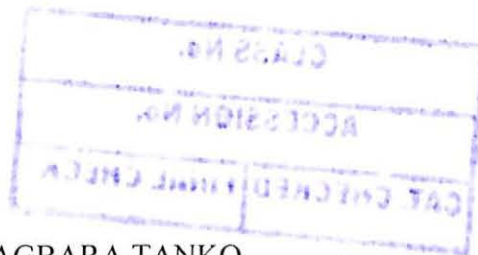


GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE DAILY GUIDE, THE ENQUIRER AND THE GHANAIAN TIMES.



BAGBARA TANKO

AUGUST, 2017

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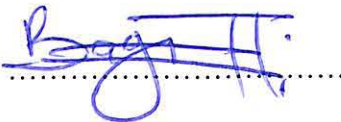
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
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FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS
IN JOURNALISM

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

I, Bagbara Tanko, hereby declare that this submission is my personal work and has not been submitted to any other universities. This work was supervised by Dr. Godwin Etse Sikanku. All sources and references that were used in this study have been acknowledged.

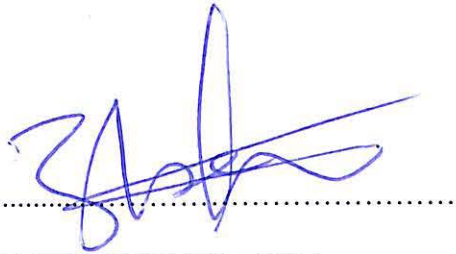


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21st August 2017

DEDICATION

To God Almighty, who has been my provider and sustainer through this academic career. Finally, to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dickson Bagbara, my wife Eyonam Bagbara , brothers and sisters for their love, inspiration, encouragement, prayers and support.

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Finally, I am ever thankful to God for seeing me through this academic career.

Although, all these people have contributed immensely to the fruition of this work, I am liable for any errors and inaccuracies that may be detected from this work.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to have a content analysis of the Ghanaian media relative to the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for NDC and NPP using Daily Guide, the Enquirer and the Ghanaian Times. Specific objectives would include assessing the performance of the print media houses on their coverage of the NPP and NDC campaign, determining the factors that shaped their coverage systems and assessing the challenges that the print media houses encountered in the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for the NDC and NPP.

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study were the management and staff of the three print media houses namely The Ghanaian Times, Daily Guide and The Enquirer. For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary data were used. Data analysis was done using content analysis of the newspaper sampled.

The findings of the study revealed that contrary to previous Ghanaian study, which played down the issue of partiality in Ghanaian journalism practice, horse race framing of election campaigns is increasingly gaining grounds in the practice of political journalism in Ghana. This trend seems to be contributing to a two-party democratic governance in the country as is the situation in the United States, for instance. To illustrate this point here, all the characteristics of horse race framing such as who is winning the race, public opinion polls, focusing on crowd attendance at campaign rallies all go to project the two main political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP to the disadvantage of the smaller political parties.

Recommendations were that to enhance and enrich the public sphere, it is recommended that a more interpretative news style of reporting policy issues.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Ghana probably experienced its best time in its constitutional history for freedom of the media when the Criminal Libel Law that had restricted press freedom and criminalised free speech for more than a century was repealed in August 2001. With the introduction of the 1992 Constitution which had ended 11 years of military dictatorship in Ghana (with a population of more than 24 million), the stage was set for the struggle for greater media freedom.

Since 1993, Ghanaians have guarded their multi-party democracy carefully. The West African country has had series of general elections and political power has changed hands peacefully between democratically elected political parties to form governments on two occasions in 2000 and 2008. The 2008 election for instance was hailed as the closest elections in any part of Africa, with less than 40,000 votes separating the winning opposition party and the losing incumbent party in government.

Currently, there is a proliferation of the media. The media landscape is liberalised. Journalism has played significant roles in safeguarding Ghana's constitution and other democratic efforts. The repeal of the criminal libel law has brought more freedom to journalists than before. In spite of these tremendous strides, the heightened level of unethical and irresponsible journalism is giving cause for concern. Many believe the repeal of the law has opened the floodgates to irresponsibility on the part of journalists.

As a result, some Ghanaians are beginning to doubt the ability of the media to continue to protect the country's democracy. Others are even calling for laws that would curtail some of the powers given the media by the constitution. There is currently a debate over the media's role in

consolidating democracy and national development, and this paper aims to feed into this debate by assessing how parts of the print media are meeting the standards of ethical journalism.

Ghana has moved on democratically since late 1992 to become a more liberal society with respect to free speech and freedom of the media but abuses of the powers given journalists and excesses within the media as articulated by the National Media Commission Chairman are now giving grave cause for concern. The Criminal Libel Law referred to by Blay-Amihere was unanimously repealed by Ghana's Parliament in July 2001 and given assent shortly after by then President of the Republic John Agyekum Kufuor. This libel law, which was regarded as "inimical" to press freedom by media rights organizations such as the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), can be traced back to the country's first Criminal Code, the 1892 Criminal Code Ordinance, and its subsequent amendment in 1934.

This law had made it difficult for journalists to play their watchdog role effectively and with its repeal Ghanaians won an important struggle for liberty and, especially, for freedom of expression. It brought to an end more than a century-old legislative regime which repressed free expression.

Media watchdogs including Article 19, the London-based organization campaigning for the freedom of expression across the world, hailed the government's action as "a step in the right direction" while others like MFWA, an organization promoting the rights and freedoms of journalists and the media, said it would give journalists more space to operate without fear and harassment. The media landscape evolved when the 1992 Republican Constitution - which appears to have brought an end to series of coup d'états by the military - guaranteed multi-party democracy which took effect in January 1993. The private media grew gradually but started to make their presence felt in the face of the established state-owned media.

Ghanaians, however, witnessed the full growth of the private media from 2001 after the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law with a particularly rapid expansion of the electronic media. Currently, in virtually every district of Ghana, there is a local radio station and newspapers with national reach are also available. Access to television stations is not hard to come by either.

The growth in the media landscape indeed helped in the 2016 coverage of the presidential campaigns for the political parties more especially the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress. The news media play a crucial role in the democratic process, providing information to the public on the full spectrum of candidates and policies while facilitating public participation in debates over major issues (ACE 2013, Norris and Odugbemi 2009). In the US, media scholars have concluded that the American news media failed in its responsibility to support the democratic process in the 2016 presidential campaign season (Patterson 2016, Zarawik 2016). So focused on sensational comments and negative controversy, the media neglected its duty to inform the public about the real issues at stake or promote dialogue among interest groups in our increasingly factionalized society.

However in Ghana, the media have played an important role in promoting and consolidating democracy since the early 1990s. The 2016 presidential campaign was an example of another media excellence in Ghana despite the challenges that the Ghanaian media encountered. In their review of the role of the media in the 2016 presidential and parliamentary campaign, the Center for Democracy and Development concluded that the media provided a platform for intense political discussions between political parties while educating the public (CDD 2016). And yet, many Ghanaians complain that the media was susceptible to the same problems plaguing the American news media. While one school of thought argues that the media was objective in their coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns, another school of thought disagrees to this

assertion. It is in the light of this that this study does a content analysis of the Ghanaian media and coverage of the 2016 presidential elections for National Democratic Congress and New Patriotic using The Daily Guide, The Enquirer and the Ghanaian Times.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In a feature article by Ansah (2010) it has become common knowledge that the media is the fourth estate of every nation besides the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Ansah (2010) also acknowledged that the media is supposed to bridge the rift between the government and the governed, providing a platform for social debate and consensus building as well as the stage for diverse ideologies on the best development prospects for the nation.

The media played a very crucial role in information dissemination and education of the masses during the 2016 presidential campaign. Indeed, the print media especially ensured a good coverage of the campaigns of political parties. In their study of the Ghanaian media's role in elections, two US academics Temin and Smith (2016: p.124) stated: "Ghana has a chequered past with respect to the press. Only recently has the country shed the 'culture of silence' that dominated the 1980s under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Due to the authoritarian control of the media (private and state-owned, although there were hardly any private media) by the PNDC regime during the 1980s, press freedom was slow to materialize during the campaign for the 1992 presidential and parliamentary elections, the first democratic polls held since 1979.

By implication, the repeal of the law has given journalists and media houses the freedom to express their views on issues and activities in the country without being arrested or barred from operating as they had in the past. Articles 162 to 173 of the 1992 Constitution specifically guarantee media freedoms.

The media since 1992 has been seen to facilitate participatory democracy. According to the NMC Chairman, “Our democracy is stronger and growing because we have a free press and free speech”. He said since 1993, the press has consistently exercised its Constitutional Mandate under Article 162(6) to “uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people of Ghana.” Temin and Smith (2016) agree with the NMC Chairman. They aver that “both the private and state-owned media have undergone major transformation during the 1990s, as a result of the increase in freedoms afforded to the media by the state, and that these transformations have played a major role in the country’s consolidation of multi-party, democratic rule.” Even though the print media that is the national and private newspapers did well in ensuring the effective coverage of the 2016 elections, there were many challenges as some of the political parties were of the view that some of the newspapers were being bias. In that respect, both the national and private newspapers were accused of such biasness. This brings to fore the performance of the media relative to the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for NDC and NPP.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to have a content analysis of the Ghanaian media relative to the coverage of the 2016 presidential elections for NDC and NPP using Daily Guide, the Enquirer and the Ghanaian Times. Specific objectives would include:

1. Assessing the performance of the print media houses on their coverage of the NPP and NDC campaign.
2. Determining the factors that shaped their coverage systems.
3. Assess the challenges that the print media houses encountered in the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for the NDC and NPP.

1.4 Research questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following questions would be assessed:

1. Were the sampled print media houses able to meet their objective on the coverage of the NPP and NDC campaign?
2. What factors shaped the coverage systems of the sampled print media houses?
3. What are the challenges that the sampled print media houses encountered in the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for the NDC and NPP?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study on a content analysis of the Ghanaian print media relative to the coverage of the 2016 presidential elections for NDC and NPP using Daily Guide, the Enquirer and the Ghanaian Times is very important. The Ghana Media Foundation for that matter can adopt the recommendations made in this study to develop strategies in their operations that would enhance the performance of the media in Ghana.

This study would also be beneficial to the government agencies and ministries, specifically the Ministries of Information and Communication, public and private organisations in the media sector. It will enable management of print media houses to institute various measures that will enhance their operations especially during elections.

The study will also help business executives on the field to appreciate the role that print media play in enhancing election campaigns of political parties. As it centers on the content of the

message, the influence therefore is to enable political parties to create a well branded messages that would enhance our democratic credentials.

The study will again serve as a guide for students who are studying related subjects. The project is to finally serve as a source of current literature to researchers in this area.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study on a content analysis of the Ghanaian print media relative to the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for NDC and NPP using Daily Guide, the Enquirer and the Ghanaian Times is limited to just the three sampled media houses. Other media houses may not be considered because of time constraint and the bureaucracy involved in accessing information. As a result, certain generalisation might not be very accurate but intense effort is made to obtain relevant and accurate information to produce a representative result.

1.7 Organisation of the study

This study will be structured into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the study which includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, research methods, scope of the study and organisation of the study. Chapter two will deal with the literature review of the study. In view of that, relevant topics related to the study are considered. The third chapter will assess the methods used in gathering data. The chapter four will deal with data presentation and analysis. Chapter five will be based on the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for the management of the sampled media houses.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter two of this study examines the literature review of the study. Both theoretical and empirical research are organised under this chapter. The chapter looks at major theories that relate to communication and news as well as how the print media carried out the coverage of news in the 2016 presidential elections.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Gatekeeping theory

Gatekeeping is the process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the internet or some other mode of communication. The academic theory of gatekeeping is founded in multiple fields of study, including communication studies, journalism, political science, and sociology (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009). It was originally focused on the mass media with its few-to-many dynamic but now gatekeeping theory also addresses face-to-face communication and the many-to-many dynamic inherent in the Internet. The theory was first instituted by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1943 (Lewin, 2012). Gatekeeping occurs at all levels of the media structure—from a reporter deciding which sources are chosen to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are printed or covered, and includes media outlet owners and even advertisers. Individuals can also act as gatekeepers, deciding what information to include in an email or in a blog.

Gatekeeping is a process by which information is filtered to the public by the media. According to Pamela Shoemaker and Tim Vos, gate keeping is the "process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people every day, and it is the

center of the media's role in modern public life (Lewin, 2012). This process determines not only which information is selected, but also what the content and nature of the messages (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009), such as news, will be."

1. In exercising its "surveillance" function, every news medium has a very large number of stories brought to its attention daily by reporters, wire services, and a variety of other sources.
2. Due to a number of practical considerations, only a limited amount of time or space is available in any medium for its daily presentations of the news to its audience. The remaining space must be devoted to advertising and other content (Lewin, 2012).
3. Within any news organization there exists a news perspective, a subculture that includes a complex set of criteria for judging a particular news story – criteria based on economic needs of the medium, organizational policy, definitions of newsworthiness, conceptions of the nature of relevant audience, and beliefs about fourth estate obligations of journalists.
4. This news perspective and its complex criteria are used by editors, news directors, and other personnel who select a limited number of news stories for presentation to the public (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009). They then encode them in ways such that the requirements of the medium and the tastes of the audience are met.
5. Therefore, personnel in the news organization become gatekeepers, letting some stories pass through the system but keeping others out. This then limits, controls, and shapes the public's knowledge of the totality of actual event occurring in reality."

Criteria of choosing a news story

According to Shoemaker, et. al., (2009), Journalists rely on the 5 criteria when choosing a news story. The first criterion is strong impact. Local stories impact the public more than unfamiliar international events. In order to attract attention, journalists inflate news and present them as situations that could happen to anyone. They turn rare international crises into everyday scenarios, personalizing stories and losing the main significance of them (Park, 2013). Violence, conflict, disaster, or scandal is the second criterion. Topics such as murders, wars, shootings, or hurricanes captivate the attention of the audience. Newspapers containing violence outsold other newspaper chains that contained less violence.

The third criterion is familiarity. News stories gain more attention if they have issues pertaining to the public or if they include familiar situations concerning a large audience. Journalists try to turn international events or crises into stories that can relate back to their current audience. People tend to retain a lot of information about celebrities and tend to care about the personal intimacy of other's lives ((Park, 2013). They value the traits and attributes of others and may try to relate to them in many ways. News about a celebrity's or president's death may resonate on a deeper level, allowing certain events to remain in the memory much longer.

Proximity is the fourth element. People prefer news that is local, close in proximity. People pay close attention to local news more than they do to international or national affairs. Local media outlets do well because they focus most of their stories on local events, about seventy-five percent. There is a strong preference for local news over international and national news. The fifth element is timely and novel. News should be something interesting that does not occur

every day or an event that is not a part of people's lives. Events such as hurricanes or new store openings capture the attention of many (Park, 2013).

Influence of criteria

The news criteria pressure journalists and news outlets to frequently publish new stories, in order to stay current on events. Reporters attend local events in order to get stories quickly and easily. When events are difficult to report on, journalists resort to interviews or experts of the event or field (Lewin, 2010). The five criteria dictate which events are chosen and which events to spend money on to report. The size of a newspaper also dictates which stories to publish and which ones to skip. Once stories reach news outlets, editors must determine which stories to select. Editors do not spend much time choosing stories.

An average editor must choose stories in seconds. Investigative or complex stories are covered by TV sources and radio. Those types of stories go towards television and radio because they have more time to dedicate to the stories. They can describe the event, background, and causes in depth (Singer, 2003). The size of the paper and the pressure editors have may cause bias in the audience's perspective. Stories containing the five criterion almost always make the front page of the news. The frequent representation of those types of stories often leads to skewness from the public.

2.2.2 Propaganda model

The propaganda model is a conceptual model in political economy advanced by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky to explain how propaganda and systemic biases function in mass media. The model seeks to explain how populations are manipulated and how consent for

economic, social, and political policies is "manufactured" in the public mind due to this propaganda (Singer, 2003). The theory posits that the way in which news is structured (e.g. through advertising, concentration of media ownership, government sourcing) creates an inherent conflict of interest that acts as propaganda for undemocratic forces (Singer, 2006).

2.2.3 News value

News values, sometimes called news criteria, determine how much prominence a news story is given by a media outlet, and the attention it is given by the audience. A. Boyd states that: "News journalism has a broadly agreed set of values, often referred to as 'newsworthiness'..." News values are not universal and can vary widely between different cultures (Singer, 2006). In Western practice, decisions on the selection and prioritization of news are made by editors on the basis of their experience and intuition, although analysis by J. Galtung and M. Ruge showed that several factors are consistently applied across a range of news organizations. Some of these factors are listed below, together with others put forward by Schlesinger and Bell. According to Ryan, "there is no end to lists of news criteria". Among the many lists of news values that have been drawn up by scholars and journalists, some, like Galtung and Ruge's, attempt to describe news practices across cultures, while others have become remarkably specific to the press of certain (often Western) nations.

Galtung and Ruge, in their seminal study in the area put forward a system of twelve factors describing events that together are used as a definition of 'newsworthiness'. Focusing on newspapers and broadcast news, Galtung and Ruge devised a list describing what they believed were significant contributing factors as to how the news is constructed (Shoemaker, 2009). Their

theory argues that the more an event accessed these criteria the more likely it was to be reported on in a newspaper. Furthermore, three basic hypotheses are presented by Galtung and Ruge: the additivity hypothesis that the more factors an event satisfies, the higher the probability that it becomes news; the complementarity hypothesis that the factors will tend to exclude each other; and the exclusion hypothesis that events that satisfy none or very few factors will not become news.

2.3 Electoral politics in Ghana: Electoral commission, Electoral laws, Electoral results in the 4th republic.

2.3.1 Electoral commission and electoral system of Ghana

The Electoral Commission of Ghana is the official body in Ghana responsible for all public elections. Made up of seven members, its independence is guaranteed by the 1992 Ghana constitution. The current commission was established by the Electoral Commission Act (Act 451) of 1993.

The president is elected using the two-round system, whilst the 275 members of Parliament are elected in single-member constituencies using first-past-the-post voting. Eligible voters must be Ghanaian citizens who are at least 18 years old, although those declared insane are disenfranchised. Parliamentary candidates must be Ghanaian citizens at least 21 years old, and either be resident in their constituency or have lived there for at least five of the ten years prior to the election.

2.3.2 Electoral laws

Shoemaker (2009) notes that Ghana elects on national level a head of state, the president, and a legislature. The president is elected for a four-year term by the people. The Parliament of Ghana has 275 members, elected for a four-year term in single-seat constituencies. The presidential election is won by having more than 50% of valid votes cast, whilst the parliamentary elections is won by simple majority, and, as is predicted by Duverger's law, the voting system has encouraged Ghanaian politics into a two-party system, creating extreme difficulty for anybody attempting to achieve electoral success under any banner other than those of the two dominant parties. Elections have been held every four years since 1992. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held alongside each other, generally on 7 December.

2.3.3 The 2016 presidential election

General elections were held in Ghana on 7 December 2016 to elect a President and Members of Parliament. They had originally been scheduled for 7 November 2016, but the date was later rejected by Parliament. Former foreign minister Nana Akufo-Addo of the opposition New Patriotic Party was elected President on his third attempt, defeating incumbent President John Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (Goode, 2009). The election results are announced on 9 December 2016 due to a delay of voting in two areas. At 19:51 local time, Mahama called Akufo-Addo to concede defeat. At 20:45, the Electoral Commission declared that Akufo-Addo had defeated Mahama in a single round, the first time that a sitting president of Ghana had failed to win a second term.

2.4 The NDC and NPP: constitution, structure, management mechanism

2.4.1 The New Patriotic Party

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) is a liberal democratic political party which was registered on 28 July 1992. A truly popular national organisation, our membership and support spans the length and breadth of Ghana with offices and local parties in each of the 230 constituencies across the country.

The NPP's tradition of advocating and championing multi-party democracy in Ghana dates back to the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) founded in 1947 with the primary aim of fighting for political independence from the British colonial administration.

The UGCC itself was led by our forebears, Dr J.B. Danquah, Alfred "Paa" Grant, R.S. Blay, R.A. Awoona-Williams, E.O. Obetsebi-Lamprey, Edward Akufo-Addo, J.W. De Graft Johnson, William E. Ofori-Atta and others. No wonder, therefore, that the NPP can claim direct ancestral links to the oldest democratic traditions of Ghanaian politics.

Since the democratization of Ghana in 1992, it has been one of the two dominant parties in Ghana politics; its leading rival being the centre-left National Democratic Congress (NDC). John Kufuor of the NPP was President of Ghana from 2001 to 2009. At the elections held on 7 December 2004, the party won 129 out of 230 seats. The NPP candidate was Kufuor, who was re-elected as President with 52.75% of the vote. The New Patriotic Party symbol is the African elephant and the New Patriotic Party colors are red, white, and blue.

In the 2008 general election, the NPP candidate Nana Akufo-Addo conceded to losing in the closely contested presidential election runoff amidst accusations of vote rigging, with Akufo-

Addo receiving 49.77% of the votes, versus 50.23% for John Atta Mills, the NDC candidate. In the 2012 general election, the NPP faced a similar situation from vote results provided by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC). Nana Akufo-Addo received 47.74% of the vote, while NDC candidate John Mahama received 50.7% amidst accusations of electoral fraud. Akufo-Addo was chosen as the NPP's candidate for a third time in the 2016 elections and defeated Mahama in the first round (winning 53.83% of the votes).

Our Aims & Objectives

- To bring together like-minded citizens of the country so that they may strive for Freedom and Justice by the appreciation and protection of human rights and the rule of Law through the practice of true democracy.
- To build in this country a free and democratic system of government under which all citizens will be able to contribute to the welfare, peace, and prosperity of our nation and keep its people free from dictatorship, and oppression (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008).
- To reduce the excessive centralization which has characterized Government up to now and ensure as far as practicable that the regions and districts of this country fully participate in deciding matters affecting their development and their wellbeing.
- To promote a vibrant, free-market economy and encourage vigorous participation by citizens in economic activities.
- To create a climate in which private enterprise will thrive, and citizens and foreigners alike may invest without fear and without unnecessary bureaucratic restrictions and impediments, in order to create wealth and prosperity for the citizens and people of this country.

2.4.2 National Democratic Congress

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) is a social democratic political party in Ghana, founded by Jerry John Rawlings, who was Head of State of Ghana from 1981 to 1993 and the President of Ghana from 1993 to 2001. Following the formation of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) which ruled Ghana following the military coup d'état on 31 December 1981, there was pressure from the international community to restore democracy. The NDC was formed as the ruling party ahead of elections in 1992, in which Rawlings was elected President, and in 1996 Rawlings was re-elected as the NDC candidate. Rawlings' second term ended in 2001. The NDC lost the presidency in the 2000 election, and it was not until the 2008 election that they regained it with candidate John Atta Mills.

The NDC party symbol is an umbrella with the head of a dove at the tip. The party colors are red, white, green, and black. And the party slogan or motto is unity, stability, and development. Internationally, the NDC is a member of the Progressive Alliance and Socialist International.^[2]

On 9 December 2012, the Electoral Commission of Ghana declared NDC candidate John Dramani Mahama to be President-elect after a hotly contested race in which he won 50.7% of votes cast.

2.5 The Ghanaian media and politics in Ghana

From the onset of the third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991), a number of dictatorship regimes including Ghana have been transformed. For instance, Ghana today can be said to have relatively stable political institutions, access to the mass media, expansion of the

mass political audience, the elevation of the news media to a more powerful institution and a proliferation of the main means of communication.

The news media have been an important catalyst in the democratization process. The fact is that the media and modern democracy are strongly connected-the media serving as a link between the political leaders and citizens. Strömbäck (2005:332) believes that the media are in need of democracy. This is because democracy stands out as the only system of governance today that ensures values such as freedom of speech, expression and information as well as the independence of the media from the control of governments. Political messages and actions of politicians get to the public through the media.

Perception and voting decisions are made possible by political stories supplied by the media. Although free elections are critical it is not enough for democratic governance. Blumler and Gurevitch (2005:104) observe that to ensure some level of political awareness, public discussions and media participation, a democratic society needs extensive and intelligent news media to report on public affairs.

In effect, democratic governance demands the kind of media that is truly free and also give access to citizens to engage in quality debate. The media, Strömbäck (2005:332) acknowledges normatively, play three significant roles in democracies namely: (i) ensuring the supply of information in societies (ii) serving as a platform for public discourse of variety of political ideas and (iii) media establishment positioning itself as an effective watchdog overseeing activities of political leaders. The role of the mass media is critical in every democratic governance.

The media can be used as tools for the resolution of societal conflicts in order to ensure peaceful atmosphere for development (Curran (2005:137). According to Miller (1965:7) “the core of

politics is the resolution of societal conflicts.” Once a society needs intelligent and informative journalism to help sustain the workings of democracy (Curran, 2005:136) then it becomes the responsibility of the media to support body politics to achieve a stable democracy.

There is sufficient evidence that demonstrates that media framing and selection of perspectives of different political actors in news reports have real consequences for the public (D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). Indeed, how the news media frame politics has significant cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural effects that are especially important during election campaigns when voters are called upon to elect their political leaders. A number of studies have shown that differential framing is capable of increasing or decreasing voter knowledge of political issues, change public perceptions of candidates, impact the level of support of certain policies and affects public opinion and voting decisions (de Vreese, 2004).

Ghana has a vibrant press that plays a key role in political discourse, national identity, and popular culture. Emerging in the nineteenth century, the news media have given voice to popular campaigns for independence, national unity, development, and democracy throughout the twentieth century, establishing a distinguished history of political activism for Ghanaian journalism.

In response to this question, one needs to juxtapose the level of press freedom in Ghana with the quality of journalism as reflected in the ability of the press to effectively influence the agenda building process of the country. The Reporters Without Borders 2016 World Press Freedom Index ranks Ghana 26th in the world and 2nd in Africa (behind Namibia on 17th). Though the

country is blessed with one of the freest media in the world, the quality of its journalism could do with some improvements. In spite of the giant strides the media have made in furthering the democratic growth of this country, there is still cause for concern. The Ghanaian media, it would seem, are losing their agenda setting role to powerful political figures and their communication high guns that are better known as serial callers. Many media owners and managers open up valuable media spaces to these serial callers who specialize in invoking the choicest invective against political opponents, foreign diplomats, traditional rulers, religious leaders, the judiciary, parliament and other state institutions. The net result is the gradual loss of confidence in our public persons and institutions.

Media and politics are necessary for each other as politics cannot be run without the help of media and media also cannot run without politics (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). In today's technological world, the purpose and role of the media cannot be underestimated in any human society as it informs the public.

The country's mass media [especially, newspapers, TV, and radio stations] is having enormous effect on the behaviour, political belief, social attitudes, choices and thinking of the citizenry. More profound, and of an entirely different media practice is the ethno political prism through which Ghana's media play its role in relation to how it should conduct itself. Yes, the advance of democracy has provided the country's media with press freedom and freedom of speech. However, a pernicious and dangerous poison is now slipping into Ghana's media. Politics is a dirty business and I do not think many people would disagree with this statement. But when media personalities' journalistic ethics is usually compromised on a daily basis, then journalistic integrity and prime tenets of objectivity and impartiality of the media should be questioned.

Considering the importance of media framing for public knowledge, candidates' perceptions and policy evaluation as well as the significance of news for voters, it is critical to investigate the news framing of the 2016 election campaigns in Ghana. This study, therefore, examines the news media framing of the two elections by the four leading newspapers in Ghana. Contrary to election news framing research in the U.S., the analysis shows that election framing in Ghana used issues framing at the expense of horse race. The analysis also demonstrates that unlike previous studies, horse race framing is emerging in the political communication of the country. Besides these, the press in Ghana appears to give intense publicity to the two candidates of the two main political parties. This study conflicts with earlier research that negative coverage dominates elections. Again, study also shows that although the news media are accused of corruption and lack of professionalism, what seems to motivate their selection and representation of politics, specifically, election events and issues is economic interests.

2.6 News Media and Politics

Undoubtedly the news media institution is key in the development of societies. It is an institution which gathers and processes political, social as well as economic ideas and activities taking place in societies across the globe and then disseminates the information. By this act, the news media are engaged in the process of globalization. In effect, the news media are making it possible for citizens across the globe to share ideas and experiences. With the availability of new enhanced information and communication technology, the same information can reach mass audience simultaneously (McQuail, 2000).

Due to the enhanced new information and communication technology, societies around the world get to know the political, social and economic growth of other societies. In the world today,

various fields have turned to the news media as an important and reliable platform for public discourse. Politics is one area which cannot do without the news media. The institution of politics is one discipline which relies so much on the news media to engage citizens.

Perhaps it is against this background that scholars maintain that the news media are potential tools for the kind of civic participation as well empowerment leading to human development.

For the past decades, studies have revealed that the news media play “the role of civic teacher” in democracies (McCombs, 2004:51).

This is done by the media setting citizens’ agenda of issues. In effect, the media pass on to the audience issues and events they cover including positive and negative tones. Amartya Sen points out that “Political and civil rights give people the opportunity to draw attention forcefully to general needs and to demand appropriate public action. The response of government to the acute suffering of its people often depends on the pressure that is put on it. The exercise of political rights such as voting, criticizing and protesting can make a real difference to the political incentives that operate on a government” (Sen, 1999:6).

At the present time, democratic societies around the world are engaging the news media as a critical tool for mobilization of citizens as well as drawing attention to electoral activities. One significant principle of democracy is for democratic societies to be holding frequent, free and fair elections to elect their leaders to govern them.

The electorates as well, become aware of political parties, political actors and issues they articulate; the news media, therefore, become an important tool used by political actors to reach out to the voters, who at the end of the day decide those they believe are best suited to be their leaders. In their book, *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*, Bennett and Entman (2001) point out that traditional characteristics of doing politics are still with us; from the old fashioned door-to-door canvassing of votes to political party and social movement organizations.

One acknowledges that such old fashioned mobilization of citizens demands much effort, determination, time and energy on the side of candidates and political parties to achieve a good result. Therefore, political actors find it more convenient to engage the news media and journalists to reach out to citizens with their messages. This is evident not only in the developed democracies but also in the emerging democracies including Ghana.

Strömbäck and Kaid (2008) argue that election news coverage is critical for democratic societies since it is a prerequisite for a well-informed voter. Election news coverage, therefore, adds to the enhancement of democratic practices. During election campaigning, political actors experiment with various techniques and strategies in an attempt to win voters to their side in order to get sufficient votes to win the election. In pressing home their intentions, political actors apply various methods to make known their positions on individual issues and policies. They resort to making promises to the voters as to the policies they would pursue if voted to power.

While some candidates focus their efforts on the strategies that they would apply to transform their plans into reality, others would want to engage in debating or resorting to criticizing the opinions of their competitors. With politicians applying various methods in approaching issues, problems and events, the news media in their coverage frame the issues that emerge in various forms. Depending on the policies of the media, journalists may decide to present election stories using the horse race frame or issue frames or personalization frame. The various forms of frames used by journalists may go a long way in influencing electorates' perceptions about the various candidates, political parties as well as the electoral process.

It is evident that news media frame an issue or event differently, depending on the type of media policy, the editorial policy of the media, ownership affiliations of the media towards a particular candidate or party as well as the economic, social and political situation of a particular country (Strömbäck and Kaid, 2008). To explore these differences, researchers are motivated to carry out studies in order to examine how journalists in their coverage, frame election campaign issues and events.

According to scholars such as Esser and Angelo (2006); Vreese, Peter and Semetko (2001), findings from a number of researches talk of cross-national variations in the framing of election campaign events worldwide. This thesis is interested in examining how the press frames election campaigns in emerging democracies like Ghana. The study, therefore, engages the 2016 Ghanaian general elections by both the state-owned and privately-owned newspapers in Ghana.

2.7 News coverage and content analysis of the Ghanaian media in 2016 elections

Media coverage of elections has come a long way since the transition elections of 1992. However, despite improvements, challenges still persist. Some commentators note that election coverage often fails to properly interrogate electoral issues, campaign promises and manifestos in a manner that demands accountability or enables the voters to make well-informed choices at the polls. Also the ownership or control of media organizations by politicians manifests in the biased editorial slant in favor of certain political parties, reflecting their allegiance to certain interest; be they private or state media houses. Also, the inability by newsroom staff to speak truth to power tends to undermine the quality of reportage in Ghana.

However, the media coverage of Ghana's December 2016 elections was characterized by some noteworthy innovations that won the media plaudits from the public. Some newsrooms, for example, set up a fact-checking service where key election issues and claims were cross-checked and thus ascertained to be true, partly true, or false. Also, some media houses took advantage of data journalism opportunities to tell compelling election stories using data-driven story-telling techniques, especially in the area of visualization. Indeed, many of the leading newsrooms relied heavily on new digital technologies, especially social media, not only to tell and source news stories but also to satisfy Ghanaians' insatiable appetite for real time news.

On Election Day, the media played a crucial role in keeping citizens abreast of what was going on during and after voting had closed. The battleground for most newsrooms was in regards to who was able to compile reliable provisional results of the elections ahead of the official announcement of the final results by the Electoral Commission of Ghana. This service by the

media was particularly useful since the Electoral Commission, due to a myriad of reasons, was considerably slow in releasing confirmed results (Barzilai-Nahon, 2006).

Accra-based Joy-FM led the pack of media houses and distinguished itself when in the early hours of Friday, December 9th, two days after the elections, and some 18 hours ahead of the EC, it projected Nana Akufo-Addo likely to win with about 53.35% of valid votes cast. Official results showed Akufo-Addo won by 53.85% of the votes. Joy-FM also impressed listeners when it challenged the EC commissioner's claim of unusually low voter turnout of 49%. The station pointed out that that by its own calculations voter turnout was almost 20 percentage points higher at 68%, the figure eventually confirmed by the EC.

Still, the media in Ghana must continue to improve their performance in order to stay ahead of the curve. Looking into the future, elections in 2020 will prove even more challenging given the growing sophistication of Ghanaian news consumers. Other factors to watch include the growth in new digital technologies and declining advertising revenue, which are eroding the influence of traditional news media.

2.8 Dominance of state-owned media and opposition complaints

The mass media are the most common source for information about Election campaigns in democracies and societies in transition around the world. In terms of the sheer volume of information available to citizens via the media on issues, political parties and leaders, election campaigns often represents a high point for political communications (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009). Concerns about political bias in the mass media are at the heart of debates about the roles and responsibilities of the media at election time. Behind these concerns is the assumption that there

may be effects, intended or unintended, on public opinion and political behavior and, ultimately, electoral outcomes.

In every election campaign, citizens must not only decide upon the party or candidate they wish to support, they must also decide whether they will vote at all. In democracies that do not mandate compulsory voting, most political observers would agree that turnout in an election is a measure of success where the higher the turnout, the better (Singer, 2006). In most cases, parties and candidates use all means to stimulate turnout and motivate supporters to go to the polls. In some cases, however, parties and political camps aim to repress turnout to accomplish their goals.

It is the larger context of political party strategies and tactics, and the structure of the mass media environment, that we also need to consider when we turn to addressing questions about balance during election campaigns (Shoemaker, et al., 2001). The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) has accused the state-owned media, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation of favoring the governing National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the allocation of airtime and space for political party campaigning ahead of this year's election. The anti-corruption campaigners said its report on the abuse of incumbency and electoral corruption revealed the NDC had been allowed much airtime while other political parties have been given little or no opportunity on the various platforms of the state broadcaster (Lewin, 2010). Ghana's 1992 Constitution enjoins state-owned media to give equal access and coverage to all political parties during campaign seasons in the run-up to elections.

2.8 The Election Campaign

The 2016 election campaign in Ghana was held in a largely peaceful environment, though there were reports of isolated violent incidents. Basic freedoms of association, movement and assembly were generally respected. The Electoral Commission of Ghana worked with the various political parties to agree on the schedule for campaigns. The election campaign was highly competitive, with political parties and candidates holding rallies and meetings across the country. There was extensive use of advertisement on radio, television and in newspapers. Posters, flags and billboards were used extensively.

Candidates also used leaflets, road-shows, images, music and social media to reach their supporters. SMS text messages were used to invite party supporters to rallies. Parties also ran websites on which they advertised their manifestoes, news and information. The campaigns generally focused on issues, with the candidates putting across a spirited agenda on, for instance, the use of oil resources, infrastructure development, education, youth employment and health.

During our briefings, we heard concerns about abuses of incumbency. The most flagrant alleged abuses involved the abuse of state vehicles, state security apparatus, state officials, venues and paraphernalia. It was suggested that abuses of incumbency in the Ghanaian electoral context were more pronounced due to the fact that the incumbent President and Vice-President were contesting the elections.

The Group heard calls for the consideration of public financing of political party activities.

Smaller parties, in particular, expressed the view that public funding of political party activities, could enable them to compete on a more even ground, in the context of the overwhelming

dominance of the two major political parties. The Group observed that substantial resources were deployed by political parties in the campaign. We were informed that while existing campaign finance regulations prohibit political parties from obtaining foreign sources of funding certain foreign business interests were supporting some political parties. We also heard concerns that reporting requirements for campaign expenditure were inadequate, and that the transparency of the electoral process could be enhanced by the strengthening of campaign finance regulations. Overall, the campaign was peaceful, though characterised by fierce rivalry and trading of harsh words, particularly between the main political parties—NDC and NPP.

2.9 Media Coverage

Freedom and independence of the media is guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution. This guarantee provides for media to operate without interference and censorship. As a result, Ghana has a vibrant and diverse media with several newspapers, radio and television stations as well as online news agencies. There are over 50 newspapers published in Ghana. Radio is a very popular medium, with over 200 FM stations spread across the country. There are over 50 registered television stations, with Ghana Broadcasting Corporation TV, a state owned station having national reach. Ghanaians are also increasingly using the internet as a source of news and information. Mobile phone subscription is also very high in Ghana with about 10 million people owning a handset.

A number of bodies, such as the Ghana Journalists Association, the National Communications Authority, the National Commission on Civic Education, the Media Foundation for West Africa

and the National Peace Council, organised a series of workshops and training programmes for journalists on how to effectively and responsibly cover the election.

Laws and Regulations

As stated above, freedom and independence of the media is guaranteed in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Chapter 102 provides the framework for establishing media enterprises, and the benchmarks for professional practice. Article 166 provides for the establishment of the National Media Commission (NMC), a statutory body whose functions are to promote and ensure the freedom and independence of the media for mass communication and information. The Commission also is charged with the maintenance of the highest journalistic standards, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against the press or other mass media.

Section 2 (c) of the National Media Commission Act (1993) stipulates that the NMC is meant to insulate the state owned media from government control. However, Section 19 of the same Act states that “A President shall at all times have access to sound or television broadcasting, the press and other media of mass communication or information which are financed from public funds for the purpose of broadcast, announcement or publication of any matter which appears to the President to be in the public interest.” This leaves a conundrum during elections, particularly, with regard to state media, which is required by the Electoral Act to provide equal and balanced coverage to all political parties.

In ordinary situations, such a provision would not pose any problem. However during elections where a sitting President is also a candidate, such a provision may be subject to abuse. In the lead up to the 2012 elections, the NMC maintained regular dialogue with media houses, calling on them to discharge their duties responsibly, to ensure a peaceful election. In light of the reports, the Group received regarding the use of inflammatory language by some media houses, it was however not clear what sanctions the NMC had in place to deal with media that did not live up to the guidelines of professional conduct.

Print Media

The media are expected to play a crucial role in democracies, however, the question is: How effective are the mass media in executing this all important role in emerging democracies such as Ghana? Newspapers, radio, television and the internet have become major channels of information for people across the world, however, what does this say about the functioning of democratic governance and its processes?

Currently, there is a debate as to whether free media are enhancing or rather undermining democratic governance especially in emerging democracies such as Ghana, which reintroduced democracy in 1992. This is because in the advanced democracies such as the United States whose media are driven by market forces, the media are agued are finding it difficult to perform their democratic roles.

This, it is said, is leading to cynicism, apathy and ignorance with regard to politics among citizens of democracies across the globe. Examining the role of media in democracies, Muller (2014) points out that democratic media should supply societies with relevant political

information, which should reach a considerable number of citizens with the media upholding the public watchdog role as they also provide a public platform reflecting the diversity of societies.

In this case, Muller (2014) appears to suggest that democratic media can play their roles better if they take on the public service character to promote programmes, events and services of the state and non-profit institutions that will meet the information needs of citizens. This will include election campaign events, which go to help voters to decide who to vote for.

It will also mean that during elections the press will exhibit the capacity to provide electorates the needed platform for rational public debate of issues of common good. This will require the press to help enrich voters with relevant sufficient information that will well educate voters about not just policy issues candidates are championing, but also issues about competence, intelligence, credibility and morals of candidates for voters to be well informed in order for them to take the critical decision as to which candidate deserves their votes.

In effect, one fundamental question to ask is: In a society such as Ghana, where due to resource challenges and high illiteracy rate newspapers are restricted to only the urban communities, how can the ideal public sphere be achieved to help sustain its democracy? Equally legitimate question is: How is it possible for newspapers, which are being driven by profit motive including the state-owned take on the character of public service at a time when there is an attempt for scramble for media audience of Africans including Ghanaians by powerful global media institutions (Willems and Mano, 2016)?

Of interest to this study, therefore, is the framing practice in the media; specifically, newspapers, of multiparty election campaigns in post-dictatorship Ghana and the relationship existing among the press, economic interest and political actors in the country. In the study, framing of election campaigns, political actors' methods for influencing and shaping election journalism practice coupled with the influence of economic interest of journalists and the media are explored.

The aim is to elucidate how these critical relationships weaken or deepen democratic culture in Ghana. At the core of this study, is the attempt at theorizing the function of the press establishment and how it relates to the public sphere in the context of an African democratization process. Communication research theories such as gatekeeping and framing of journalism practice will inform the study.

This investigation attempts to address issues of framing election campaigns and to establish whether in the context of democratization process, “changes in the array of forces that exercise Control over cultural production and distribution limit or liberate the public sphere” (Golding and Murdock, 2000: 78).

Using the research questions for the study, the thesis examines ideal forms of journalism practice, gatekeeping and framing practices, which give guidance to an ideal press serving as a critical platform for crucial quality discussions in an emerging democracy such as Ghana. The ideal public sphere provides the platform “where popular political will should take form and citizens should be able to constitute themselves as active agents in the political process” (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1991: 2). Thus, one of the cardinal roles of the press is helping to bring

about actively informed citizens, who can be engaged in rational debates and contribute to the democratization process of the country. This is crucial for enhancement of democracy in Ghana.

During the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections, the Newspapers devoted substantial space to covering the election process, highlighting political party platforms, analysing party manifestoes and activities of the National Electoral Commission. There were also in- depth analyses and commentaries of the profiles of the candidates. The Group noted that the main daily newspapers, notably, Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, The Chronicle, Daily Guide and Crusading Guide offered more in-depth reporting about the elections. There were also several pamphlets which were clearly partisan in their editorial content. These, the Group learnt, were started by various political groups to champion their cause, and that they would fold as soon as the elections are over.

2.10 Summary

Ghana has a vigorous press with a distinguished political history. Journalism plays a crucial role in contemporary processes of democracy in Ghana, providing a common sphere of dialogue among diverse political and economic interests as well as the voices of popular culture. Journalists have enjoyed more freedom, cooperation, and respect in their dealings with the state with President Kufour in office. While seriously concerned about the economic viability of the private press, Ghanaian journalists are nonetheless optimistic that the political liberalism of the current administration is laying a foundation for the maintenance of press freedom and professionalism in the future.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study discussed the methodology that was adopted used in obtaining and analyzing data for the study. It presents the content analysis, research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling techniques, sources of data relative to primary and secondary sources and the research instrument. The others are the data analysis technique and the profile of the organization.

3.2 Content Analysis

According to Krippendorff, (1980), content analysis is a type of secondary data analysis which is used to analyze any form of text. This includes interview transcripts, newspapers, books, manuscripts, journals and web sites. It therefore helps to determine the frequency of specific words or ideas. He adds that the results of content analysis allow researchers to identify, as well as quantify, specific ideas, concepts, and their associated patterns, and trends of ideas that occur within a specific group or over time. Berelson (2001) also defines content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications. Berelson (2001) continues that the content analysis provides objective analysis of written materials and can identify meaning from text data and also allows managers to go through very large amounts of text quickly. It can also quantify qualitative data. However, it may not include all the values present in the study and also, the results can be skewed and slanted if words are misinterpreted. For this particular research work, the following features of content

analysis were looked at in the analysis of the sampled print media. They include transcript clues, name and entities, speaker identity and Character Recognition (OCR) and temporal structure.

3.2.1 Transcript Clues

For the purpose of this work, news transcript is the closed-caption which has been temporally aligned to the content of the news. In the transcript of each type of information, there are certain “clue phrases” that allow the identification of some of the anchor and reporter shots (Hauptmann, 2005). Since there are only a small number of clues, they are handcraft as several “templates”, which are used to find all their occurrences in the transcript automatically. Detecting some clue phrases require the identification of peoples’ names. For every information it is important that the content provides some vital information that enables the reader understand the message being published. This feature therefore helps in achieving this purpose.

3.2.2 Name entities

There were many political characters that were mentioned in the publications. Although the associations between the names and the people (shots) are unknown, the names of the people detected from the transcript still provide valuable clues for identifying the person's type. For example, if no presenters' names were spotted in the transcript of a news story, there is probably no reporter appearing in this story. Apart from the type of name, another thing that provides an interesting clue is the gender of each name (Yang, 2005). This can indeed be obtained by looking up the first name in the lists of common male and female (first) names. The gender of a name is set to male if it has a male's first name, female if it has a female's first name, or both if it can be either a male or a female's name. The gender information does not work by itself; instead,

it makes sense when comparing with the estimated gender of the speech of the shot being examined.

3.2.3 Speaker Identity

The speech accompanying the content of the information is segmented and the segments are clustered using Laboratoire d'Informatique pour la Mécanique et les Sciences de l'Ingénieur (LIMSI) speech detection and recognition engine (Gauvain et al., 2002). Presumably, the speech segments in the same cluster belong to the same speaker and they are assigned a unique identity. The gender of each speaker identity is also predicted by Laboratoire d'Informatique pour la Mécanique et les Sciences de l'Ingénieur. Since a shot may temporally overlap with several speaker identities, the one with the maximal temporal coverage in the shot is regarded as the primary speaker identity of the shot.

3.2.4 Temporal Structure

In the view of Houghton (1999), print media publication has a relatively fixed structure. A typical content is first indicated with the He continues that the story is usually, though not always, ended with the reporter or anchor giving the concluding comments. Although there are counter-examples, such as a short story consisting of only anchor shots, this structure is helpful particularly for identifying anchors.

3.3 Research Design

The research design that was used was the descriptive survey. This was used because the research was aimed at getting respondents to answer the same questions which involved many variables. The descriptive survey design was directed towards determining the nature of a

situation as it exists at the time of the study. It is practical, in that it identifies present conditions. It focused on vital facts about people and the opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour and simply provides an understanding of a phenomenon (Best and Kahn, 1998). Among the different methods of data gathering for research purposes, the survey method is preferred by many researchers due to its various advantages, strengths and benefits. However, surveys also have their disadvantages and weak points that must be considered. Surveys provide a high level of general capability in representing a large population. Due to the usual huge number of people who answers survey, the data being gathered possess a better description of the relative characteristics of the general population involved in the study. As compared to other methods of data gathering, surveys are able to extract data that are near to the exact attributes of the larger population. However, there is possible inappropriateness of questions. Questions in surveys are always standardized before administering them to the subjects. The researcher is therefore forced to create questions that are general enough to accommodate the general population. However, these general questions may not be as appropriate for all the participants as they should be. A good example of this situation is administering a survey which focuses on affective variables, or variables that deal with emotions.

3.4 Population of the study

In conducting this study, the management and staff of the sampled print media houses were used. The population of the study therefore were the management and staff of the three print media houses which include The Ghanaian Times, Daily Guide and The Enquirer.

3.5 Sample size and sampling technique

Out of the total population, a sample size of 6 respondents were used which consisted 2 respondents from each of the print media houses. The sampling method that was used in selecting the staff was the stratified sampling technique. For the staff, stratified sampling technique was used to select them. This is commonly used probability method that is superior to random sampling because it reduces sampling error. A stratum is a subset of the population that share at least one common characteristic. Examples of stratum might be males and females, or managers and non-managers. The researcher first identifies the relevant stratum and their actual representation in the population. Convenience sampling technique was used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. The sample is selected because they are convenient. This non-probability method is mostly used during preliminary research efforts to get a gross estimate of the results, without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample.

The quota sampling technique was used for the management of the media houses. With this method all the staffs were grouped into two; that is news editors and reporters. The staff was then divided into subgroups and identification was made by those responsible for editing.

3.6 Source of Data

The purpose of this research calls for the use of both primary and secondary data.

Primary data

A primary source is a document, speech, or other sort of evidence written, created or otherwise produced during the time under study. The primary data would be obtained by the use of interviews. Observations were adopted to add to the credibility of data obtained. The researcher

interviewed the managers while the staff of The Ghanaian Times, Daily Guide and The Enquirer answered the questionnaires.

Secondary data collation

Secondary data according to Thompson (2005) is any data prepared for other sources of research apart from what is being embarked upon. Secondary data was also collected from both internal and external sources of the organisation. The internal source included the past reports of the newspapers selected within the period and prior research reports relating to the topic. The external sources comprised textbooks, articles in newspapers, journals and the internet.

3.7 Research instruments

This study is a content analysis of the coverage of the 2016 Presidential election in Ghana and that the main instrument used to support the secondary data would be interviews of staff of The Ghanaian Times, Daily Guide and The Enquirer. This study employed the interviewing method with the aim of obtaining information which the questionnaires are unable to bring out. The researcher interviewed two (20) managers.

3.8 Sampling procedure

In order to gather information from the respondents, permission was sought from the programme managers after which respondents were selected from the selected departments to respond to the questionnaires. The purpose of the study was disclosed to the respondents and further explanations given as to the need for answering the questionnaire. The questionnaires were then administered. Because it is content analysis, news publications by the three media houses in the month of October, November and December 2016 were examined.

3.9 Data presentation and analysis

To draw a meaningful, valid and reliable conclusion, and make relevant recommendations, descriptive and content analysis were drawn based on percentage corresponding to absolute figures.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the data obtained and presents the analysis of the data. The content analysis of the three print media sampled is made and the results were presented in a descriptive format of the coverage of the presidential elections of the NPP and NDC were made from The Ghanaian Times, Daily Guide and The Enquirer. A mixed method approach was adopted for this study

4.2 Issue-based election

In the context of political election, issues involve “any questions of public policy which have been or are a matter of controversy and are sources of disagreement between political parties” (Denver, 1990: 20). With issue-based election, the electorates get the opportunity to compare candidates’ principles against their own to help them decide as to the candidate to vote for (Campbell, 1964: 98). In effect, issue framing tends to give electorates more information about each candidate. For an issue to create the needed basis for a choice, the electorates must first be concerned about the issue and have some relevant knowledge about such an issue (More, 1999: 245). It is important for the media to provide more than one opinion about a particular issue for the voter to form a solid opinion about such an issue (More, 1999: 246). In this case, how gatekeepers select and frame election campaigns events and issues go a long way in contributing to the decisions that voters make as to the candidates they should vote for.

The understanding is that how issues or events are framed by the mass media are effected by the political system, media system as well as social conditions of individual countries. (Strömbäck and Kaid, 2008). Brian McNair in his book, the Sociology of Journalism (1998) writes:

“The journalistic text is viewed as the product of a wide variety of cultural, technological, political and economic forces, specific to a particular society at a particular time” (1998:3).

With such a situation we are likely to experience different forms of framing of issues or events among societies across the globe. This is because ideologies of individual societies as well as levels of development in societies are not the same. In other words, the assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, values as well as technological, political and economic levels of development, for instance, of an advanced democracy like the United States and an emerging democracy like Ghana vary to a large extent. It is, therefore, understandable that coverage of election campaigns across the globe is showing some signs of differences. For instance, as already indicated in this study, in a good number of societies in the Western world, election campaign coverage has taken the form of horse race while countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Israel and the Netherlands have their mass media using issue framing to tell election campaign stories (Binderkrantz and Green-Pedersen (2009)).

Based on the above, this study seeks to demonstrate how different is the election campaigns coverage in Ghana from that of the advanced democracies such as the United States, where horse race framing is said to dominating election campaign coverage.

The way and manner gatekeepers select and present election campaigns events and issues go a long way in contributing to the decisions that voters make as to the candidates they should vote for during elections. For instance, if electorates develop favourable impression about politics and political candidates, electorates may develop more interest in politics or election campaigns.

However, if their impression about the conduct of politics or election campaign remains unfavourable, this can lead to electorates' cynicism towards political actors and politics. And this can perhaps affect the outcome of elections (Cappella and Jamieson, 2003). This seems to provide the answer to the question as to why it is necessary for not only the developed democracies but also developing democracies such as Ghana to constantly find out the trend of election campaign media framing in the country.

As has been observed, election campaign framing across democracies has been focused more on horse race than the substance of a campaign. And this trend of political communication is also consistent with the trend in the United Kingdom's general election coverage (Deacon et al., 2001).

However, from the survey of evidence reviewed, this trend of election campaign reporting appears not associated with the framing of election campaigns in Ghana. This chapter is, therefore, interrogating more closely the relative balance of issue/policy and horse race framing during the 2016 election campaigns.

Table 1: A comparison of the appearances of the political parties in newspapers coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign of NPP and NDC

Political Parties	PAPER					
	The Ghanaian Times	%	Daily Guide	%	The Enquirer	%
New Patriotic Party	26	44	41	65	57	69
National Democratic Congress	32	56	22	35	15	31
Total	58	100	63	100	82	100

Source: Field Data, 2017

It is clear from Table 1 that during the 2016 presidential election campaign, the three newspapers devoted greater part of their coverage to stories about issues. However, the coverage of issues decreased depending on the support that a particular newspaper has for a party. This means that the newspapers created the opportunity for Ghanaian electorates to become aware of the policies the presidential candidates contesting the elections had in mind to implement when voted to power.

And since it is obvious that electorates were interested in transforming their lives, such awareness was necessary for the decisions they took during the elections. For instance, Kwesi Amofo-Yeboah, an independent presidential candidate in the 2008 election, according to The Daily Guide, announced what appeared to be his master plan with which to tackle malaria, a disease, which the country is still struggling to manage. Part of the story reads: “Since we know that mosquitoes cause malaria and we know how they breed, we need to focus our resources on dealing with mosquitoes, instead of providing medication for malaria patients” (The Daily Guide, Friday, November 14, 2016, p.12).

The Ghanaian Times writes: “The presidential candidate of the Convention people’s Party (CPP), thinks that building a self-reliant economy with agriculture as the pivot, ensuring that the country’s entrepreneurs compete favourably on the world market as well as enhancing free quality education and efficient exploitation of natural resources were the way forward” (Ghanaian Times, Thursday, November 1, 2016). These news stories appear to demonstrate the positions of the presidential candidates on critical issues such as malaria and the economy and what they planned to do if voted to power.

The gatekeepers of the newspapers might have framed these stories because of their conviction that the issues involved were significant and therefore, merited the attention of the electorates.

Although in the 2016 election campaigns, issues framing dominated the coverage by a significant margin, we cannot lose sight of the fact that on the basis of single theme framing, Horse race also in 2016 election campaign surged ahead of individual issues coverage and became the dominant frame of coverage with 27.5 percent. This also means that the newspapers under study in their coverage made it possible for the electorates to become aware of which presidential candidate was ahead and who was behind in the political contest. The Daily Guide of Thursday, November 1, 2016 published an election campaign story with the headline, “NDC will win the election massively” then writes: “Mr. Edward Kusi Ayarkwah, District Chief Executive (DCE) of Sekyere South and the parliamentary aspirant of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Sekyere South constituency, has said the ruling NDC is poised to win the December 7 general elections hands down.”

Again on outcome predictions as a horse race coverage, the Ghanaian Times of Wednesday, November 5, 2016 with the headline, “Fianoo predicts massive win for NPP at Keta” the story reads: “The parliamentary candidate of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), in the Keta constituency, Mr. Kodjoe Fianoo, has predicted a massive win for the NPP because of its numerous achievement.” It is also interesting to note that as critical issues such as peaceful election, economy and employment had their coverage decreased in 2012 general election campaign, horse race framing coverage increased by 8.7 percent.

While horse race framing has always been associated with the advanced democracies such as the United States' campaign coverage and not associated with Ghana's election campaigns coverage

over the years, the 2016 election campaigns coverage by the press showed new trend in election campaign coverage in Ghana, a country which has experienced six multiparty elections since the restoration of democratic governance in 1992. This new trend in election campaign journalism perhaps goes to help make the point that the Ghanaian election campaign is gradually incorporating American style of election campaigning since Ghana's campaign also involves professionalization, presidential debates, opinion polls, good physical looks of candidates and the image of candidates as family men. Unfortunately, the concept of Americanization did not form part of the scope of this study for it to have explored the extent to which Ghana's election campaign style is being Americanized for the study to have in addition attempted to answer the question whether Ghana's election campaign style is Americanized or rather modernized.

In his study, Amponsah (2016) observed that in the Ghanaian context, especially studying the state-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic), the horse race framing of election campaign was not one of the issues identified. However, this current study suggests that the Ghanaian press including the most prestigious paper in the country, the Daily Graphic, seems to be adding horse race framing of election campaigns to its political communication practice. The following examples of opinion polls results framing will illustrate this point better:

The Ghanaian Times of Wednesday, November 21, 2016 reporting on opinion poll with the headline, "RI predicts victory for Akufo-Addo" reads: "With barely 15 days to the 2016 general election, an opinion poll conducted by Research International is predicting a first round victory for the 2016 presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo." The Daily Guide of Friday, November 14, 2016 with the headline, "Akufo-Addo leads

polls” writes: “The Danquah Institute, Ghana’s leading centre for research and political analysis, has conducted a nationwide survey of voters’ intentions ahead of the general elections in December.” The fourth paragraph of the story reads: “Judging by these figures the NPP candidate is expected to win the popular votes by a clear margin almost one quarter of electorate in the first round.” In effect, one can, therefore, infer that horse race framing is now becoming an issue and part of Ghana’s political communication concepts, which should attract the attention of election campaigns researchers in the country.

The following headlines should help demonstrate the extent to which horse race framing is gradually becoming an issue in communicating election campaigns events as well as issues in Ghana:

1. “Kumasi erupts for Nana” (Daily Guide, Saturday, November 29, 2016)
2. “Volta stands for Mahama” (The Enquirer, Wednesday, November 7, 2016)
3. “Akufo-Addo leads polls” (Daily Guide, Friday, November 14, 2016)
4. “NDC will win polls by 60% - Bagbin” (The Enquirer, Tuesday, November 4, 2016)
5. “Bawku gives Mahama a rousing welcome” (The Enquirer, Tuesday, November 18, 2016)
6. “Campaign trail of NPP shakes Wa” (Daily Graphic, Thursday, November 20, 2016)

It is clear from the content analysis of this study that Ghanaian journalists are also becoming interested in reporting on crowd at rallies. For instance, with the headline, “Bawku gives

Mahama a rousing welcome” the story reads: “Business and social activities at Bawku came to a halt last Sunday when the flagbearer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), President John Dramani Mahama arrived in the town amidst acrobatic displays by motorcycles, bicycles and cars” (The Enquirer, Tuesday, November 18, 2016). The Ghanaian Times of Monday, October 29, 2016 also with the headline, “Big welcome for Akufo-Addo, Bawumia” reports: “A large number of New Patriotic Party (NPP) supporters and other residents of Tamale, the capital town of the Northern Region, last Friday treated Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia to a tumultuous welcome that lasted over four hours.” The second paragraph also reads: “A sea of motorbike riders seated in either twos or threes and others in cars and buses filled to capacity met the two on the outskirts of the city about 10 miles away from Tamale amid drumming and dancing.” The Daily Guide of Wednesday, November 7, 2016 has a story which draws attention to the crowd which reads: “The large crowd, boldly clad in NPP T-shirts and paraphernalia, threw the schedule of the tour of Nana Addo out of gear as they stampeded him.”

As has been discussed in the literature of this study, some scholars have declared horse race journalism as low quality coverage which but for commercial interest journalists would not engage in such a practice. The practice is also described as too entertaining which displaces discourse of substantive policy issues (Iyengar et. al. 2004). However, there are some scholars who hold different views about the quality of horse race framing. These scholars are of the view that horse race frames of, for instance, opinion polls stimulate attention to politics. This, they argue, is because horse race framing makes reading the story very exciting. They also suggest that opinion polls are important political information in multiparty democracies since opinion polls lead to strategic voting. Yet there are some scholars who believe that the perceived effect of

horse race framing of election campaigns is just an exaggeration (Newton, 2006). On his part, Patterson (2005) argues that public opinion polls play a significant role in election campaign framing. However, according to him, opinion polls have been discredited for fueling horse race journalism and for supplying citizens with repackaged news (Rosenstiel, 2005).

Opinion polls, as horse race framing maybe discredited because journalists who frame opinion polls as election campaign stories may not have studied research methods for them to be well grounded in the methodology to enable them identify any inaccuracies in the information coming from the pollsters. In addition journalists who frame these opinion polls are accused of failing to interpret the findings correctly when differences are statistically non-significant because, for instance, they do not understand the meaning of margin of error (Petry and Bastien, 2008).

Strömbäck (2009) points out that methodological information is also in most cases not included in the opinion polls stories. Again people are of the view that opinion polls are simply complex and also too dominant (de Vresse and Semetko, 2002:379). In addition there is also the fear that because of opinion polls stories voters would be tempted to vote for those the polls suggest are in the lead of the contest. Valentino, Beckmann and Buhr (2001) also argue that by framing opinion poll stories, the media may end up distracting voters' attention away from the real important issues. This may decrease voters' ability to get the needed information about presidential candidates and policies of political parties, even when these are present and salient in the news coverage.

For instance, in Ghana, opinion poll stories, according to the study were few, but when published they always attracted debate with political parties' officials running from one media house to another either discrediting the results of the polls or insisting on the validity of the result,

depending on which party such polls would favour or go against. The political party, which appeared disadvantaged, would use technicalities to question the basis of such results. For instance, with the headline, "NDC Polls Bogus" the Daily Guide of Monday November 17, 2016 writes, "Mr. Gabby Asare Otchere-Darko, Executive Director of the Danquah Institute, has described as bogus and misleading an opinion poll advertised on media networks over the weekend." The source story, which used Otchere-Darko as the only source of the story, gave him the opportunity to discuss the poll's result in which he used wrong margin of error, questioned the appropriateness of the sample size as well as the questionnaire used for the opinion poll. The story, which had no author, did not do any interpretation of the poll. Also another opinion poll in the Daily Guide of the same edition with the headline, "Nana leads latest polls" just presented the results with no interpretation of the results. Such presentation of opinion poll stories in the newspapers in Ghana goes to discredit those stories. This act increases the level of cynicism towards politicians as well as the political process in general. It is also likely to add to low confidence in the newspapers election campaigns stories.

However, the overall findings of this study show that considering the five prominent themes captured in the 2016 election campaigns by the press in Ghana, the issue framing exceeded 80 percent in 2016 and also exceeded 70 percent in 2016 election campaigns news content in the four papers. In their coverage, the various newspapers selected and framed stories on different issues that formed the campaign messages of the presidential candidates and political parties as a way of winning votes. Issues or policies such as peaceful election, education, economy, employment and free Senior High School received more coverage. As peaceful election dominated the issues in 2016, it was rather horse race journalism, which included candidates' endorsements that dominated the 2016 election campaign coverage. For instance, with the title of

a feature article, “Actualisation of Nana Addo’s vision on education” the concluding part of the story says:

“Undoubtedly, the free secondary school policy is possible. It will succeed for as long as the government has the political will to do it. The NPP government under Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo does not only have the political will to do it, but has the commitment and the desire to make it happen”(Daily Graphic, Monday, November 5, 2016). A letter-to-the-editor with the title “President Mahama, you were tops” also reads: “I congratulate you President John Dramani Mahama on your great performance during the recent IEA debate in Tamale on October 30, 2016. Your performance, devoid of literacy technicalities was clear, comprehensive and very easy to understand even by primary school kids” (Daily Graphic, Friday, November 16, 2016). Since issues such as peace, the economy and free senior high school dominated the election campaigns of the various presidential candidates, the chapter will discuss them one after the other to determine why the four newspapers had to give them the kind of coverage they received during the elections.

Peace: The dominant theme

In 2016 the dominant campaign theme that could easily go through the gates of all the four newspapers sampled for the study was unsurprisingly the issue of peace. Peace as a theme displays, received 153 stories representing a significant 35.1 percent. Peace as a dominant theme might be because of the election violence that erupted in some of the African countries such as Libya, Egypt and Cote d’Ivoire which led to deaths and high level of structural destruction in recent times. What might have also contributed to the dominance of peace were the high levels of intolerance, including the use of vile and insulting language against political opponents,

especially during phone-ins programmes on radio broadcasts; the hiring by the major political parties of so-called “macho men’ or party foot soldiers’ to promote the interests of a candidate and a political party and discourage opponents through intimidation and violent measures as well as reluctance to prosecute offenders for serious electoral offences, particularly if the offenders belonged to the ruling party. All these created tension within the country to the extent that the gatekeepers of The Ghanaian Times of Tuesday, October 7, 2016 allowed through its gate a feature by Professor Kwesi Yankah with the title, “Prof. Kwesi Yankah wonders: Will Ghana survive Dec ’08?” Part of the story observes that “In Ghana... the war drums have been loud enough in recent times. From gun shots ringing at registration centres, gun shots at political rallies, to arson and inter-party killings at Gushiegu, to clashes at Berekum, and stories on stocking of arms by various ethnic groups and political parties. Day in day out, newspaper headlines have been chilling and convey the impression that all is not well with the nation Ghana.”

It was probably this scary situation that might have motivated the traditional leaders, religious leaders, Ghana Journalists Association, National Media Commission, The National Peace council and other interest groups to campaign for peaceful election in the country. For example, “Right Reverend Emmanuel Arongo, Anglican Bishop of Tamale, has called on the NDC and NPP to discourage their supporters from fighting and mudslinging each other” (The Ghanaian Times, Friday, October 3, 2016). Also “the chief of Apam, Obotantam Nana Edu-Effrim X, has challenged politicians to demonstrate their commitment to peace by taking disciplinary action against any of their members whose actions and utterances can disturb the peace of the country (Daily Graphic, Tuesday, October 2, 2016 page 19).

With the headline, “Campaign for peaceful polls intensified” the story reads: “With barely six weeks to the general election in December, non-governmental, religious and faith-based organisations and civil society groups have intensified their campaign for peaceful elections” (Daily Graphic, Monday, October 22, 2016 page 16). Kabral Blay-Amihere, the chairman of the National Media Commission charged the media to “provide accurate reportage to ensure peaceful, free and fair 2012 election” (Daily Guide, November 1, 2016). It is interesting to note that a week to the voting in 2016, the eight presidential candidates were made to commit themselves to peaceful conduct in the lead up, during and after the elections by signing an agreement pact to that effect. Commonwealth Observer Group reports: “with the level of intolerance, which manifested itself in several ways, witnessed by the Chief Justice, traditional and civil society leaders and security chiefs, in the week preceding the 2012 election, presidential candidates had to sign the Kumasi Declaration under which leaders publicly committed themselves to taking a stand against election violence, impunity and injustice” (Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, Ghana Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, December 7, 2016).

The issue of peace, therefore, became a major campaign message for the gatekeepers of the media to find it absolute necessary to frame it and allowed it through their gates many times. In the lead up to the 2016 election, the National Media Commission maintained regular dialogue with the media, calling on them to discharge their duties responsibly to ensure a peaceful election (Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group: Ghana Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, December 2016). The numerous appeals, the political tension in the country during the elections and the memory of election conflicts’ experiences of some African societies might have

influenced the editors and journalists to settle on the issue of peaceful election as a major campaign story.

Since the way editors and journalists select stories and how they frame them are often as a result of their political convictions, the newspapers with their political convictions and lessons from McCombs and Shaw (1972; 1993), they made peace an agenda whereby the press did not only tell people what to think about, but also told them how to think about peaceful election. Therefore, it is argued that gatekeepers of the four newspapers sampled for this study framed a lot of election stories on the issue of peaceful election as a result of their political convictions not only for Ghanaians to think about but also how to think about it for the followers of the various political parties especially the two main parties not to engage in political violence no matter the outcome of the elections.

By framing and projecting the issue of peaceful election and highlighting information about it made the issue the subject of communication in the public sphere in the country. In the letter-to-the-editor section of The Ghanaian Times of Monday, October 29, 2016, the paper published a letter calling for peaceful election: "For the December 7 election to be peaceful, let's all watch our utterances, especially on radio. Let's not incite tribal politics and let's choose our words carefully bearing in mind that we have only one Ghana." In effect, the newspapers enhanced the significance of peace for it to become a dominant feature for public discourse in the public sphere. As Kuypers (2002:7) points out, "facts remain neutral until framed; thus, how the press frames an issue or event will affect public understanding of that issue or event. Callaghan (2005: XI) argues that with framing, the media and the politicians can determine for the citizens

boundaries within which an issue is to be debated. Therefore, with the Ghanaian political actors talking about the need for violence free elections and the press framing it in their publications the attention of Ghanaians was focused on the subject of peace. However, it worth noting that from the experiences of some African societies, peace can be undermined if citizens are poor and not sure of the intentions of their political leaders. From the above and the fact that any time election is approaching there is threat of election violence makes the issue of peace an important matter.

4.3 Does peace matter: As an election campaign issue in Ghana?

With the title, “Ghana makes peace a priority in election campaign” Afua Hirsch writes: “For months, every available space on the streets of Ghana’s capital city has been plastered with campaign posters as the eight presidential hopefuls in this month’s elections jostle for prominence. Amid the slogans, new theme has emerged: a plethora of concerts, conferences and prayer meetings organized to promote peace at the polls.” The article continues, “the let Peace Rain gospel event, the One Ghana Peace gig, the Avoiding Conflict and Mayhem concert and the Peace Song compilation album are a few of the options in what some say has become a ‘peace industry” (The Enquirer, Friday, December 2, 2016).

Since the 1990s, crime has become an electoral issue in South Africa and public safety has become an electoral issue in Nigeria so has peace also become an election issue in Ghana. The editorial of the Daily Graphic, Thursday, November 6, 2008 calling for peace before, during and after election, writes: “while we all join the people of the US to celebrate their momentous election, we urge Ghanaians to learn from the US experience as we prepare for the December 7, 2016... the patience and tolerance of US voters must be emulated.” In a feature in the Ghanaian Times of Monday, November 26, 2016, Kofi Annan notes: “we are an open country, with a

vibrant press and an active civil society. Investors, from home and abroad, applaud this stability which creates a sound investment climate. We can be proud of this record. But there can be no room for complacency.

The disastrous 2007 elections in Kenya illustrated the risks faced by all countries.” Dr. Kwesi Aning of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training observes that politicians in Ghana were deliberately preaching hatred, exploiting ethnicity, regionalism and religious group for them to win Power. Aning notes that in all these, “we sit here and think that Ghana’s democratic credentials are intact. The falsehood and wrong perception of Ghana as a front-runner state is not doing us any good” (Daily Guide, Thursday, October 25, 2016). Until this publication, the Ashanti Regional Police Commander, DCOP, Augustine Gyening had accused politicians of raising the “political temperature in the region with their utterances (Daily Guide, Thursday, October 4, 2016).

From the above, it is no wonder that peace became 2016 election campaigns agenda which was discussed in the public sphere by civil society groups, youth groups, religious groups, women groups, traditional rulers as well as the political actors. This is so because despite Ghana’s reputation for peaceful transitions, previous elections have come dangerously close to violence, therefore, peace was more of an issue, which competed with other issues such as economy, employment, health and education. Former President Kufuor, President Atta Mills and President John Mahama, it is argued, won elections because they were framed as being calm and peaceful. Calmness and peace are values, it appears, Ghanaians cherish. Therefore, in considering peace as an issue based, the study coded any election campaign story which called for peaceful election or political actors promising peace be it a feature, editorial, opinion or straight news. It appears that in developing democracies such as Ghana, the concept of issue-based election needs to be

expanded to include not only the economy, employment, education, health and housing but also peace, taking the political development of such societies into consideration. Indeed exploring the background and context of an emerging democracy such as Ghana, this would create the necessary expansion to accommodate peace as a campaign issue for the media to highlight. Article 3 of the UNESCO Media Declaration notes: “the mass media have an important contribution to make to the strengthening of peace and international understanding and countering racism, apartheid and incitement to war” (UNESCO, 1979).

In their book, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War*, Mansfield and Snyder (2004) suggest that countries in South America, East Asia, Northeastern Europe as well as South Africa, which experienced a reasonable smooth transition in democracy, succeeded because they enjoy relatively high per-capita income and literacy. With these advantages, the citizens had the needed resources as well as skills to put in place institutions and civil society groups which could allow democracy to be consolidated. According to them, before the transition, many of these countries had well-developed state institutions such as administrative bureaucracies, which operated with some level of efficiency to advance state objectives with minimal corruption. They point out that some of these countries enjoyed the benefit of some past experience, with independent legal and journalistic outlets, which could be adapted for use by the democratizing country. In other words, with such conditions, it is possible for powerful democratic institutions to be established quickly, for democracy to be easily consolidated leading to a peaceful transition as in Brazil, Chile and Poland. However, in a situation where democratic institutions were weak and democratization was incomplete, war was more likely as in Ethiopia, Pakistan and Peru. Therefore, in Ghana with its weak democratic institutions, high illiteracy rate coupled with threat of violence from some political elites, it makes sense for peace to be placed top on the election

campaign agenda as elections 2016 have demonstrated. But for peace becoming an election campaign issue, Ghana's democratic process story might have been different.

Robert Dahl in his book, *Polyarchy* believes that Great Britain, for instance, after Second and Third Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884, because of its rules, habits and institutions of competitive politics were well in place and developed, its transition to democracy was relatively smooth. This is in contrast to the situation in Ghana, where mass electoral politics developed ahead of the needed institutions to regulate political competition. In Ghana, every election since 1992 had been challenged by the losing party to the extent that the 2012 election ended up in court because Nana Akufo-Addo accused John Mahama and the NDC of electoral malpractices. This, they could not support in court. In fact when the result was announced there were some violent acts by the supporters of the NPP. But for the calm and peaceful personality of John Mahama, who asked the supporters of NDC not to fight back and also agreed to co-operate with the court, Ghana would also have perhaps seen war.

Probably, Ghana's practice of multiparty democracy presents the world of academia with interesting and distinctive aspect of election journalism for scholars in political communication as well as political science to take interest in and study. This is because it appears from this study that some significant conventional positions of election campaign coverage are not applicable to the Ghanaian experience of political communication. An example is the dominance of peace in the coverage of the 2016 election campaigns in contrast to the dominance of economy, health, immigration, job creation and now fighting ISIS in the advanced democracies across the globe. This goes to strengthen the argument for de-Westernizing studies since conditions in various societies are not the same. Hence, the needs and aspirations of citizens across democracies differ to a large extent. It would be strange for a candidate in an advanced democracy during election

campaign to campaign on peaceful election. This is because electoral violence is not a concern in the advanced societies. These societies have been able to consolidate their democracies and established democratic culture in the citizens. However, in an emerging democracy such as Ghana, which is struggling in its democratization process, because of the huge interest of political elites to have power and control, anytime election is approaching there is high tension and signs of electoral violence.

As this chapter was being developed, there was tension already forming and there was fear of electoral violence towards the 2016 general election in the country. The main opposition political party, NPP led by Nana Akufo-Addo was calling for new voters register at all cost, which the ruling party, the NDC thought was not a realistic position for NPP to take. "The Ghanaian Times of Saturday, December 5, 2015 reports: "The opposition New Patriotic Party insists the electoral album is bloated calling for a new one to be compiled ahead of the 2016 general election; however, the governing National Democratic Congress just wants the existing register to be purged." In addition to this, there was also serious conflict within NPP leadership, which had led to the killing of two of their supporters. In the face of this, electorates would first be interested in their safety and that of their families before they would think about the economy or education or health. Development in which ever form would be virtually impossible without a peaceful atmosphere. What this chapter attempts to demonstrate is that emerging democracies, which are threatened by violence or war would make peace an important agenda for the media as well as the political actors to talk about and think about it. It is a question of seeking peace first and all others can be added.

Based on the above, it appears peace as an election campaign issue matter and that it is desirable. The benefit of placing it high on election campaign agenda and for it to find space in the public sphere of developing democracies with weak democratic institutions coupled with elites who believe they should be presidents at all cost is enormous. Finally, peace as an election campaign issue is important since it may take a while for Ghana to have the rules, habits and institutions of competitive politics well established. It is worth noting that citizens or voters would choose issues which appear to represent their interests. Therefore, citizens must have some flexibility depending on existing conditions to choose any issue that they deem fit would enhance their politics and democracy. As already indicated in the literature for any issue to become public policy for candidates to make it their campaign message, voters should have first be concerned about the issue and have some relevant information about such an issue (More, 1999: 245). During the two elections, the situation in the country demanded that peace should be an issue of great importance.

Therefore, it is expected that like the issue of economy or crime control policies, it is also possible to have peace enforcement policies as a major campaign agenda once that is what would satisfy citizens and ensure their well-being.

4.4 Economy: The significant campaign issue

One significant factor that has led to political instability in Ghana, it is argued, has been the fact that democracy has not been able to deliver to the citizens the needed economic prosperity. Acemoglu and Robinson (2012:1) argue that the revolutionary uprising against the rule of the privileged elites in Tunisia and Egypt, for instance, was as a result of the poverty level of citizens. In Ghana today, there is evidence that points to the failure of the economic system to

enhance the living standards of citizens. Declining economic growth is worrying since jobs cannot be created and prices of goods and services are going high by the day (Bawumia, 2014). With this worrying state of affairs, the longest serving Minister of Finance, Professor Kwesi Botchway (a member of the ruling party, NDC) in a lecture in June 2014 lamenting, pointed out that there was widespread disaffection and anger among Ghanaians. The anger has led to frequent demonstrations and strike actions. Doctors, nurses, university and other levels of teachers as well as staff of the Attorney General have resorted to strike action for salary increase. This is leading to a popular mood of frustration among technocrats and public servants. In Ghana, Botchway points out that there is feeling among citizens that everyone in public office is engaged in corruption and money grabbing.

There is already evidence showing that Judges, Custom Officers, the Police Service, Members of Parliament and even the media are corrupt and grab money for their services. Against this background, one is tempted to suggest that the issue of economy will continue to be significant during election campaigns in Ghana. Considering the high level of poverty in the country, citizens are obviously looking for a government that is committed to the public welfare and responsive to their economic needs. Since politicians are aware of this high expectation of citizens, during election campaigns, the issue of the economy is expected to feature high in their campaigns for the media to also give it the needed coverage. Already, the main opposition political party is accusing the government for poor economic performance. The party is promising Ghanaians that NPP as a government would transform the economy (Daily Graphic; The Ghanaian Times; Daily Guide and Ghanaian Chronicle, Thursday, December 3, 2016). After all, globally, it appears “at the core of all predictive models is the power of economic conditions to predict voting outcome” (Jamieson, 2000:6). Relying on the predictive models, Jamieson,

therefore, argues that economic conditions of the individual electorate as well as the nation will be central to the decision that the voters will arrive at as to who becomes their president. Although the economy will always feature high on the list of voting consideration, occasionally other issues will emerge and be considered significant just as peaceful election emerged in 2016 election campaigns in Ghana.

A great deal of information on the economy from the presidential candidates on the present state and future prospects of the economy will attract journalists for it to go through the gates for publication. In other words, voters would be primed by the gatekeepers to take the economy into account in deciding who to vote for during elections (Jamieson, 2000:6). There is no doubt that Ghanaians have come to appreciate education as one important variable that can help bring about economic prosperity. Politicians, especially the NPP, aware of this coupled with the fact that many Ghanaians are struggling to pay the fees of their children, made free senior high school NPP's major campaign message, which the NDC responded saying that what the country needed immediately was more and decent educational infrastructure conducive for teaching and learning and to give access to more students after which, then the policy of free education can be implemented as provided in the 1992 constitution.

4.5 Free Senior High School: The most contested issue

In 2016, the Daily Guide and the Ghanaian Chronicle gave intense level of attention to the issue of free Senior High School education, which forms one of the three levels of Ghana's educational structure. The other two levels are the basic education and the tertiary education. The basic level takes eleven years to complete for one to qualify to enter the Junior High School, which also takes three years to complete after which one then moves on to the Senior High

School. It is after the completion of the SHS that one qualifies to enter the tertiary level to pursue either a diploma programme or a first degree programme. The educational system consists of state-owned schools and privately-owned schools at all levels. With regard to preference, majority of Ghanaians would prefer to attend the state-owned Senior High Schools and state-owned tertiary schools. This is because they are of high standard than those of the privately-owned and most of the prestigious schools are the state-owned schools. In Ghana a considerable number of students are attending the state-owned SHS. Because of the harsh economic condition in the country, parents and guardians would be happy and thankful to any government that would implement free SHS educational policy. Being aware of this, the opposition political party, NPP and its presidential candidate might have been so convinced that promising and making free Senior High School their main campaign message was likely to win them the needed votes to govern the country, which since independence in 1957 the party has governed for 10 years.

So for the Daily Guide and the Ghanaian Chronicle to frame and select the issue of free Senior High School and made it become a major election campaign agenda was not surprising. The provision of free Senior High School was the main campaign theme of the NPP and its presidential candidate. With the headline, "Free SHS policy possible" the story reads: "the former president John Kufuor says the New Patriotic Party's free senior high school policy is possible with the country's oil find" (Daily Graphic, Thursday, October 25, 2012). The Daily Guide gave the issue 46 (42.2 percent) stories while the Ghanaian Chronicle also gave the same issue 22 (28.2 percent) stories. However, what happened to be the main election campaign message of the NDC, that was, the provision of more and better educational infrastructure to enhance teaching and learning received 15 stories (19.2 percent) from the Enquirer. The Daily Guide had no story for the NDC's main theme. As has already been mentioned, the owners of the

two papers happen to belong to NPP and therefore, the gatekeepers of the papers (editors and political journalists) might have been more interested in NPP and Nana Akufo-Addo winning the votes to come to power.

Hence, the two papers made the issue of free Senior High School an intense election campaign agenda for the electorates to talk about in the public sphere. As indicated earlier in this study, if horse race is said to dominate election campaign coverage in the advanced democracies, what then accounts for the dominance of issues in election campaign coverage in a developing democracy such as Ghana?

4.6 Why the dominance of issues framing?

The question for this section seeks to answer is this: What can explain why unlike the United States, which is noted for horse race framing, issue framing such as the economy, peace and education appear to be ahead of horse race framing of election campaigns in Ghana? As has been observed, journalism practice is influenced by the political system, media system as well as socio-economic situation of societies (Strömbäck and Kaid, 2008). Therefore, one can make the suggestion that the issue framing of election campaign dominance in Ghana may be due in part to variables such as the history and socio-economic situation in the country.

One reason that can also be used to explain the dominance of issue over horse race framing of election campaigns in the country may be the nature of practice of journalism. The profession has been subjected to all manner of governmental controls throughout the greater part of its development. The practice has been that the media depended on official sources for the information they would need to frame events or ideas. In such an atmosphere, which clearly undermines the media autonomy, it is difficult for journalists to embark on horse race journalism.

This is because horse race framing of an event such as election campaign allows journalists to engage in interpretation, which in most cases demand that journalists add their personal views unconstrained by the journalistic principle of objectivity to the stories that they frame for electorates (Jamieson, 2001:39).

Another contributing factor to the dominance of issue framing over horse race framing is the socio-economic conditions of the country. Ghana, like many other developing societies, has a considerable number of its citizens living in poverty. Many communities lack basic needs such as portable water, health facilities, educational facilities, balanced diet and jobs. With such level of poverty it makes sense that electorates would demand from the various political parties and leaders' policies that could help improve their standard of living. It, therefore, stands to reason that presidential candidates and political parties in mounting the campaign platform would raise issues that would win the electorates to their side. To win votes, "Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom, presidential candidate of the Progressive People's Party (PPP), has called on Ghanaians to vote the party into power to make the nation a better place to live in. He says the PPP has come to rescue Ghanaians from economic hardship" (The Ghanaian Times, Monday, October 29, 2016). To this end, Ghanaian journalists in order to meet the expectation of citizens would therefore, frame and select more stories on issues since they have also learnt that one responsibility of journalism is to help mobilize the society to put in place structures that would help create a sustainable road out of poverty for better conditions of life for citizens. Although the findings of this study show that Ghanaian election campaign coverage is issues-based, one cannot ignore the fact that horse race framing is emerging in the political communication of the country, which appears to have the potential of even dominating election campaign coverage in Ghana as it is

the case with the developed democracies. Therefore, horse race as a concept is being given some attention in this study.

4.7 Space allocation to candidates

Intense appearance of presidential candidates in the media during election campaign coverage has engaged the attention of political communication scholars. In fact candidate-centred election campaigning is being discussed and researchers are increasingly becoming interested in political party leaders. The study also showed the extent to which the main political party presidential candidates dominated press coverage in the 2016 general elections in Ghana. So is the result of space allocation to political parties also displayed by Table 2. The results seem to suggest that presidential candidates especially those of the two main political parties, the NDC and the NPP, commanded a considerable press appearances. Comparing the result of appearances of candidates to that of parties, it is obvious that the newspapers devoted more attention to candidates. The rationale here is to focus the analysis of space allocation devoted to party presidential candidates in order for the study to answer one of the research questions which, focuses on media bias and an incumbency advantage.

Table 2: A comparison of the frequency of appearances of the political parties in newspapers coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign of NPP and NDC

Political Parties	PAPER					
	The Ghanaian Times	%	Daily Guide	%	The Enquirer	%
New Patriotic Party	43	47	52	55	62	65
National Democratic Congress	48	43	41	45	32	35
Total	91	100	93	100	94	100

Source: Field Data, 2017

4.8 The Ghanaian state-owned press and incumbency advantage

From the above discussion one cannot ignore the new emerging trend in the personalization of election campaigns in Ghana's multiparty democracy. Previous Ghanaian election campaigns coverage studies have revealed an incumbency advantage in the use of the state-owned press to support ruling governments' election campaigns. For instance, during the 2004 general election campaign, the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) in a study on the abuse of incumbency and administrative resources during the election accused the ruling political parties of not only having too much access to the media but also public resources. The report, therefore, reads:

“Monitoring of selected state-owned media revealed that these organs gave significantly more coverage to the campaign activities of incumbent party candidates. Print coverage of the incumbent party tended to be more extensive and was more likely to include front-page stories and photographs” (Centre of Democratic Development, 2005:3). However, coverage of the 2016 election campaigns appears inconsistent with the assertion that the state-owned newspapers

continue to ensure an incumbency advantage. This revelation opens a new chapter in the life of the media in Ghana. For the Daily Graphic and The Ghanaian Times to be seen not to be given incumbents presidential candidates, coverage advantage is certainly an interesting development in Ghana's democratization process. In order to interrogate this issue more closely to have a better insight into this trend of coverage, the study, therefore, examines the relative balance of the presidential candidates of the two main political parties, which have ruled the country since 1992 when Ghana went back to democratic governance.

4.9 Political party driven campaign coverage

As the current study shows, Ghana's election campaign coverage was political party driven. What this means is that in presenting and selecting election campaigns stories, Ghanaian journalists concentrated more on political campaign events and less on them taking the initiative do analysis of the candidates' campaign messages or doing investigation to tell the electorates who really the candidates are. With this kind of journalism, which appears to be consistent with what pertains in other democracies, what it means is that journalists would use one source that is the presidential candidate of a political party or an official of the same party to tell the election story. Sources of information are critical in the process of telling a journalistic story. Sources add to news stories, which go to shape its meaning and interpretations. It is being suggested that using different sources in news stories impact news framing (Lawrence, 2000; Callahan and Schnell, 2001). The practice of objective journalism demands the use of different sources in news stories. Among a number of major functions of sources include the verification of the news story, making the news story to look credible, sources also help to avoid suspicion of bias and give news consumers different opinions on a particular subject of interest from different

stakeholders in the society (Manning, 2001). In effect, all those involved and all those affected featured in one news story will enhance the practice of journalism.

The reliance on the political actors, especially, political candidates of the various political parties in telling a story at times as much as three-quarters of a page go to show the extent to which Ghanaian political elites influence and shape media stories including election campaign stories. Hallin and Mancini (2004:233) note: "the production of news is structured around information and interpretation provided by state officials." According to Bennett and Entman (2001), United States media coverage of events and issues including election campaigns coverage is noted for intense use of official sources, which means Ghana is not alone in this kind of journalism practice.

However, Lawrence (2010) is of the view that news stories with different sources are a condition for solid news stories. In other words, the four influential newspapers sampled for this study, failed to provide voice to the ordinary Ghanaian citizens and non-partisan experts. This practice of election campaign journalism is undesirable and may undermine democratic governance in the country.

Not only did the Ghanaian press framing of election campaigns lacked different sources, the coverage also appeared to have focused on conflict in the news. With commercial interests and the news value that 'conflict sells' news (Hamilton, 2004; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996), news media are tempted to focus on conflict. To this end, politicians' issues are oftentimes framed as conflicting with issues of their competitors. Conflict framing may go to divert the needed attention from the core political issues (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). For instance, in covering the issue of education during the 2012 election in Ghana, the press appeared to focus

attention on the conflict between the NDC and NPP. It can be argued that this style of journalism practice may have left the Ghanaian voters with little appreciation of the specifics of the issue of education as a campaign promise. Strömbäck and Dimitrova (2006) observe that conflict framing is a concern for election campaign news coverage in the media in the United States.

The literature on gatekeeping theory shows that journalists and editors also have their own political philosophy which goes to influence their coverage of events and issues. Hence, during an important event such as election campaign, various journalists are more likely to be interested in the activities of a party of their choice and give the party more coverage as well as favourable coverage. One, therefore, can argue that Ghanaian journalists as well as editors have their own opinion on political issues and also the candidate who should be voted for to become the leader of the country. For instance, the results of the 2016 general elections in Ghana show that Ghanaian journalists and the press gave Nana Akufo-Addo an advantage to become the president of the country. That their preference went to influence their coverage of the election campaigns goes to reinforce the point that Ghanaian journalists, editors and media owners might have opinions that favoured either the NDC or NPP. Hence they consciously paid particular attention to their campaign activities. Hence, the dominance of the two political parties in the coverage of election campaigns in Ghana as demonstrated in previous studies as well as the current thesis. Indeed, the contemporary history of politics and elections in Ghana have become very much a tale of two political parties, the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party.

Entman says in the *Media and Democracy without Party Competition* (2005) that there is a price to be paid for restricting multiparty democratic system to a two-party competition. Entman argues that a situation of this nature exposes the media to keen market competition, reduces investment in serious hard news by mainstream media and audiences. With this, there is no clear

line drawn between news and entertainment when covering politicians, events, issues and policies. Entman would, therefore, argue further that this can lead to citizens losing interest in politics. A situation such as this can bring down the demand for serious news whereby citizens would then fall for entertainment news. This would then undermine serious public discourse on politics thus defeating the democratic principle of public participation in democratic governance.

As the major news media and citizens begin to pay less attention to politics due to their dwindling interest in politics, politicians and political parties endowed with resources will then have the capacity to manage media images. This will place them in a better position to set agenda for the media as well as to frame the news in their favour. Since effective public discourse is possible when politicians help with framing and interpreting reality, this partisan imbalance will end up protecting the political party in power from being accountable to citizens who voted for it to lead them. Finally, Strömbäck and Kaid (2008) argue that election news is critical for democracy. This, they explain, is because election news is necessary for preparing well-informed electorates. A well-informed electorate, it can be suggested, may be good for the growth of Ghana's democracy. Hopefully, this chapter has made it clear the debate about issues-based and horse race framing of election campaigns in Ghanaian contemporary political communication and how different it is from the developed democracies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUAMMRY OF FIDNINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter five of this study on the Ghanaian media and coverage of the 2016 presidential elections for the NDC and NPP presents the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations to help enhance media coverage of elections in Ghana.

5.2 Summary of findings

The main objective of this study is to have a content analysis of the Ghanaian media relative to the coverage of the 2016 presidential elections for NDC and NPP using Daily Guide, the Enquirer and the Ghanaian Times. Specific objectives would include assessing the performance of the print media houses on their coverage of the NPP and NDC campaign, determining the factors that shaped their coverage systems and assessing the challenges that the print media houses encountered in the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaigns for the NDC and NPP. In examining the objectives of the study, content analysis was used to examine the various publications of the sampled newspapers.

The findings of the study revealed that contrary to previous Ghanaian study, which played down the issue of partiality in Ghanaian journalism practice, horse race framing of election campaigns is increasingly gaining grounds in the practice of political journalism in Ghana. This trend seems to be contributing to a two-party democratic governance in the country as is the situation in the United States, for instance. To illustrates this point here, all the characteristics of horse race framing such as who is winning the race, public opinion polls, focusing on crowd attendance at

campaign rallies all go to project the two main political parties in Ghana, the NDC and the NPP to the disadvantage of the smaller political parties.

The study is showing significant differences as compared to election campaign coverage in the advanced democracies across the globe. As studies indicate that there is dominance of horse race framing in North America and Western Europe in the coverage of election campaigns, however, in Ghana it is rather the issue framing that appears to be dominating election campaigns coverage. This goes to suggest that as citizens in those societies were being exposed more to horse race coverage, citizens in Ghana were being exposed more to issues. Ghanaian framing of election campaigns, it can be argued, was more issues oriented. Thus the newspapers in carrying out their gatekeeping function, selected and disseminated more stories on election campaigns issues. Regardless of this form of journalism practice in the country, the results should also be of some concern since the outcome shows that horse race framing has a potential of dominating election campaigns coverage in the country. As has already been noted, one significant way for voters to get to know about their presidential candidates and their positions on issues is through how the news media select and present election issues and events. If that be the case, then a time would come when the media in Ghana, which are expected to tell citizens how to think about election campaigns' events and issues and how to evaluate political actors, would not be in the position to do so because electorates would be reading about which candidate is ahead, candidates endorsements, opinion polls without critical interpretation and speeches from rallies. In this case, horse race stories, perhaps, may have come to matter most in election campaigns coverage than issues. This can undermine Ghana's young democracy.

5.3 Conclusion

The media play a critical role in democracies and they are expected to be fair in their coverage of candidates as well as political parties during election campaigns. However, it is argued that citizens accuse media of bias with the state-owned media giving incumbency candidates coverage advantage. The chapter, therefore, examines patterns of press bias as well as evidence of an incumbency advantage during the 2016 elections campaigns coverage in Ghana by the four newspapers under study. The chapter is motivated by the fact that the 1992 constitution of Ghana directs the media, especially, the state-owned media to give equal and fair coverage to all political parties and candidates during election campaigns. This, it appears, the framers of the constitution had in mind that the media should avoid bias as well as an incumbency advantage in their role of enhancing democratic governance in the country. The constitution demands a level playing field for all political parties and therefore notes: "The state shall provide fair opportunity to all political parties to present their programmes to the public by ensuring equal access to the state-owned media." Again, "all presidential candidates shall be given the same amount of time and space on the states-owned media to present their programmes to the people."

In addition to this constitutional provision, the code of the Ghana Journalists Association also expects the media to ensure equal and fair coverage to all political parties and candidates. The main theories used for this study include the established theories of framing and gatekeeping. Both theories relate to issues of the role of media in societies and how stories selected may be disseminated differently to the audiences of different media outlets. On the basis of this, exploring the concept of personalization of media, the chapter is intended to lead to whether or not there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate media bias as well as an incumbency advantage that are influenced by the two theories in playing their role in Ghana's newspapers. In examining

the concept of personalization of the Ghanaian press, in the context of the review of literature, this study restricts itself to more coverage and more positive coverage to a particular presidential candidate at the expense of other candidates in the political race of 2016 elections in Ghana. This is to help gain a better understanding of the extent of bias and an incumbency advantage in the Ghanaian press despite the constitutional provision and the GJA's code. The outcome of the study, hopefully, will go to contribute to the on-going debate of gatekeeping and framing practices of the Ghanaian media.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are therefore provided to help enhance media coverage of elections in Ghana:

To enhance and enrich the public sphere, it is recommended that a more interpretative news style of reporting policy issues. There are claims that news journalism has over the years changed from being predominantly descriptive in form to more interpretive journalism. This news style of journalists telling stories of issues and events involves the mixture of information and interpretation of the facts. Such stories present views of experts use direct quotations as well as consideration of pros-and cons. They take the form of analysis (answering why- questions) and contextualization of political events addressing the issues of causes, consequences and connections in one story. In effect, interpretative reporting helps societies to create informed citizenry and by extension impact democratic governance. Interpretative news reporting aids citizens to understand the world of politics better. Journalism practice of this nature is not just defensible but laudable. An emerging democratic society such as Ghana will need a media system whose owners understand journalism to be an "ideological force, communicating not just

the facts but also a way of understanding and making sense of the facts. In this way the media in Ghana may be transformed to become the public sphere's one most significant establishment for citizens to engage in the much needed rational critical discourse for better democracy.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How does the organization determine its performance systems in its coverage?
2. How were those challenges resolved to ensure performance of the organisation?
3. To what extent does the organization determine the importance of particular news coverage?
4. What are some of the challenges that confronted the organization in its coverage system?
5. What factors guided the coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign?