived, or constructed from administrative-text-based data, which comprises press releases, letters, memos, and other correspondences. The cases were grouped according to their themes to give a context to each of the cases. This approach has also helped to establish specific issues raised against each selected case.

Part Two involves textual analysis of each case and guided by the purpose of this study. The textual analysis approach is significant because media texts or messages, essentially, cannot be “viewed as static, transparent and unchanging throughout the communication process” (Procter 2004, p. 57). In other words, communication is continually consciously slanted or subjective.

Part Three examines readings and interpretations of media experts and practitioners, including new editors, producers of programmes, senior journalists, and owners of media entities; and traditional and cultural experts such as traditional rulers or chiefs, traditionalists, scholars in African studies, heads of cultural institutions, et cetera, with regards to the creators’/sharers’ biases and depictions in the selected cases. The interpretive and critical models have been applied to analyse one-on-one, in-depth, field interviews conducted.

Thus, the study draws on the three parts-approach together with Hall’s pioneering encoding/decoding theory of communication to interrogate the roles of the indigenous communicative acts and the contemporary mass media in news-sharing in the era of convergence and interactivity, globalisation and glocalisation, and proliferation of media and media ownership in the production and reading of the cases (media texts).

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In terms of appropriate specific research techniques used to collect data to answer the research questions, a variety of qualitative techniques were employed in the study. Qualitative method allows for ambiguities/contractions in the data, which reflect social reality, to be addressed. The research design was to seek views from respondents on three case studies of what were considered instances in which the media in Ghana had breached indigenous communication protocols.

1. In terms of data collection, a documentary review of relevant documents (reported cases of violations of traditional protocols of news-sharing in the modern mass media in Ghana) was conducted from the Executive Director and the Administrative Secretary of the National Media Commission (NMC), the Principal Archivist of the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) and the Registrar of the National House of Chiefs (NHC). These first evaluations revealed that NHC and PRAAD were not in possession of any relevant documents. Rather, the reviews led to the location of data sets at the NMC.
2. The selection of cases and collection of data on them then now focused on the NMC office in Accra. Files and records were searched, hand-written notes were taken, letters, press releases and memos were located on nine cases classified from 2010 to 2015. Out of nine cases, five were directly related to issues of breach of traditional protocols of news-sharing in the modern mass media. Three very pertinent ones were selected from the five cases for study, constituting the first set of data. Following this, official correspondence in the form of a letter was sent to the Executive Director of NMC for the release of these text-based data for the study.

3. Media data, consisting of videos, photographs, newspaper clippings, et cetera, were collected from producers and editors of electronic (TV and radio), and print (newspaper, magazine) media houses, respectively. Videos, photographs, screen shots, et cetera, were derived from internet sources.
4. The third source of data has been from in-depth, one-on-one interviews conducted for categories of participants (media practitioners and cultural experts) in *Table II* below. Interview guides have been used to allow participants to answer questions already structured and answer additional questions openly posed to them. A portable audio recorder was used to record the interviews, which were later transcribed, catalogued, and themed for analysis. For ethical considerations, Consent Forms were administered to each participant. The main reason for the interviews was to examine the regulatory context and industry practices, and the traditional context, of news-sharing. The respondents described their external reality (perceptions, facts, events) or internal experience (feelings, emotions, meanings) towards cases selected. The interview method has been relevant to the research problem and model in a manner that the research is not about what people do or how they do it, per se, but what people think about the phenomenon of infringement of traditional protocols in news-sharing.

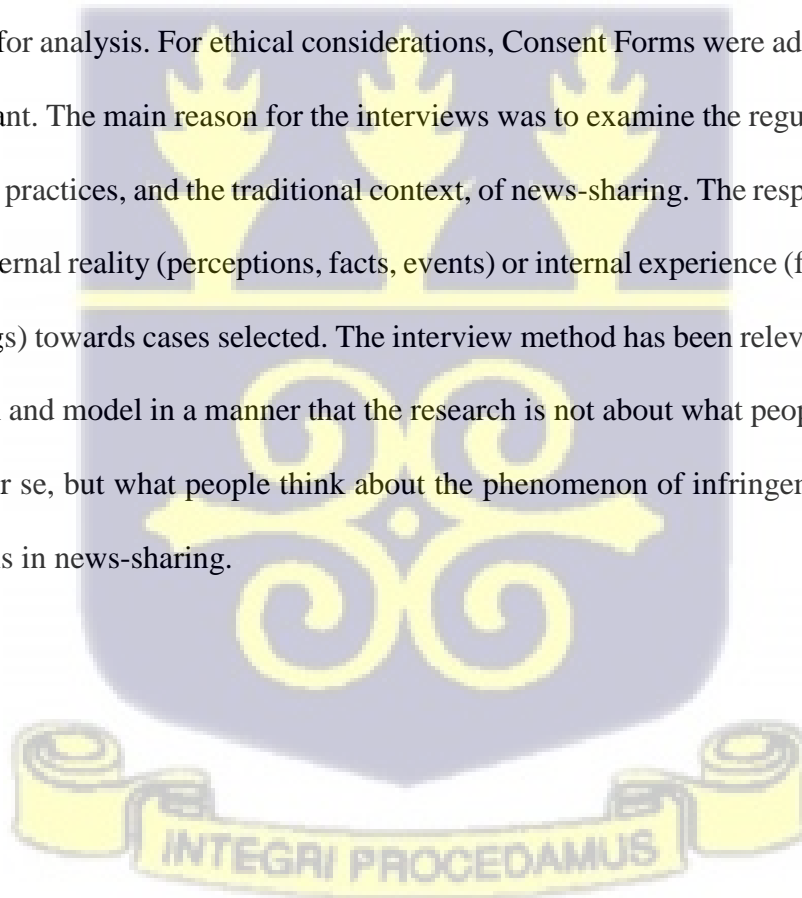


Table II: Categories of Respondents for Interview

No.	Interview Respondents	
<i>MEDIA EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS</i>		
Conventional media [Radio news, Television news, Newspapers/magazines]		
S/N	Participants	No.
1.	Editors-in-Chief	2
2.	Senior Journalists	2
3.	Communication experts	1
<i>INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES</i>		
Traditional & Culture		
4.	Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems	1
5.	National Commission on Culture (NCC)	1
Media		
6.	Chairman, National Media Commission (NMC)	1
7.	President, Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)	1
8.	President, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA)	1
9.	News Editors or Programmes Presenters, Uniq 95.7 FM (English/public) and their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram handles, and Blogs pages were visited.	2
10.	News Editors or Programmes Presenters, Peace 106.3 FM (Vernacular/private) and their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram handles, and Blogs pages were visited.	2
11.	News Editors or Producers of Programmes, GTV (English/public) and their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram handles, and Blogs pages were visited.	2
12.	News Editors or Producers of Programmes, UTV (Vernacular/private) and their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram handles, and Blogs pages were visited.	2
<i>TRADITIONAL RULERS, TRADITIONALISTS AND CULTURAL EXPERTS</i>		
Traditional rulers		
13.	Adumasahene of the Akwamu Traditional Area, Eastern Region	1
14.	Regent of Keta/Tegbi, Volta Region	1
15.	Konor of Many Krobo, Odumase Krobo, Eastern Region	1
Traditionalists and cultural experts		
16.	Scholar in African studies	1
17.	Scholar in social linguistics	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS		23

4.4 THE STUDY SAMPLES AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Purposive sampling technique was used to develop the sample of the study. The institutions, NMC, NHC and PRAAD, for instance were purposively selected based on the specific roles they play in the scheme of affairs in the Ghanaian society. The NMC is mandated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana “to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the

mass media, including investigations, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media.” The NHC also has its mandate from the Constitution. It is the highest body that brings together all traditional rulers and chiefs, and queen mothers of Ghana’s various ethnic groups and clans. These titleholders of the Ghanaian society are automatic custodians and representatives of the people when it comes to issues of culture and tradition. Accordingly, this thesis views them in this manner. PRAAD has been selected because it is the public institution authorised by law to collect and preserve Government of Ghana records that reflect the history, culture, and identity, in fact, the collective memory of Ghanaians. PRAAD (<https://praad.gov.gh/index.php/about-us/>).

The criteria for selecting the three cases for analysis are, first, because the three cases had generated much public interest and became subjects of wide media discussion; secondly, because the cases had been reported at the NMC, a statutory institution with the powers to arbitrate in matters such as these. Babbie (1992), Gerring (2007) and White (1994) contend that case studies have helped to accomplish efficient research that can be used to generalise. This position is shared by this thesis.

Generally, sample members were selected based on their knowledge, relationships, expertise, and profession vis-à-vis the research topic under investigation. Specifically, they were selected, using the following four-point criteria:

- Participants having special relationship with the phenomenon under investigation: *news editors and programmes presenters who use social media and social networks and blog.*
- Participants having sufficient and relevant information in the field: *editors-in-chief, senior journalists, and communication experts.*

- Participants of institutions actively involved in initiatives and partnerships: *representatives of traditional, culture and media institutions.*
- Participants with much experience in cultural matters: *traditional rulers, traditionalists, and cultural experts.*

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In terms of analysis, the study draws on ‘explanation building’ (Yin 1981) and ‘constant comparative’ analytic strategies.⁴⁸ In general terms, the ‘constant comparative’ process consists of comparative assignment of incidents to categories, searching for relationships and themes among categories and simplifying and integrating data into a coherent theoretical structure (Wimmer 2006). Theoretical, critical, historical, and aesthetical techniques were applied to major analytical approaches of textual, contextual, and thematic analyses. The entire data involve print and electronic news media excerpts: reports, minutes, releases on specific cases of perceived conflict gathered from NMC, historical records and interviews. With the ‘explanation building’ approach, the causes of perceived tension between indigenous communicative acts and the contemporary mass media channels have been explained. The primary analytical processes the study employed were contextual, thematic, and textual analyses.

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is nothing concealed in the research design of this study. The participants were amply informed about every process leading to data collection, analysis, and dissemination of research findings so they can give their expressive consent and involvement. The concerns and fears of

⁴⁸ The ‘constant comparative’ technique was first articulated by Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine, and has subsequently been refined by Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

participants had been addressed well ahead of their engagement in the study. As Okpewho (1992) notes, “informing and imparting time-honoured wisdom by ‘traditional repositories’ or our old people to ‘modern’ scholars has always been regarded as manipulative” (p. 355). In this way, guardians of such knowledge have all the time been cynical and thought sharing may not accord them any monetary gains or recognition (Okpewho 1992). In settlement of these issues in advance, signed contract or consent forms, indicating that data and other information was going to be used solely for academic purposes, were administered to all participants. The proposal, questionnaires and all other related documents of this thesis had also been submitted to the Ethics Committee for Humanities of University of Ghana, Legon, for which approval had duly been granted.

4.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, various strategies towards collecting and analysing data have been presented. Awareness of these strategies and their application to the study affords the researcher an effective set of tools through which to evaluate data gathered. These research tools also stand the study in good stead in preparing data and in hallmarking the research in the broad area of media, culture/tradition, and historical studies. This chapter has specifically presented the interpretive and critical models of media and cultural studies, drawing attention to how they have focused and been applied in the investigation of the topic. The research processes and methods for gathering, and analysing data have been discussed. The various models and concepts engaged here have helped in collecting relevant data for responding to the research questions. The main theoretical framework adopted for this study, Hall’s encoding, and decoding theory, shed more light and provide comprehension of audience (traditional rulers, traditionalists, and cultural experts) responses to questions. It is the conviction of the researcher that these methodologies are the right

combinations of a theoretically defined approach with clear practical relevance considered within the context of general media and culture studies perspectives.



CHAPTER FIVE **PRESENTATION OF CASES AND ANALYSIS**

Education serves to endow members of a community with a mind-set, giving each individual some knowledge, values, aptitudes and character to fit them into society and its way of life. By making individuals capable of rational and positive responses to changing social situations, creative individuals come out with new ideas, knowledge, insights, skills and tools, which grow the normative and material cultural assets that the community hands down from one generation to another (Cultural Initiatives Support Programme, 2010).

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the three selected cases: *Sharing of the news of the passing of Mr. Paul Victor Obeng by the Daily Guide newspaper*; *Sharing of a private conversation between Mr. Ebo Quansah and his friend by Asempa 94.7 MHz FM*; and *Sharing of satirical image and publications about H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur by Peace 104.3 MHz FM Online* (<https://www.peacefmonline.com/>). Drawing on the Interpretive Model (Roth & Weber 1976) and the Critical Model (Hall 1982) that have been adopted by this study, this chapter uses textual and thematic analyses to examine the cases. The diverse versions of accounts from participants have enabled the study ascertain representations of perceived conflict and consider the concerns regarding news-sharing by means of indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass media channels in Ghana.

The field data that were used to formulate the text of the cases in the chapter comprise written materials (press releases, letters, memos, etc.), media data (videos, photographs/pictures, newspaper cut-outs, screen shots, etc.) collected from producers/editors of electronic and print media houses, and online sources. The data collected through personal interviews are augmented with relevant published literature to provide an effective appreciation of the issues in a concrete way.

5.1 PRESENTATION OF CASES

As stated in the previous chapter, case studies establish more detailed essential contexts involving practices, activities, and nuances in social behaviour. In this way, case studies are known to have worked to achieve methodical research to the extent that it can be used in generalisation to make a case for similar situations (Babbie 1992; Gerring 2007; White 1994). Accordingly, this study is structured so that each case is scientifically analysed in order that they can be compared with other studies.

5.2 CASE 1: ON THE THEME OF SHARING OF NEWS ABOUT THE DEAD

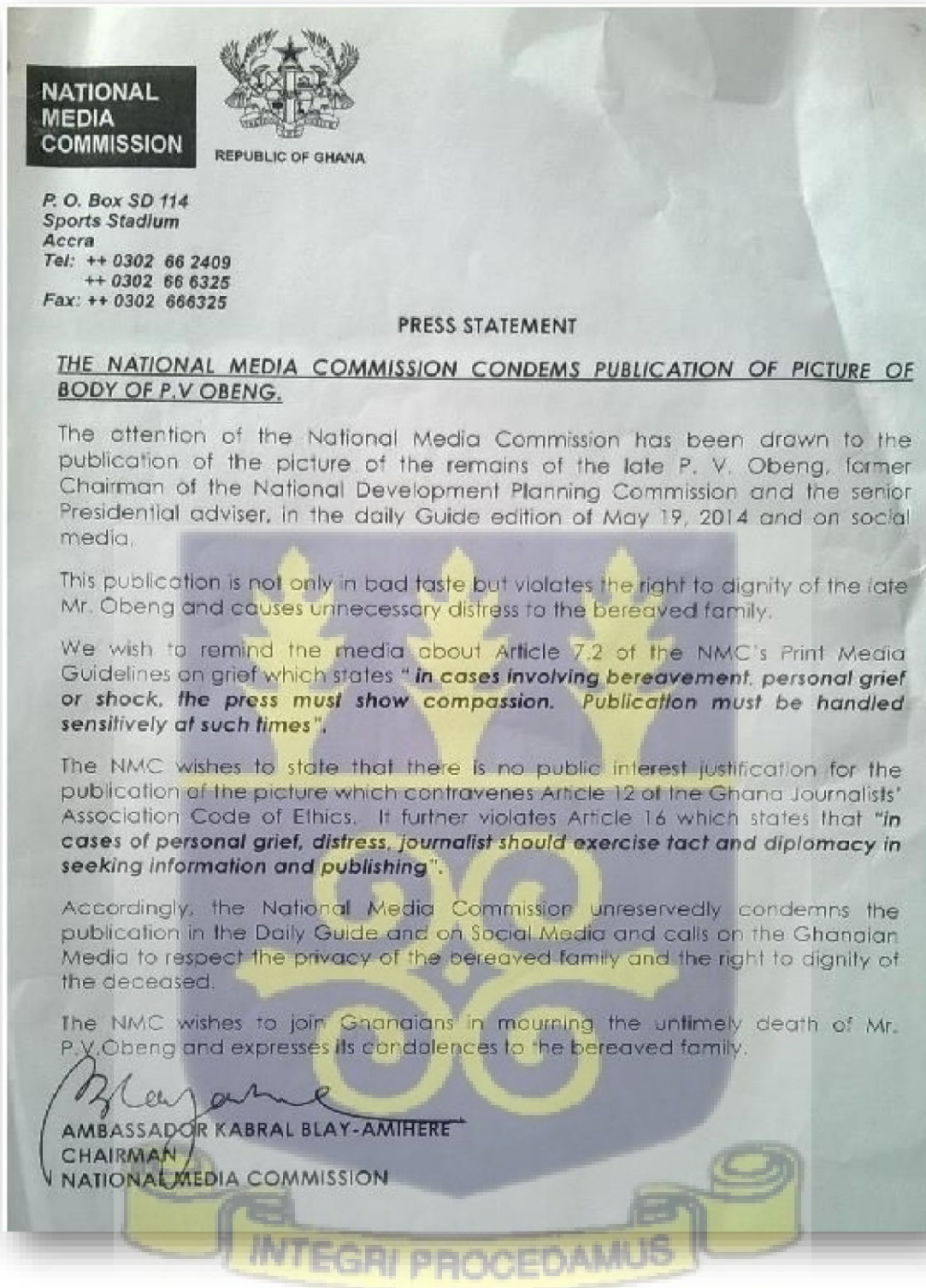
Sharing of the news of the passing of Paul Victor Obeng: Mr. Paul Victor Obeng (also known as P.V. Obeng) was the Former Chairman of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) from 2010 to 2014, Presidential Adviser on Governmental Affairs under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) from 1992 to 1997. He allegedly collapsed behind the steering wheel of his parked car along the Spintex Road in Accra. A taxi-driver ‘Samaritan’ who spotted him first took him to the Inkoom Hospital on the Spintex Road, and he was referred to the Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly (LEKMA) Hospital in Teshie. Mr. P.V. Obeng was purported to be driving himself from a meeting when the incident occurred. Ghanaians were left in a state of shock and disbelief at P.V. Obeng’s death and the circumstances surrounding his death. Many commentators in Ghana believe that P.V. Obeng’s position as a senior public officer, an accomplished politician, a passionate nationalist, and patriot qualified him to receive the best of largess services.⁴⁹ He was, therefore, in the category of prominent persons in society whose death

⁴⁹ *How PV Obeng Died*, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/542579/how-pv-obeng-died.html>, 21 May 2014; *President Mahama’s tribute on the death of Mr. Paul Victor Obeng*, <http://theheraldghana.com/president-mahamas-tribute-death-mr-paul-victor-obeng/tribute-death-mr-paul-victor-obeng/>, May 21, 2014; *How PV Obeng Died*, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/542579/how-pv-obeng-died.html>

and announcement must be treated with dignity, decorous and restrained prudence. However, the taxi driver and reporters who thought they had a rare scoop or an exclusive, photographed his last moments of departure to his ancestors, and caused his death to be announced on social media (WhatsApp) and in the press (*Daily Guide Newspaper*), using morgue photographs of him as their ultimate evidence. So, the news of P.V. Obeng's demise was published in the public domain before all key stakeholders had been privately informed. Appalled by the ghastly images of their kinsman being shared on social media, the family head had appealed to the public to be sympathetic and respectful to the deceased public servant. The National Media Commission (NMC) criticised various commentaries and people circulating pictures in the media of P.V. Obeng's remains. The NMC followed its criticism with a press statement as follows:



[died.html](#), 21 May 2014; *Rawlings mourns with family of PV Obeng*, General News of Thursday, 22 May 2014. Source: Tv3network.com <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Rawlings-mourns-with-family-of-PV-Obeng-310109>



Press Statement of the NMC.
Source: National Media Commission

As noted in Chapter One, news-sharing about the dead has always followed certain protocols in the Ghanaian traditional context. In most ethnic groups, the protocols demand that if the deceased person is an ordinary citizen, his/her family is informed first. For example, in the Akan ethnic group, the matrilineal family must be informed first and the head of family (together with other elders) or his appointee has the privilege to announce the death to the public. Whereas in most other ethnic groups such as Ewe and Dagomba, the patrilineal family receives the news and announces the death. The same with the Fon ethnic group of the Republic of Benin. Matrilineal for the Akan and patrilineal for the Ewe and Dagomba because of the dynamics regarding inheritance. The Akan recognise matrilineal inheritance, while the Ewe and Dagomba approve of patrilineal inheritance (Nukunya 2016). The announcement follows the protocol in this order: the deceased's spouse(s), children, in-laws, head of the community (traditional and political), opinion leaders, employers, or work colleagues, et cetera, are given the news first before the public is informed. The protocols are even more complex with the death of a traditional ruler or leader and prominent persons in society (Hagan 2006) like Mr. Paul Victor Obeng. In the case of Mr. P.V. Obeng, an important member of society, especially in political leadership in Ghana, the President of the Republic and the Head of Government would have been one of the first persons to be informed aside from his family. Likened to traditional leaders, palace authorities (chiefs and elders) are informed first before even the larger family. It should be noted that some close family members always form governing and decision-making group or the establishments of the palace. The protocol to inform palace authorities first before the family is explained that by virtue of becoming a traditional ruler, one becomes a public 'property/possession' (Yankah 1998). Also, the death of traditional rulers is usually kept from the public for an unstipulated period. This is interpreted in many ways such as:

The security of the state and public order demanded that the major leaders of the state be informed for certain security measures to be put in place before the public got to know of the demise of the ruler. Though people interpret the news blackout as facilitating head gathering as the burial of a chief demanded, the main reason was that it was necessary to pre-empt any disorder and chaos (George Panyin Hagan. *Interviewed, December 5, 2017*).

However, these traditions appear to have been violated in many instances in recent times by the contemporary mass media channels.

5.3 CASE 2: ON THE THEME OF DIVULGING PRIVATE CONVERSATION

Mr. Ebo Quansah vs. Asempa 94.7FM: The editor of the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, Mr. Ebo Quansah, made a complaint to the National Media Commission that *Asempa 94.7FM* played a recording of a private conversation between him and a friend at a public place – the Ghana International Press Centre (GIPC) – in one of its programmes on Monday, October 4, 2010. In his statement of complaint, Mr. Quansah said the person who recorded his conversation did not seek his permission and therefore viewed both the recording and airing as an intrusion into his privacy. This matter borders on the right to privacy (with regards to Mr. Quansah) versus the right to free speech and not to suppress dissemination of news (in terms of *Asempa 94.7FM*).

In connection with the right to privacy, secret recording is illegal in Ghana, therefore recording of Mr. Quansah and his friend borders on an illegality. Article 18(2) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides that “No person shall be subjected to interference with the privacy of his home, property, correspondence or communication except in accordance with law and as may be necessary in a free and democratic society for public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the protection of health or morals, for the prevention of disorder or crime or for the protection of the rights or freedoms of others.” This explains that the conduct of the person who secretly recorded Ebo Quansah’s conversation with his friend breached the privacy rights guaranteed under Article 18(2) because the recording was done without his (or their) consent. Also,

the invasion of privacy and a secret recording raises ethical issues in journalism in Ghana, according to the *GJA Code of Ethics*. Article 5: Respect for Privacy and Human Dignity, states that “Journalists should respect the right of the individual to privacy and human dignity; Enquiries and intrusions into a person’s private life can only be justified when done in the public interest; A journalist should guard against defamation, libel, slander, and obscenity.”

Relating to the right to free speech and not to suppress the dissemination of news, Article 21(1) (a) of the 1992 Constitution states that “All persons shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media,” and “Under no circumstance should news or a publication be suppressed unless it borders on national security or is in the public interest to do so (*GJA Code of Ethics*, Article 8: Suppression of News).

The issue had generated public outcry, although it was amicably settled by the Complaints Settlement Committee of the NMC, the solicitors and representatives of Multimedia Group Limited (owners of *Asempa 94.7FM*) and the complainant. There was a consensus that *Asempa 94.7FM* acted unprofessionally and was asked to render an unqualified written apology in the same manner as the offending piece was published to the complainant to be read on their network. The apology read:

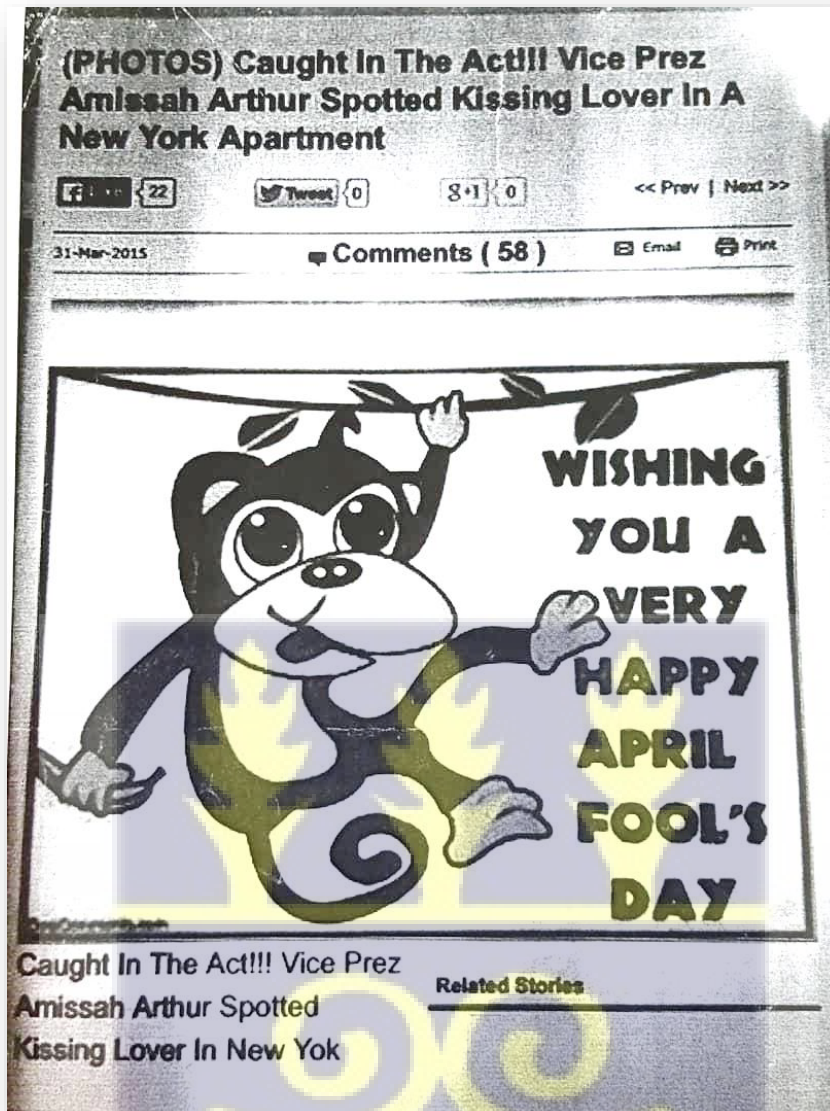
The Management of *Asempa 94.7FM* wishes to offer its unqualified apology to Mr. Ebo Quansah for the broadcast on October 4, 2010, of a recording of a private conversation between him and a friend. The Management has realised in retrospect that it should have exercised its editorial discretion so as not to broadcast the said recording. We apologise to Mr. Ebo Quansah and anybody else who may have been affected by the said broadcast and recommit ourselves to the highest standards of editorial discretion to ensure that such an unfortunate incident does not recur (NMC).

The NMC took the opportunity to remind all journalists and media houses in Ghana of Article 5(I) of the Ghana Journalists Association Code of Ethics, which reads: “Journalists should respect the right of the individual, the privacy and human dignity.”

5.4 CASE 3: ON THE THEME OF NEWS CONCERNING DELIBERATE FALSEHOOD

Sharing of satirical image and publications about H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur: The lawyers of H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur, the former Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, drew the attention of the NMC to a deliberate falsehood being peddled about him and the serious innuendoes unleashed on him by two media houses. The item was published/circulated on *www.peacefmonline.com* on April 1, 2015, and captioned: “(Photos) Caught in The Act!!! Vice Prez Amissah Arthur Spotted Kissing Lover in a New York Apartment,” and an assertion made by one, Abeiku Santana of *Okay 101.7FM*, in the afternoon of April 1, 2015, stating that H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur had died. These stories purport to be true episodes in the life of H.E. Amissah-Arthur, but are in fact a bitter, unpleasant, and unjustifiable attack on his person. The facts are untrue and the caption on *www.peacefmonline.com* is highly defamatory of H.E. Amissah-Arthur. The lawyers, with the instructions from their client, request the NMC to call to order the editors of the offending media houses, all forming part of the Despite Group of Companies. The lawyers demanded from the NMC to cause the two (2) media networks to immediately retract the offending article/caption and story and render an unqualified apology to their client in the same manner as the offending pieces were published. The media houses should also give written assurances and undertaking that they will not further publish/circulate the said items or any similar articles concerning H.E. Amissah-Arthur.





Publication (with cartoon) on www.peacefmonline.com on April 1, 2015.
Source: National Media Commission

The cartoon has been included here in the text to illustrate and make clear the arguments being advanced and to help readers understand better what was in contention. According to www.peacefmonline.com the story it published, and the assertion made by Abeiku Santana on *Okay 101.7FM* were both carried out on 1st April (All Fool's or April Fool's Day) and was meant as a satirical piece with no malice intended. The response from www.peacefmonline.com emphasised

that the April Fool's satirical pieces were not meant to attack or malign any person nor cast aspersions on the integrity of anyone and deeply regret the unfortunate incident. Apparently, the satirical pieces were made about other prominent persons in society and widely distributed. *www.peacefmonline.com* and *Okay 101.7FM* then apologised to H.E. Amissah-Arthur, for both stories and, as a mark of the sincerity of their apology, pulled down the offending article from the website, and rendered an apology to H.E. Amissah-Arthur, in same manner as the offending pieces were published.

The lawyers for H.E. Amissah-Arthur indicated that while their client has no qualms about the publication of satire, what was published by *www.peacefmonline.com* and *Okay 101.7FM* could not have passed for the description. They stressed that "deliberate falsehood cannot pass for satire, thus making the two publications particularly offensive and in poor taste."

5.5 ANALYSIS OF CASES AND FINDINGS

The analysis has been carried out to reveal interpretations and perceived tensions between indigenous communicative acts and the modern mass channels, using the case studies. Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding paradigm and Hagan's (2006) normative strategies suggested for adoption as a cultural framework in news-sharing for the modern mass media in Ghana become the appropriate models. The encoding/decoding model offers an inclusive approach to comprehend and clarify news-sharing intricacies and issues encoded in the case studies. It is appropriate to emphasise certain aspects of both models to expand on what has been discussed earlier as they relate to this thesis, then go ahead to analyse the selected cases.

Stuart Hall's model of encoding/decoding outlines the encoder/producer and decoder/receiver practices of production and reproduction of culture (Hall 2006). The

encoding/decoding model aids in understanding how different viewers react, deduce the ways different audiences respond, interpret, and read the media texts (Hammer & Kellner 2009). In discussing the complicated nature of the communicative exchange between the encoder/decoder, Hall notes that the correspondence between the two is not given but constructed (2006, p. 171). He explains the paradigm, that is, the processes of the producer/encoder production and audience/decoder reproduction of culture through a hypothetical analysis. Drawing on Parkin's study, Stuart Hall mentions three decoding rules within which audiences make meaning from media texts.

In the first place, there is a dominant-hegemonic position or preferred reading, according to Hall. In this position, the audience fully agrees with the preferred meanings encoded or philosophical meanings of the text. In this case decoding takes place within the overall world of the encoded signification. Hall refers to the experience of clarity between the moments of encoding and decoding, the moment of hegemony. The reader at this moment comprehends and agrees with the authenticity of the message or communication without any reservation (Hall 1994, p. 262). Rojek, however, notes that preferred readings cannot only be deduced through hegemony (2009, p. 57) because, according to Dryer (1977), encoded message in a text may convey viewpoints other than hegemonic insights. Due to predisposition to a habit or value, a viewer may agree with a habit or value contained in a text because it resonates with his/her personal values, therefore decoding the text from a preferred meaning position (Morley 1999, p. 292). The appreciation that viewers agree with contents of texts without reservations is pertinent in understanding the selected cases and why they are published/posted by their originators, and why the messages are accepted or not accepted by viewers due to the viewers' predisposition to values through socialisation.

Hall recognises a second rule which he calls “negotiated” position. With this, the viewer completely comprehends and agrees with the authenticity of the content of the text but questions certain portions due to his/her own captivation. The viewer agrees partly with the preferred meanings the text encodes.

Hall names a third rule and refers to it as “oppositional” reading. This rule describes the situation where viewers completely reject the hegemonic imperative contained in the text although they well comprehend it (Hall 2006). Viewers may proffer oppositional reading to a text because they belong to a specific group that has imbibed beliefs and values resistant to the dominant or preferred imperative contained or imprinted in it. Oppositional reading is not, per se, out of place. It simply serves as a review to a preferred reading (Morley 1992). The analyses of negotiated and oppositional readings, advanced by Hall (2006) and Morley (1992), helps the comprehension of traditional leaders and cultural expert’s questioning of portions of the texts (case studies), while accepting the entire content or rejecting it.

There has been unfavourable commentary on the encoding and decoding model although it is employed to clarify issues of influence on viewers, regarding how they react and comprehend media texts as well as appreciate the several readings they make from a text. For this reason, changes have been proposed by various scholars to make it more useful in the analysis of viewers’ responses and readings of media texts (Morley 1992; Wren-Lewis 1983). For instance, Morley contends that a lingering dilemma exists in agreeing with the notion of “preferred reading” due to its application in the study of viewers’ readings of fictional texts (1992, p. 114). Wren-Lewis also believes that the notion of “preferred reading” pays no attention to “the level at which decoding operates” with fictional texts (1983, p. 186). Distinct from factual texts, which is privileged to openly present actualities about the world, a preferred reading in a fictional text is vague. This is

dilemma for the notion of “preferred reading” (Morley 1992, p. 114). This position is anchored on the fact that meaning is not solely established from the text, but also with the reader depending on several factors such as those produced through the relationship constructed in the text with the codes by the viewers (ibid). This is to buttress the point that texts do not have a single fixed meaning but meaning varies (ibid). As a solution to the difficulty posed for the analyst, Wren-Lewis suggest that the analyst must treat various likely readings by the viewers as “a series of ‘preferred readings’” (1983, p. 195). Wren-Lewis asserts that the analyst can then rely on textual analysis after assigning various potential meanings to the text to ascertain the textual features that undergird specific meanings at specific points in the text’s narrative (Wren-Lewis 1983, p. 195).

Jordin and Brunt contend that preferred readings can be established through textual analysis before empirical examination, following which interpretations by the viewers can be determined concerning the likely preferred reading recognised in the textual analysis (1988, pp. 243-245).

Jordin and Brunt’s approach has been endorsed by this study. The study uses textual and thematic analyses of the case studies to ascertain the possible preferred readings by the respondents. In this case, the preferred readings recognised in the textual and thematic analyses of the cases are considered as “privileged readings” since they are derived from readings regarding the Ghanaian cultural knowledge of the analyst (myself) together with the information collected from the respondents on their affects. Also, it has established how respondents feel and think about the issues. Ascertaining positive or negative responses within preferred, negotiated, and oppositional readings and analysis from the media practitioners and cultural practitioners present exciting understandings into the selected cases.

Having examined Stuart Hall's model of encoding/decoding, it is proper to remind the reader about Hagan's cultural framework for news-sharing discussed earlier in Chapter Three. For Hagan (2006), it is important for the modern mass media in Ghana to adopt certain normative strategies for news-sharing. These include, acknowledging the self-worth of every member of society, disseminating information on constructive cultural philosophies, and eliminating objectionable beliefs and values, appreciating multiethnic cultural differences, recognising principles of honesty, accuracy, suitability of time of release of information, the way it is released and context of disclosure, to establish what society stands to gain. These frameworks have been adopted to examine the selected cases.

In the sections that follow, the findings on the depictions in the selected cases vis-à-vis cultural issues are discussed. The discussions are in two categories: editors-in-chief of media entities, senior journalists, and communication experts who also use social media and social networks and/or blogs (collectively referred to as 'media practitioners') on the one hand, and representatives of traditional and cultural institutions, traditional rulers, traditionalists, and cultural experts (collectively referred to as 'cultural experts') on the other hand. The discussions are based on three themes: *Sharing of news about the dead, divulging private communication/information, and sharing of news concerning deliberate falsehood*. These themes are determined from the subject matter of the cases. They are discussed to ascertain:

- How indigenous communicative acts are applied or not applied;
- Whether practitioners in the contemporary mass channels are familiar with indigenous communicative acts and consider using them in an era of media convergence and interactivity;
- How globalisation and glocalisation affect news-sharing; and

- How proliferation of media and media ownership affect the use of indigenous communicative acts in news-sharing.

It is important to note that all twenty-three (23) (see *Table II*) participants or respondents were interviewed on each of the cases and themes. However, the participants are grouped in two major categories of media practitioners and cultural experts. The findings from each of the two categories are presented and analysed together. This is because there are no vast differences in the findings of the categories/individuals. In the same way, the analyses of media practitioners and cultural experts are all discussed together so as not to demonstrate only the relationships, but also the different readings. Special attention and interpretation are accorded to specific issues or details from individual participants where and when it is necessary. The first case under study is on sharing of the news about the passing and morgue pictures/video of Mr. P.V. Obeng on Saturday, May 17, 2014.

5.5.1 *Sharing of news about the dead: News about the passing of Paul Victor Obeng*

The data from both categories of participants revealed that most Ghanaians appear to cherish their cultural traditions, evident through celebration of various festivals, funerals, outdoor events, clothes and their styles, languages, and communication, and so on. The data indicate that media practitioners believed deaths generally, and of prominent people, are extraordinary experiences in the lives of journalists.

As such and resulting from new cultural tendencies because of globalisation and interactivity, deaths exemplify a need for documentation in their own right, independent of any external motivation, and that in some instances, capturing images or recording videos occurred unwarily (Kwami Sefa Kayi, *Radio Host and Producer*, Oct. 16, 2017).

Although modern journalistic ethical codes, for instance the *GJA Code*, contain provisions on sensitivity in terms of grief, respect for privacy, the media practitioners consider that the uniqueness or news-value of P.V. Obeng's death and morgue pictures necessitated documentation.

However, Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, a media consultant, Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC) and the former Programme Coordinator of the Cultural Initiative Support Programme (CISP), asserts that “There is, undoubtedly, an element of bravado here” (*Personal Interview, Oct. 16, 2017*). A cultural expert, George Panyin Hagan, indicates that “taking or filming images humiliates victims and their families in the sense that this act shows the influence of the media persons to target or reduce the victim’s status, turning him or her into a mere image.” He further notes that “in the past the driver (suspected to have shared the WhatsApp pictures) and newspaper editor who published the images would have been punished, in the worst scenario, by decapitation” (*Personal Interview, December 5, 2017*).

With respect to the data and readings, P.V. Obeng’s episode was planned and staged by the mortuary attendants who released a short video of his remains. The recorder of the video took active part in it, rather than passively detailing an uncommon incident. In other words, he creatively cast himself in a lead role, in a subjective shot, and others as extras in a movie-like, drama. From the reading of the video, it signifies an effort towards recording or authenticating an extraordinary event because the movement of the camera could possibly be explained as ‘searching’ rather than being invasive. This textual analysis of the video, revealed from the start that the mortuary attendant seems to be recording a rare event that he was disengaged from. Midway through the video, the camera’s role was altered from an objective position to a subjective position, in a seeming bid to be more creative and being at the centre of the event; making the camera a player by itself to stimulate a cinematic appeal. At this instant, it becomes somewhat obvious that the recording was for a sinister purpose to humiliate P.V. Obeng. This confirms Kwami Sefa Kayi’s point about the motivation of journalists, which the mortuary attendant appeared to assume. The video and pictures screenshot from it and posted on social media created a huge controversy among

the Ghanaian public and commentators. This prompted some media networks, including *Peace 104.3FM* to report on the subject. As part of the reportage, the mortuary attendant was interviewed. The mortuary attendant claimed he recorded the video for the purpose of evidence (*Interview of mortuary attendant by Peace 104.3FM, May 17, 2014*).

Different readings indicate cultural experts strongly believe that indigenous communication, cultural values, and traditions in Ghana have shown notable dynamism and adaptability to contemporary mass media channels. According to Nana Ansah Kwao IV, Adumasahene of Akwamu Traditional Area, Eastern Region, “Customs are, thus, not merely being modernised but modernity is being customised” (*Personal Interview, October 4, 2017*). The outcome of these processes, Kwame Sefa Kayi considers, is a triumph neither for ‘tradition’ nor for ‘modernity’ (*Personal Interview, October 16, 2017*). The submissions of Nana Ansah Kwao IV and Kwame Sefa Kayi, prove that contemporary mass media channels secure continued existence by positioning themselves as a melting point for competing viewpoints on cultural, political, and social issues, and their role in present communication dispensation cannot be understated. As stated by one of the media experts, Samuel Attah-Mensah of the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), “What is important here is the fact that the survival of the modern mass media in Ghana depends on finding a middle ground between its weaknesses and the strengths of the cultural/indigenous norms and values” (*Personal Interview, October 16, 2017*). This supports the views of Nyamnjoh (2009) that the mass media and culture, and traditions are interconnected such that neither can do without the other. He further clarifies that sometimes culture and traditions determine the type of media a society should have, and that the media would fail in its duty to society not to consider the beliefs, philosophy, the language, traditions, and values of the people.

This form of genuineness and value communication, according to Wefwafwa (2014), will promote trust between the people and the media.

Kojo Arthur of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems, is of the view that “the indigenous media and its protocols represent an essential symbol of identity in the communication context of modern Ghana” (*Personal Interview, November 18, 2017*). Specifically, Nana Ansah Kwao IV contends that “there seem to be deterioration in cultural traditions, especially in communicative values, which many believed was due to new communication technologies such as new media and globalisation of experiences” (*Personal Interview, October 4, 2017*). Nana Ansah Kwao IV’s criticism of new media and its technologies are informed by his intertextual and cultural awareness of popular protocols of indigenous communication. The proposition that there are numerous likely ways of reading a text is applicable here (Hall 2006). This intertextual awareness agrees with several scholarly readings about the impact of new communication technologies on indigenous values of communication (Burgh-Woodman 2014; Chao-Chen 2013; Nyamnjoh 2010; Oduro-Frimpong 2011; and Wasserman 2012).

In connection with how globalisation and glocalisation may influence sharing of news of the selected cases, George Panyin Hagan states that like many other countries in the Global South, Ghana for the past few years has been challenged by the transformations in the ideas of globalisation and glocalisation. He further notes that recently, “cultural institutions like the National Commission on Culture, Bureau of Ghana Languages, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, and Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, as well as the Ministry of Education, have been charged with the duty of regenerating the deteriorating Ghanaian cultural wealth” (*Personal Interview, December 5, 2017*). Relating George Panyin Hagan’s position to the cases under study, it may be suggested that it is professional competence, home-grown knowledge, and expertise in

indigenous or local history and traditions that is favoured over run-of-the-mill and ambiguous appreciation of cultural traditions.

According to Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, “the media’s role as a conduit and embodiment of Ghanaian cultural transmission, and all those who share information, ought to have good understanding of cultural traditions of Ghana” (*Personal Interview, November 29, 2017*). Sarpong (2012) explains the cultural-traditions-knowledge proposition succinctly:

The idea is not that we should keep them because they are cultural; the aim is, first, that we understand the people who are involved so that we do not impute our own motives to them, and that when we realise that something has to be altered, we do not employ our own means of change, but that we use the method of explanation and conviction. It is a principle of social anthropology that every institution in our society has a function; it has a *meaning for the people who perform it*. This principle is the basis of the functionalist approach to the interpretation of cultural practices and habits (2012, p. 7).

Generally, the perspectives from both categories of media practitioners and cultural experts similar on issues of cultural sensitivity and regenerating. The findings, however, indicate disparities in the way the respective groups responded to the effects of globalisation and glocalisation in relation to the cases. For instance, whereas the media practitioners clarify how “images are ever sophisticated,” and disagree with the thought of “the typical viewer as an impassive, emotionless space waiting to be bombarded with displeasing images, stories and scenes,” the cultural experts hold the position that “images can absolutely influence perceptions of people.”

Regarding effects of proliferation of media and media ownership in news-sharing, Samuel Attah-Mensah of GIBA, contends that

contrary to a generally held view that private media ownership impedes objectivity of media houses and journalists due to affiliations, it does not amount to a takeover from society to express their views on matters of interest. The followings that private media houses have cultivated help to promote debates on specific matters of political, religious, ethnic, and regional relevance (*Personal Interview, October 16, 2017*).

From the literature, Rich (2010) appears to disagree with Samuel Attah-Mensah, stating that private media ownership poses problem for media practice because it serves interests of certain groups, Hagan (2006) maintains that it is needless in a democratic dispensation to control ownership and spread of the media. He argues that despite these encouraging levels of influence and power-relationships, it upholds the tenets of democracy such as freedom of the media.

What is clear from the interviews and literature on proliferation of media and media ownership is the fact that every day social (inter)actions have been dominated by the media, propelled by new media technologies which have also become essential parts of human life. Various uses have been assigned to the mass media such as for pleasure and entertainment, and to document remarkable life episodes. Likewise, they are engaged to present and reconstruct identities.

The data revealed how in present-day community living, a sizeable amount of time is devoted to watching, usually self-created images. George Sarpong, the Executive Secretary of National Media Commission, asserts that in essence,

‘to belong’ is ‘to be available online,’ and one is viewed as a thriving or an effective social being only to the idea that one is noticeable as such on social media. In the case of P.V. Obeng’s pictures, you could notice that the guy just wants social media presence” (*Personal Interview, October 2, 2017*).

Affail Monney, the President of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), raised questions of how the media and ‘citizen journalists’ who share videos and images of other Ghanaians see themselves: as a people socially removed from the lives and concerns of Ghanaians? Or, do Ghanaians find ways into their texts? (*Personal Interview, November 29, 2017*). Insights to his questions are offered by some respondents as the data provides.

Without exception, both media practitioners and cultural experts decoded the attempts by some media professionals and amateurs to disregard protocols of news-sharing, whether

indigenous or conventional. At first sight, readings from the videos/texts seem consistent with this position as they appear to belittle victims and their families. But the respondents were divided as to the present-day relevance of sharing of such videos. The most generally articulated framing is that issues on news-sharing are different now, suggesting that concerns of most Ghanaians are genuine, especially if they are categorised based on parallels between the past and now. For that matter, three framings can be deduced: alien framings (for now and of those who are not conversant with the culture), parallel framings (for issues depicted in videos that can be traced to the past) and ambivalent framings (videos not consciously recorded and shared). However, “parallel” and “ambivalent” framings do not match with the predominant readings of the texts. Using Hagan’s normative strategies as a benchmark, alien framings, apply to those who share news but are not familiar with Ghanaian beliefs, values, and behaviours. For instance, Hagan (2006) suggests that those who share news and information must “appreciate the uniqueness in culture and belief systems of their society” and “come to terms with combined effects of multiethnic experiences in order to appreciate cultural differences and characteristics” (p. 8-9). The videos were disseminated not based on a constructive cultural value of respect for the dead. As mentioned earlier, the production of the videos seems to be based on documentation of an extraordinary incident. The unique selections of close-range-shots and probing camera positions appear to present a preference for amusement.

This means that there is a simple claim that news-sharing on sensitive matters without following protocols is worse now. As Kwesi Pratt, Jnr., Managing Editor of *The Insight* newspaper states:

It has recently become a reflex action for witnesses to be dramatic or unusual about events, to record images using their phones. Advancement of digitisation due to new technologies such as smart phones with their omnipresence cameras and instant picture-taking culture have had significant effect on everyday life (*Personal Interview, October 6, 2017*).

Data gathered, especially, from media practitioners have been interpreted to mean that effective communication is never merely about the exchange of information, but about interactions and participation, a reality that has enlarged and become more demonstrable in the social media space. In the view of Kwesi Pratt Jnr., the mortuary man and the *Daily Guide Newspaper* wanted interactions and participation in the information about the demise of P.V. Obeng. He argues that

P.V. Obeng's incident seems to have been recorded because the citizen journalist wanted to be the first to scoop the news and the *Daily Guide Newspaper*, published the images later as souvenirs or as visual mementos. The rising online culture of humiliation is apparent all over (*Personal Interview, October 6, 2017*).

The NMC documents indicate that video-taping becomes increasingly imperative and the news-sharing aspiration plays less of a part. As part of a snapshot culture, it appears the videos of the study-cases were recorded to document uncommon occurrences. It could be said that the recordings describe how individual impetuses are entrenched in modern technological and cultural tendencies. In the entire episode of the video, the victim (P.V. Obeng), is unkindly dishonoured, and the recording perform central functions of this humiliation. The degradation prolongs when pictures and movies are disseminated and exposed to others. A snapshot culture necessitating the documentation of unusual experiences is also a combined part of the episodes. The case, thus, serves as an example of media motivations entrenched in contemporary socio-media and technological developments.

According to Latour (1991), society and technology are not two ontologically distinct entities, but more like phases of the same essential action. Reflecting on Latour's assertion, it is imperative to accept that recording equipment such as cameras and microphones may be viewed as effective instruments in communication, generating an active influence. The handler of camera, for instance, can manipulate its use for a selfish end because videos or images are intended to

create atmospheres or make statements. Therefore, widespread circulation of videos or images can be a key inducer of traumatic experience for families of victims.

As Stubblefield (2011) indicates, the relationship between the digital revolution, new technologies and breach of decorum can be perceived in the attitude of instantaneous picture producing. So, the smartphone camera has been employed variously for documenting extraordinary events aside its everyday life usage. These uncommon incidents which activate the need for photograph may be a wrongdoing of a member of the society as in the case of P.V. Obeng. It is to be noted that photographs are taken for the purposes of communication. Likewise, videos are produced not arbitrarily without their audience. Samuel Attah-Mensah underscored the point that photographs, in most cases, are knowingly produced for specific audiences. He stressed that:

Sometimes the producer becomes the automatic consumer of the videos. Recording of events may be said to be linked to cultural practices and can only be understood in the context of a particular society. In Ghana, it is the use of smartphones and the 'age of selfie' which is relatively new compared to Western societies (*Personal Interview, October 5, 2017*).

Samuel Attah-Mensah's view implies that documentation is a time-honoured endeavour and an inherent part of human narrativity. The pervasive nature of cameras has only facilitated this human urge, making it an integral part of identity construction and social dealings. This assertion corroborates Stubblefield's (2011) stance. Scholars such as Carrabine (2011) are of the believe that the urge for documentation suggests the need for disquieting photography, which has long been part of the social construction of human experience. Referring to the discipline of narrative criminology, Presser and Sandberg (2015) emphasise that "images both tell stories and mobilise story-making on the part of the audience" (p. 296). This observation by Presser and Sandberg reinforces unethical dimension of recording and sharing horrendous videos of a dead public officer such as P.V. Obeng.

The ethical code of respect for privacy and human dignity contained in Article 5, of the *GJA Code of Ethics* had been breached because there was no reason to suggest that recording and sharing of the videos and photographs were done in the public interest. As Rich (2010) advocates, matters of privacy are not about how accurate a publication is, but involve ethical decisions. For this reason, truth may not be a good enough protection in privacy cases. Using Hagan's (2006) normative strategies, the media have not considered the "sensitivity and the obligation to establish what society stands to gain." Also, the media did not promote the "consciousness of citizenry by using indigenous insight into cultural systems of society" (p. 9), in employing indigenous etiquette and communication protocols to accord P.V. Obeng's family the privilege to announce his death. On the bases of the law, public depiction of private and disconcerting facts may lead to a court action (Karikari & Kumado 2000), but the action must be directed at the reputation of the individual. Therefore, in the case of P.V. Obeng, the case may not be pursued in the law courts because "his person" had not been damaged.

5.5.2 *Sharing of news about a private conversation: Mr. Ebo Quansah and his friend*

The readings of both media practitioners and cultural experts are that there are two issues at stake in this case study. One of the issues is divulging private conversation to a third party and broadcasting it in the public space. Kojo Arthur of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems indicates that "freedom to divulge information also includes knowing the power of what is divulged as well as the social value of concealing information." He further contends that "in most ethnic groups in Ghana, leaking information between two parties to a third-party is not according to culture, and strictly abhorred. The standards for assessing violation of divulging information to a third-party is more rooted in Akan tradition" (*Personal Interview, November 18, 2017*).

The data also revealed that both groups have recognised that there are standards of practice in professional journalism in the *GJA Code of Ethics* (Article 5) and provisions in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Article 18,2), regarding the right to privacy and of the individual to control the distribution of information about himself, respectively.

Reading the text of the case and likening it to the *Okyeame*, guards and domestic attendants of traditional rulers of Ashanti, respondents are of the view that although these palace members are privy to information delivered to the chief, and sometimes are the channels of such messages, they do not divulge them. According to George Panyin Hagan, “This is because the restraints placed on them concerning information dissemination prohibit that they divulge information to the public. The consequences for defying these taboos are dire” (*Personal Interview, December 5, 2017*). The analogy of this instance is that the person who covertly taped the conversation of Mr. Ebo Quansah and his friend had breached the privacy code. Likewise, the journalist did not have the consent of Mr. Ebo Quansah and his friend to share their conversation publicly.

In terms of how convergence and interactivity of the modern mass media may influence the phenomenon of divulging private conversation, both cultural and media participants considered that these technologically induced practices have minimal influence on divulging of private conversation. David Kwasi Agyeman, the News Editor of *Peace 104.3FM*, for example, believes that divulging of private conversation to a third-party “has been an age-old phenomenon even the prohibitions in the indigenous communication systems could not stop its practice” (*Personal Interview, October 16, 2017*). Globalisation, according to the data, has insignificant influence on divulging of private conversation in the modern media in Ghana because the restrictions of non-divulgence of private conversation in public appears to be detested in many cultures across the

world. “The abhorrence of this practice is also enshrined in constitutions of many states and codes of ethics of journalists” (David Kwasi Agyeman, *Personal Interview, October 16, 2017*). The media practitioners were unanimous about how proliferation of media and media ownership are key in the phenomenon of divulging of private conversation in public domain. They posit that the competition among media houses to be the first to know and broadcast, in order to win audiences and advertising clientele accounts for this.

As observed in Chapter One, ethnic groups in Ghana recognise that responsibilities must go with free speech. For this reason, provisions have been instituted to manage free speech in indigenous communication. These provisions are expected to be strictly adhered to. According to Agyekum (2010), these provisions in Akan ethnic group include *ntam* (a reminiscential oath that involves an evocation of the past unpleasant experiences of a people and the state. It serves to prevent members of society from making unpleasant comments). *Ammodin* (meaning ‘unmentionables’), is another means of imposing responsible speech. “*Ammodin* taboo expressions are to be avoided by speakers because they are considered unsuitable, distasteful, and indecent for normal linguistic usage. [...] The community has, therefore, decided to consciously avoid them in everyday speech, especially in the public domain.” (p. 142). The rest are *duabɔ* ‘imprecation,’ *nsedie*, ‘self-imprecation,’ *atennidie* ‘inventives,’ et cetera. In this case study, *Ntam* and *ammodin* are particularly relevant because both appear to serve the purpose of integrity in communication. In the same way, public communication is exercised with diligence and decorum. The *dawurobɔfo* (gong-beater), can be likened to *Asempa 94.7FM*, in this instance, for the public communicative role both play. However, the *dawurobɔfo* always exercises deliberate care with public communication.

5.5.3 *Sharing news of deliberate falsehood: Satirical image and publications about H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur*

The available data and readings indicate that H.E. Amissah-Arthur's scenario was dramatised as in the instances of images and videos of P.V. Obeng. In ascribing significance to the relationship constructed within the text, examining style and substance, through textual analysis, it has been revealed that the cartoon has been reflectively created, purposefully designed, and published on April Fool's Day. Both the cartoon on *www.peacefmonline.com* and news presentation by Abeiku Santana on *Okay 101.7FM* demonstrated the dramatisation of the news. A dramatised news is presentation of news as a "movie or theatrical production with the essentials of drama and narrative" (Bennett 1996). When presenters focused on news presentation as drama, it becomes difficult to differentiate it from "journalists as reporters of fact and as creators of fiction" (Bennett 1996). This is what the lawyers for H.E. Amissah-Arthur stressed when they indicated that their client has no misgivings with the publication of satires, but is displeased with deliberate falsehood. A respondent, Paula Sanziri (Journalist), emphasised the dramatics bit, saying, there were other persons, whom may be termed characters in the drama, and H.E. Amissah-Arthur is just one of them on April Fool's Day (*Personal Interviewed, October 2, 2017*). While most of the Cultural Experts registered their dissatisfaction about lampooning of an elderly person and a former Vice President of Ghana in a satirical image with a deliberate falsehood, a few Media Practitioners showed no regret. The Cultural Experts also decoded the publication in the contexts of globalisation and glocalisation. They argued from the data that to speak ill of an elderly person is not Ghanaian and April Fool's Day is alien to Ghanaian. In terms of these, they maintained that infiltration of other people's cultures and changes in social forces as a result of codependent of people of the world on one another was responsible. This is what Pieterse (2004) describes as the

unavoidability of globalisation and its impacts on societies, peoples, and cultures, and Burgh-Woodman (2014) explains as glocalisation's altering of both global and local ethos.

The findings from various interpretations by the Media Practitioners and Cultural Experts revealed that satirical pieces are replete in indigenous communication. In chapter one of this thesis, reference has been made to Avorgbedor, affirming *Haló* as a musical-dramatic performance form in some Anlo-Ewe communities. *Haló* is characterised by direct or comic forms of provocation, lampooning, aggravation, and sung and spoken insults, which are sometimes exaggerated through dramatic enactments. *Haló* "draws on a variety of artistic channels for the sake of incisive, aggressive, and superior communication of insult and musical affect" (1994, p. 84). Comparing this to what pertains in the Akan communities, Agyekum asserts that peculiar songs are made to cast insinuation and innuendo and even verbal assault not only on individuals but on governments to "draw their attention to certain faults in their governance" (2000, p. 10). Although satire occurs in communicative acts in certain cultures such as the Ewe and Akan cultures, the satire on Amissah-Arthur was nonetheless considered unacceptable and breach of cultural communication ethos because it bordered on fabrication. The publication of deliberate falsehood in the name of satire is also unethical and libelous, regarding the *GJA Code of Ethics* and the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, respectively.

Most of the Cultural Experts believe that the media and those who share information could cause conflicts and breakdown of the Ghanaian social fabric. Also, they may possibly ebb the values of solidarity, tradition, mutual support, and moral respectability among Ghanaians. The Media Practitioners agreed with the Cultural Experts by indicating that the viewers' attention would not be captured by an accurate but a distressing detail. Both cultural experts and media experts indicated that as much as contemporary mass media channels reach vast audiences and can

mesmerise, they should be complemented with indigenous communication systems, and not be used to disseminate untruth for an April Fool’s Day joke.

Although the modern mass media, over the years, have captured and promoted Ghanaian cultural traditions and values, it would have been expected that the media make a conscious effort to incorporate indigenous communicative norms as a construct of audio-visual creation. This would elaborate the uniqueness and moral unity of the Ghanaian society. On the contrary, the media texts deployed within the videos and documents studied appear to convey a considerable amount of ‘contemporary’ detail, but not celebrated the cultural achievements of Ghanaians, especially those that relate to news-sharing about the dead and divulging of private information. The result is hybrid texts released in social media, on radio, television, according to Affail Monney, “which maintain the constant animation of lack of candour and sincerity in contemporary experience, and affects sensibilities of kinsmen and women, provoke arguments on broader issues of cohesion and division” (*Personal Interviewed, November 29, 2017*).

Table III, below, summarises the findings and readings from participants, regarding the features of indigenous media and contemporary mass media channels.

Table III: Some features of indigenous media and contemporary mass media

NO.	INDIGENOUS MEDIA	CONTEMPORARY MASS MEDIA
1.	News-sharing as a power transaction.	News-sharing as a power transaction and a right.
2.	Measured in news-sharing: A set of complex protocols, e.g., in a funeral announcement, the giving and receiving of drinks marks the completion of a specific communication transaction.	State of flux in news-sharing: Freedom of expression and commitment to let the public ‘know.’ Not to suppress news.
3.	A set of sanctions such as verbal taboos, news embargo and an oath instituted by the culture and enforced by traditional leaders serve effectively to kill a rumour.	Ghana’s republican status and constitutional rule limited power-role, but maintained the cultural functions of traditional rulers.
4.	Strick measures to curtail defilement of communicative values.	Do not labour under such strict controls.
5.	Consequences are grave.	Steps aside from the consequences.
6.	Cultural sensitivity.	Cultural insensitivity.

7.	Paradigms for values of news remains same.	Changing standards for value of news or information.
8.	Genuine responsibility to the audience.	Seeming lack of responsibility to the audience.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined how participants of Cultural Experts and Media Practitioners interpreted three selected cases with the themes: *Sharing of news about the dead*, *Sharing of news about a private conversation*, and *Sharing news of deliberate falsehood*. By means of Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding theory and its modifications, the findings and analyses reveal that participants, comprising Cultural Experts and Media Practitioners were influenced by diverse protocols such as intertextual cultural knowledge, personal experiences and dispositions, professional orientation, and biases as they decoded the images/cases. The findings suggest that while there were noticeable differences in the way Media Practitioners and Cultural Experts interpreted the selected cases, there were also examples where comparable analyses were made. The Media Practitioners displayed their interest in cultural awareness issues and read the cases in the preferred and negotiated modes. They were not pleased with the originators of the texts or publications and those who shared them. The Cultural Experts, mainly, used the preferred approach to read and were also irritated by the creators of the texts and those who published them. They believed that the creators and sharers/publishers did not adhere to professional standards, stipulated social and cultural norms. As Media Practitioners appeared irked about the first case (P.V. Obeng's) and portrayal of dead persons in this manner, the Cultural Experts were appalled by the three cases because they saw the representations to come against traditional norms.

Although Cultural Experts were of the view that aspects of the texts/publications were influenced by globalisation, convergence, and interactivity, they accept this as belonging to a new dispensation, the globalised world. Generally, the different analyses and understandings show that

both Media Practitioners and Cultural Experts were not only affected in diverse ways as they keenly interrogate perceived conflict, regarding news-sharing by means of indigenous communicative acts and contemporary mass channels in Ghana, but they were also influenced in different ways by the texts/publications.



CHAPTER SIX **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Four beautiful thoughts of life: Look back and get experience, look forward and see hope, look around and find reality, and look within and find yourself (Unknown Source).

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents answers to the research questions, the limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, summary, and conclusion. It also presents the connection between the work carried out and previous works discussed in the literature chapter.

6.1 PROVISION OF ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6.1.1 Question 1: What are the indigenous communicative acts pertaining to information and news-sharing on culturally sensitive matters and how are they applied in the area of the three themes (*News about the dead, News on divulging of private information or conversation, News concerning deliberate falsehood*)?

This study started on the basis that there has been concern in the field of media and communications studies on the subject of “a critique of the processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts vis-à-vis contemporary mass channels.” The study, therefore set out to examine this subject in relation to Ghana. This study has also investigated the questions of media ethics and how they may exist in tension with indigenous traditions of news-sharing. It was revealed that so far as contemporary mass media channels captivate and have the capacity to share news to vast audiences, they should be complemented with indigenous communication systems. This study, also brings into focus the aspect(s) of African indigenous communication systems, aimed at pointing out alternative ways of sharing

news/information that were (and perhaps still are) more effective than the contemporary mass media channels when addressing deep rooted societal issues that touch on a people's culture.

The study's findings revealed that indigenous communication protocols of announcing the death of prominent people in society could still be used. It has been discovered that the protocols of contemporary mass media and indigenous communication acts could be integrated to provide an effective communication system. This is because the contemporary mass media channels have a wider reach and are high-class in visuals but are unable to adequately address culturally sensitive issues which demand careful attention of the people. The study discovered that indigenous communicative act in announcing death go through a very strict protocol. As already indicated, announcement of the death of a traditional leader goes through palace authorities, close family members, the community, before the general public. For an ordinary citizen, it goes through the closest family members (spouse, children, siblings), the head of the family, then the general public. The study discovered that these protocols were not followed in the case of P.V. Obeng. Per the study's findings, an oath, imposition of speech restrictions, et cetera, serve as means to stop members of society from making unpleasant comments (Agyekum 2009). Public communication is carried out with conscientiousness and in dignity. This can be observed from the deliberate care with which public communication is always handled by the *dawurobofo*. The findings also revealed that although satire and comic forms, and lampooning are used in indigenous communication, the April Fool's Day text and cartoon did not characterize this phenomenon. It was also revealed that information is usually controlled by the chief or head of the clan in Ghanaian traditional culture. The study has argued that indigenous communication modes are context-specific and are relevant to Ghana and by extension Africa. The selected cases are in dialogic relationship with indigenous communication and Ghanaian culture issues.

6.1.2 Question 2: Are media practitioners who work in contemporary mass channels familiar with indigenous communicative acts and do they endeavour to uphold them in an era of media convergence and interactivity?

The study found that the contemporary media in Ghana has been a dynamic means of information dissemination with three origins: pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial. These origins have been presented in detail in Chapter Two. The study has revealed that social media is a force to be considered in the scheme of contemporary media operations, particularly with growing dissatisfaction of its unbridled use and seeming disregard for conventional and indigenous values of news-sharing. Being an open-source medium and faceless, not every user is expected to know about indigenous communicative acts. Technologies of convergence and interactivity have made news-sharing significantly easier. Similarly, they have encouraged production of self- and home-made images and videos for purposes of dissemination. These evidences form the basis for the situations of infringements on news-sharing protocols exemplified in Chapter Five. These instances may be catalogued to represent the dark side of a more general violation of traditional norms that guided news dissemination for a functioning society. The analysis recognised how images are videoed or photographed in essence to create news and that the action should be appreciated as linked to the pervasiveness of the Internet and the evolution of unprofessional media practice. It also shows how images are captured to damage and embarrass the victim or the victim's family, and that the capturing of images therefore should be recognised as linked to an online culture of discomfiture. Lastly, the analysis reveals how images are captured instinctively when something unusual is being experienced, and look at how this activity can be categorised as a prevailing photo-taking culture. These observations by the participants and as revealed by the findings, are demonstrated in the all the three cases studied. Yankah observes that "As

communication becomes more faceless, the indigenous norms of restrained discourse are bound to slacken, taken over by greater openness and candour where affront is inevitable. But this also deepens the communication crisis [...]” (1998, p. 40).

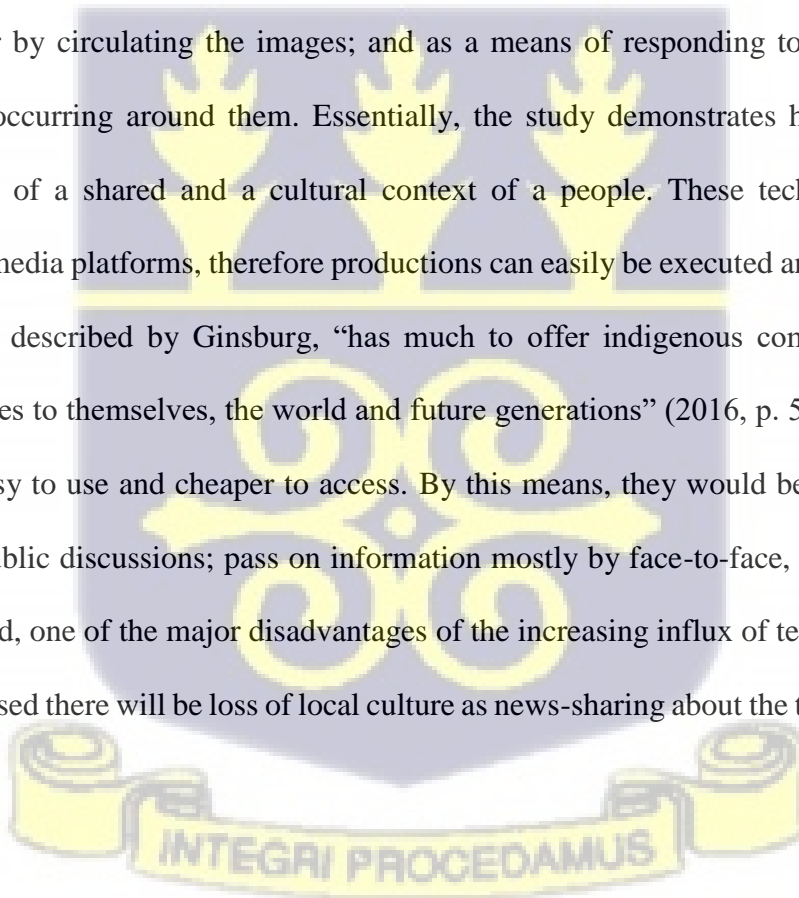
It has been discovered through the study that unlike Ghanaian traditional culture where information is usually controlled by the chief or head of the clan, information from mass communication is not controlled by one major source or with the interest of one major group in mind. Although not explicitly stated by participants, it was deduced that they believe the contemporary mass media channels have taken the nature/quality or character of the indigenous means of information gathering and broadcast in terms of gossip and rumour mongering.

6.1.3 Question 3: What impacts do the contexts of globalisation and glocalisation have on information and news-sharing in the themes selected for examination?

The data from the interviews and analysis pointed to the fact that globalisation is an issue that affects content of media texts. While access to cultures from abroad is broadly welcomed, many participants had concerns that it would lead to the erosion of indigenous culture to the point where it disappears. They believe that this can, particularly, be an issue when the flow of culture is in one direction only. It was revealed that conflict, in respect of media versus globalisation is healthy and even critical to the role of the media to develop an in-depth knowledge of society and to enable the society to manage the interactions and collision of social forces. The aspect of indigenous media advocated here, and which this study subscribe to, has to do with being able to dominate media technologies through production of media that are informed by indigenous knowledge and are capable of intervening on behalf of its people in the era of globalisation.

6.1.4 Question 4: Does proliferation of media and media ownership (mainstream and social media) affect information and news-sharing, regarding presentation and representation in the selected themes and how?

Regarding proliferation of media and media ownership vis-à-vis news-sharing, it was revealed that the media revolution which has resulted in citizens having direct access to intervene and express their views on issues and events has encouraged public discourse like the African-way in communities. The camera-built-ins of smartphones have eliminated all technological restrictions of image-making and image-sharing. Images are therefore recorded by culprits for different purposes. Some of the reasons are to re-experience the event; to demean the victim instantly or later by circulating the images; and as a means of responding to a need to record unusual events occurring around them. Essentially, the study demonstrates how this form the general function of a shared and a cultural context of a people. These technologies support convergence of media platforms, therefore productions can easily be executed and circulated. This development, as described by Ginsburg, “has much to offer indigenous communities as they redefine their lives to themselves, the world and future generations” (2016, p. 593) because these platforms are easy to use and cheaper to access. By this means, they would be able to represent themselves in public discussions; pass on information mostly by face-to-face, and mouth-to-ear. On the other hand, one of the major disadvantages of the increasing influx of technology is that if care is not exercised there will be loss of local culture as news-sharing about the three cases studied revealed.



6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation has to do with the study sample. The study has been dedicated to three selected cases. Other cases that could be selected for study did not generate public outcry. Public outcry and debate about the cases was one of the criterium of selecting them. Although more cases would have provided comprehensive interpretations on indigenous and contemporary media practices in Ghana, the selected cases have enhanced understanding regarding news-sharing on sensitive cultural issues. Another limitation of the study lies in the fact that users'/audiences' views have not been sought directly, but engaged through traditional and cultural experts and traditional rulers. This does not allow direct viewpoints from this category of research strata, regarding this thesis.

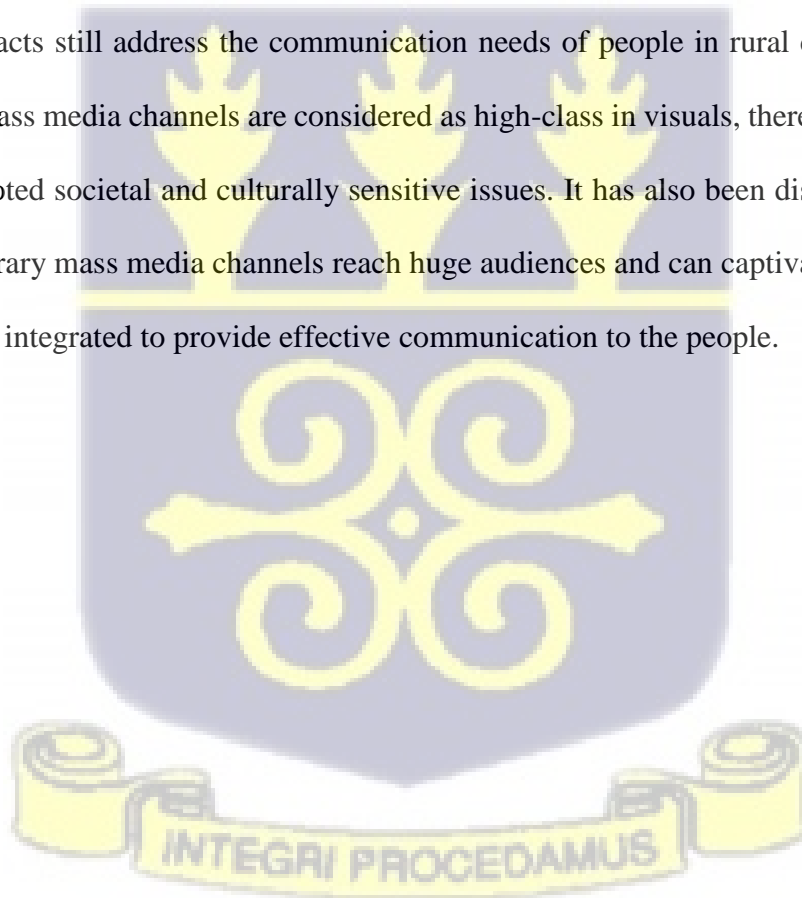
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although the findings of the study make contributions to comprehending the processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts vis-à-vis contemporary mass channels, as indicated earlier the study is limited by the cases studied. Further studies could expand on this by studying more cases. It would be stimulating to include users/audiences as participants to be interviewed to determine individual perception and response to the cases than using representatives such as cultural experts, et cetera.

6.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study sets forth to critique the processes involved in news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts vis-à-vis contemporary mass channels in order to contribute to the intellectual debates and pursuits in the field regarding Ghana. This topic has been of concern in the field of media and communications studies.

The study employed the Interpretive Model and the Critical Model in order to achieve the research objectives. Encoding and decoding theory was considered to interpret the selected cases. The theories helped to determine and explain the experiences of media practitioners and cultural experts and to analyse the three cases. Overall, the study is important because it provides understanding into news and information sharing in indigenous communicative acts and in contemporary mass channels, and insights into themes studied. It has been noticed that issues of globalisation, transforming identities, cultural linguistic influences, and so on, are inevitable in the current dispensation of world affairs. However, these issues can be dealt with within a framework of collective commitment and appreciation of the concerns. The study concludes that indigenous communicative acts still address the communication needs of people in rural communities. The contemporary mass media channels are considered as high-class in visuals, therefore are unable to address deep-rooted societal and culturally sensitive issues. It has also been disclosed that so far as the contemporary mass media channels reach huge audiences and can captivate, values of both media should be integrated to provide effective communication to the people.



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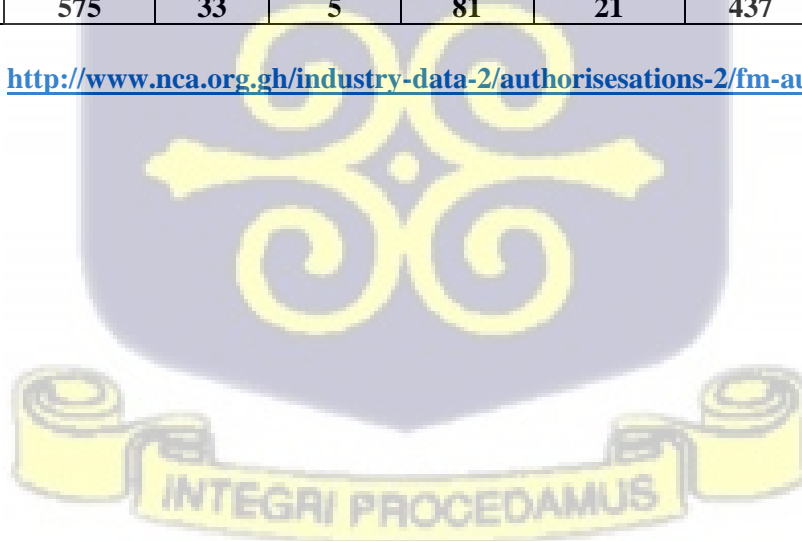


APPENDIX I

Summary of radio stations authorised by the NCA as at the Second Quarter of 2020.

No.	Name of Regions	Total No. of Authorised	Public	Public: Foreign	Community	Campus	Commercial	Total No. in Operation	Total No. Not in Operation
1.	Ashanti	83	2	1	10	3	67	65	18
2.	Bono	47	1	-	3	2	41	35	12
3.	Bono East	30	2	-	4	-	24	26	4
4.	Ahafo	4	-	-	1	-	8	7	2
5.	Central	43	2	-	9	3	29	34	9
6.	Eastern	43	2	-	7	1	33	31	12
7.	Greater-Accra	62	2	3	4	4	49	56	6
8.	Northern	42	3	-	7	2	30	22	20
9.	Savannah	10	3	-	4	-	3	8	2
10.	North-East	9	1	-	4	-	3	2	7
11.	Upper East	25	2	-	8	1	14	18	7
12.	Upper West	27	2	-	7	2	16	19	8
13.	Volta	45	3	-	4	1	37	30	15
14.	Oti	9	1	-	2	-	6	8	1
15.	Western	65	2	1	5	2	56	48	17
16.	Western North	26	3	-	2	-	21	19	7
TOTAL		575	33	5	81	21	437	428	147

Culled from: <http://www.nca.org.gh/industry-data-2/authorisations-2/fm-authorisation-2/>



APPENDIX II

Summary of television broadcasting stations authorised by the NCA
as at the Second Quarter of 2020.

No.	Type of TV Station	Total No. of Authorised Stations	Total No. of Stations on Air	Total No. of Stations not on Air
1.	Analogue Terrestrial Television	2	2	0
2.	Digital Terrestrial Free-To-Air Television Programme Channel (Nationwide Coverage)	36	36	0
3.	Digital Terrestrial Free-To-Air Television Channel (Regional Coverage)	6	5	1
4.	Digital Terrestrial Pay Television (Service only)	1	1	0
5.	Digital Terrestrial Pay Television (Service and Frequency)	5	5	0
6.	Digital Terrestrial Television (Network only)	0	0	0
7.	Digital Terrestrial Radio Service on TV Multiplex	8	2	6
8.	Satellite Television Broadcasting (Pay TV Direct-To-Home Bouquet)	4	4	0
9.	Satellite Television Broadcasting (Free-To-Air Direct-To-Home Bouquet)	9	6	3
10.	Satellite Television Broadcasting (Free-To-Air Direct-To-Home Single Channel)	72	39	33
11.	Digital Terrestrial Television Additional Services (e.g. Teletext, etc.)	0	0	0
12.	Digital Terrestrial Mobile Television Service (Stand-alone Authorisation)	0	0	0
13.	Digital Cable Television	1	1	0
14.	Television over Internet Protocol (Pay TV)	1	0	1
15.	Subscription Management Service for a Satellite Television Broadcasting (Pay TV Direct-To-Home Bouquet)	1	1	0
Total No. of Authorised TV Stations		146	102	46

Culled from: <http://www.nca.org.gh/assets/TV-List-Q2-2020.pdf>