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Decolonising Public Relations in Africa: Centring Local Epistemes in Ghanaian Political Communication

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Decolonising Public Relations in Africa: Centring Local Epistemes in Ghanaian

Political Communication

By

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Abstract

At independence, African countries were faced with the task of decolonising. Countries were renamed as part of a broader Africanisation agenda. A quest for decoloniality and Africanity was manifest in many ways. However, efforts to decolonise media and communication studies have so far been "media centric". Outliers such as Public Relations have been left out of urgent debates on decoloniality. This thesis addresses this gap by centring local epistemes in public relations in ways that decolonise political communication, using Ghana as a case study.

Despite the growth of democracy in Africa over the last few decades, democratisation in Africa has met with many problems and the role of public relations in Africa's democratisation is arguably adding to the existing problems. The overarching purpose of this dissertation was to investigate how political parties have utilised decolonised Public Relations (PR), PR strategies, tactics and activities in Ghana's electioneering campaigns. More importantly, this research was aimed at decolonising Public Relations in Africa by examining the decolonial political PR strategies political parties deploy to win elections. Proverbs instead of global North theories are used to explain what the political parties do in terms of Public Relations.

The study employed in-depth interviews and triangulated with a content analysis of media archives. The findings of the research show that while there are opportunities for decolonising PR, the curriculum has to change to reflect the call for decolonised PR. The findings also show that public relations has furthered Ghana's democracy and ensured that the two main political parties engage voters. Challenges and limitations notwithstanding, the research provides invaluable insights into how African thought and knowledge systems can be applied in public relations, political communication, and its implications for democratisation in Ghana. It contributes original insights to recent debates on decolonisation in African communication and media studies and the subsequent impact of political communication in the African context.

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Baanu so aa ɛmmia- When two persons carry a load, it does not hurt- Akan proverb.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that with the exception of works duly referenced, the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

PR- Public Relations

GIJ - Ghana Institute of Journalism

UEW- University of Education

NPP- National Patriotic Party

NDC - National Democratic Congress

USA - United States of America

APRA - The African Public Relations Association

IPR, Ghana – The Institute of Public Relations Ghana

UK – United Kingdom

CA – Cambridge Analytica

PRCA, Africa – Public Relations & Communications Association, Africa

PRAG – Public Relations Association of Ghana

OPR – Organizational Public Relationship

MP – Members of Parliament

UGCC – United Gold Coast Convention

CPP – Convention People's Party

PP- Progress Party

UP – United Party

QCA – Qualitative Content Analysis

TA – Thematic Analysis

PP – Political Party Respondent

PR-PC – Public Relations and Political Communication Scholars and Experts

PNDC – Provisional National Defence Council

HQ – Head Quarters

NMC – National Media Commission

JM – John Mahama

NCA – National Communications Authority

BTL -Below-the-line

TV- Television

IVR – Interactive Voice Response

SMS- Short Messaging Services

CD – Compact Disk

SMS – Social Media sites

SM – Social Media

IM – Instant Messaging

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

Ph. D- Doctor of Philosophy

UTV – United Television

GTV – Ghana Television

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

GNA – Ghana News Agency

1D1F – 1 District 1 Factory

SHS – Senior High School

CNN – Cable Network News

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Kwame Nkrumah, the first Prime Minister and President of Ghana not only led the Gold Coast to independence from Britain in 1957 but also took a decolonial stand in communications. Not only did he write *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism,* a guidebook on how to expunge colonialism, which caused a rift and cancellation of aid from the USA but he also among other things boldly appointed Shirley Graham DuBois as founding director of Ghana Television. She was supposed to champion television that shifts the narrative. There was a search for a decolonial perspective in Ghanaian communications at the start of its troubled democracy. Further, Nkrumah established the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) 'to provide training in journalism toward the development of a patriotic cadre of journalists to play an active role in the emancipation of the African continent'[1]. This dissertation focuses on this Ghanaian context with a view to examine the decolonial task on public relations as part of democratising political communications. My study of decolonial public relations in political communication is aimed at producing research that is relevant and speaks to the African ways of knowing and living rather than the reproduction of global north theories and concepts.

This chapter emphasises the need to examine political PR practice in Ghana in general but more importantly through the lens of decolonisation. The chapter explores the ways in which coloniality permeates the teaching and practice of public

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[1] https://gij.edu.gh/overview/

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relations and how this in turn impacts political PR practice and Ghana's democratic processes. Besides the urgency for this research, I have also argued briefly around my motivation for executing this project, as well as provided key arguments that shape the objectives and rational for this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Democratisation has met with many problems. Across the world there is a perceived 'erosion,' 'recession' or 'decline' of electoral democracy marked by a resurgence of authoritarianism. There is a problem that many are coming under the rule of dictatorships[2] (Campbell and Quinn 2021). The main challenges that fuel scepticism about Africa's democratisation include the weakness of political parties, manipulation of the electoral process, and a lack of trust in democratic institutions (Afrobarometer[3], 2019). Struggle for power between and within elections have involved strategic communications. Public relations has become a key player in Africa's democratisation. The image-making industry is arguably at the heart of contemporary democratic challenges. Cambridge Analytica's involvement in Kenya and Nigeria, and the Bell Pottinger case in South Africa have received wide publicity[4]. The situation in many other African countries remains understudied. There is therefore an urgent need to investigate the role of public relations in emerging democracies, including its impact on the process and procedures in specific contexts. This draws attention to debates on

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[2] https://www.cfr.org/article/whats-happening-democracy-africa.

[3] https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ab_r7_policypaperno57_perceived_corruption_drives_declining_trust_in_lesotho.pdf

[4] A detailed discussion of how the two former UK based PR agencies interfered in the political processes of African countries has been done in the next chapter.

decolonising public relations to engaging with how it is epistemologically defined and strategically mobilised in previously colonised contexts.

 The overarching purpose of this dissertation is to investigate why and how political parties have mobilised Public Relations (PR). The research examines the ontology and epistemology of PR strategies, tactics, and activities used in Ghana's political electioneering campaigns. It is an important investigation of the decolonial status of professional practice in democratisation. The case of Ghana is particularly fascinating given its return to multiparty democracy in 1992 and how Ghana is now hailed as the poster child of democracy in Africa. The question is how political communication is driven by African epistemes in the postcolonial framework. Research has been carried out on political marketing and political communication using the following Ghanaian case studies: (Mensah, Tayman and Tanko 2023; Akpojivi, 2023; Dankwa and Mensah, 2021; Mensah, 2019). However, little research exists in Political PR using the Ghanaian context. This research proposes to examine how presidential candidates of the two leading parties in Ghana, The New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have mobilised culturally situated PR strategies, tactics, and activities to influence electorates in a bid to occupy the highest seat of the land. The study proposes to study this in the context of two elections, namely in 2012 and 2016, respectively. More importantly, this research is aimed at decolonizing Public Relations in Africa by considering African epistemic resources, particularly proverbs in place of theories from the global North to explain what the political parties do in terms of Public Relations.

McNair (2017) acknowledges the indispensability of Political PR in political communication and adds that:

brave (and probably doomed to failure) is the organization which ventures into the contemporary political arena without a more or less sophisticated understanding of how the media work and the professional public relations machinery capable of putting that knowledge to good use (p. xiv).

Strömbäck & Kiousis (2020) define political PR as "the management process by which an organization or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals," (p11). This definition suggests the importance of PR to politicians and their political parties. The definition by Strömbäck & Kiousis (2020) also emphasizes the strategic and management role of political PR efforts and activities. That is, political PR should not be simply relegated to a technical or tactical function within political organizations or campaigns, but rather be used to help advance a political organization's principal mission and broad objectives.

According to Martinelli (2021), the practice of political PR is almost as old as politics and society itself. Martinelli (2021) and Strömbäck and Kiousis (2020) indicate that the use of contemporary political PR strategies and tactics have ancient antecedents. These include relationship management and cultivation (Ledingham, 2021), reputation management (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; Lilleker, 2020), stakeholder engagement (Kuranchie and Kwarteng-Asamoah, forthcoming; de Bussy, 2010), positioning and segmentation (Davidson & Binstock, 2012), opposition research (Johnson, 2007), rhetoric (Sikanku et al., 2023; Heath, 2009), and persuasion (Pfau & Wan, 2006). This age-old practice of political PR has however been under-researched in the field of strategic communication and has come to be associated with spin, manipulation, and behind-the-scenes lobbying (Lamme & Russell, 2009; Morris & Goldsworthy, 2008;

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Stauber & Rampton, 1995). The concepts are important when investigating the role of public relations in specific contexts, especially in emerging democracies in the global South.

Ghana's democracy is considered more advanced in Africa with some regarding the country to be a model of democracy in Africa (Kuyini, 2023). Osei (2013) adds that Ghana is one of the most democratic countries in Africa. Ninsin (2006) acknowledges that Ghana has always had a rich democratic history even before becoming a nation. He observes that:

> Political parties became important as instruments in Ghana's democratic practice as early as the 1950s when the country was in transition from colonial rule to an independent sovereign nation-state. As many as 8 political parties emerged between 1954 and 1957 to participate in the struggle for self-determination against British colonial rule. Between 1969 and 1972, when the country freed itself from the first military regime, between 5 and 12 political parties were formed to join hands in the agitation to restore democratic rule in the country. In 1979 when the country had to reclaim her government from the military and place it on a democratic basis there was an explosion of political parties: 11 political parties mushroomed; by 1981 the scramble to form political parties had simmered down reducing the number to 6 that existed at various levels of engagement in the political process until the last and longest military regime usurped power from December 1981 to December 1992 (p3).

Ghana has held eight successive democratic elections since 1992 and has chosen its national political leaders through the ballot box and this makes campaigning for votes, and marketing of candidates, parties, and policies indispensable. The literature observes that the party/voter relationship has moved beyond ideological leanings (Best, 2023; Baines et al., 2002; Needham, 2005; Reeves et al., 2006). The continuous decline of ideological identification among voters means that political parties should now look for

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diverse ways of forging relationships with voters (Mensah, 2011). This has led to several research studies being carried out on political marketing and communication using the Ghanaian case study. Although political public relations have been practiced for a long time, it is hard to find both theoretical and empirical research on public relations (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2020). Moloney (2006) believes that even UK academic literature in sociology, communications, media, and political studies does not pay enough attention to public relations as a subject worth critical attention in its own right. This study, therefore, aimed at examining political public relations in the Ghanaian context in order to engender research in the area. To research decolonising public relations in the lived experience of a global South context, the current study examined how presidential candidates of the two leading parties in Ghana, The New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have used culturally situated PR strategies, tactics, and activities to influence electorates in a bid to occupy the highest seat of the land. The study is limited to the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections in the fourth republic of Ghana. This is because these two elections produced presidents from both parties: NPP and NDC.

While attempts have been made to create conceptual frameworks based on African concepts such as *Ubuntu*[5] in PR practice, teaching and research (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023; Ngondo and Klyueva, 2023; Nhedzi and Azionya, 2022; Van Heerdeen, 2004), these attempts have stopped short of implementing these frameworks and have instead proposed that African concepts such as Ubuntu should not be "a substitute of existing theories and models of public relations" (Ngondo and Klyueva, ibid; p387) because "focusing solely on African concepts can lead to confusion and conflicts

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[5] The concept of *Ubuntu* is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

especially for multinational companies" (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, ibid; p12). These arguments imply that African theoretical concepts cannot work on their own unless subsumed under western theories. I however argue through this research that having studied and taught several global north theories in PR for over a decade, there are equivalent concepts in African knowledge systems. I further argue that African PR scholarship will need to come to an acceptance that there are African knowledge systems that work and can be applied to PR practice and used to explain the lived experiences of practioners. These concepts should be the first port of call for teaching and practice alongside theories from other other worldviews to promote conviviality and acknowledge the incompleteness of knowledge (Nyamnjoh, 2017). This research 'centres the margin' and applies African proverbs to political PR practice.

1.2 Problem Statement

The profession of political public relations has evolved with many dimensions. For example, during the late 1970s in Britain, the Conservative Party initiated a new era in which political public relations became a pivotal dimension of politics and one that was similarly adopted by the Labour Party and others during the 1980s. As studies of British politics have since documented (Scammel, 2023; Wring, 2023; Negrine, 1996; Jones 1997), all the main British political parties have continually increased their spending on promotional matters and allocated greater control to their professional communicators. A clear example can be seen in Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbel's Labour Party case. Significantly, the influence of political public relations has become increasingly apparent in party and personality brand management (most notably with `New Labour'), especially during British election campaigns.

In Ghana, however, while there are several academic research on political communication and how the media have impacted Ghana's democracy (Afful, 2016;

Mensah, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Dzisah, 2008; Ninsin, 2006; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001), little or no research exists on political public relations using the Ghanaian context. Again, while the subject of decolonising media and communication studies has received some attention generally (Mano and Milton, 2021; Chasi, 2021; Mohammed, 2022; Mohammed, 2021; Asante, 2019; Chakravarty et al., 2018; Langmia, 2018), not much has been done on the PR front. Public relations has a reputational challenge, and therefore decolonisation is imperative. A central concern of this study then is to address some of the deficiencies in academic writing in party-political public relations in Ghana. To put it another way, this study aimed to 'fill a gap' in academic and professional knowledge by critically examining this underdeveloped area of research.

1.3 Research Questions

The broad research question determines ontologies and epistemologies underpinning unconventional PR strategies and practices which the two leading political parties mobilise in their bid to attain political power. This is significant because it investigated both the conceptual and praxis behind PR employed by the political parties and how these PR methods are influenced by the cultural nuances of Ghana. Specifically, the research examined the following:

- What is the ontological and epistemic basis of decolonising public relations and democratisation in global South/non-western contexts?

- To what extent has PR been decolonised in Ghana and what has been its impact on African politics? How have political parties in Ghana deployed such decolonised PR since the country's return to democratic rule?

- What are the decolonial political PR strategies the political parties deploy to mobilise for political power?

- How and with what implications has decolonised public relations informed PR and political communication in Ghana?

- How has the political culture of Ghana informed a decolonised model of practicing PR?

1.3.1 RQ 1: What is the ontological and epistemic basis of decolonising public relations and democratisation in global South/non-western contexts?

Political public relations has been demonised as a result of its unfortunate link with spin and propaganda. While scholars, like McNair (2014), call it indispensable in political communication, others such as Michie argue that the impact of PR on democracy is negative and "deeply undemocratic" (1998, p17). Unlike in other jurisdictions, Windeck (2010) observes that in Sub-Saharan Africa's short-term political calculations are given priority over the long-term voter base. What this implies is that while politicians and political parties actively woo electorates just before elections and introduce typical campaign measures, communication, and engagement with and electorates cease after elections. Holtzhausen (2002, p29) acknowledges that public relations is a product of both democracy and capitalism and hence must be scrutinised to ensure that the social, cultural, and political contexts of the practice are emphasised.

Seeing the negative associations that come with the mentioning of PR and democracy in the Western context, this study therefore sought to find out how decolonising public relations and democratisation in global South/non-western contexts could benefit both PR as a practice and democracy.

1.3.2 RQ 2: To what extent has PR been decolonised in Ghana and what has been its impact on African politics? How have political parties in Ghana deployed such decolonised PR since the country's return to democratic rule?

The decolonisation of PR has been overlooked in many African contexts due to the perception that PR is foreign to the African way of life. Sommerfeldt (2013) suggests that the normative role of public relations in democracy is best perceived as creating the social capital that facilitates access to spheres of public discussion and maintaining relationships among those organisations that check state power. He further argues that,

> to fully appreciate the role of public relations in democracy, we must understand public relations as a rhetorical communication phenomenon practiced by any social actor—individual or organisational. (Sommerfeldt 2013, p287)

Public relations has a symbiotic relationship with democracy. Thompson (2018) avers that in emerging democracies such as Ghana, Public relations is influenced by the socio-political and economic realities of the country. There is no gainsaying that like most countries in Africa, Ghana though politically independent, still largely suffers under the burden of neocolonialism. In *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of imperialism*, Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah describes neocolonialism as 'worse than imperialism' (Nkrumah, 1965, np). Calls for decolonisation has intensified over the years and in fields such as media and communication that has a direct impact on the well-being of citizens, there is even more impetus to decolonise (Mano and Milton, 2021). The study therefore examines the extent to which PR is decolonised in Ghana and how this impacts on political PR practice to ensure that Ghana's democracy grows.

1.3.3 RQ 3: What are the decolonial political PR strategies the political parties deploy to mobilise for political power?

The research assumed that PR in postcolonial Ghana is decolonised. Political organisations' public relations activities are basically communication activities that consider the mutual benefits for different target groups in order to create a positive and honest perception. Public relations provide political actors with inexpensive and somewhat credible means of engaging and communicating with electorates, unlike advertising which is perceived as being 'biased' and partial since it reflects the ideals and values of the advertiser. This study therefore examined the exact strategies, tactics, and tools adopted by political parties in Ghana.

1.3.4 RQ 4: How and with what implications has decolonised public relations informed PR and political communication in Ghana?

Public relations is evolving with an urgent need to redefine it according to cultural contexts (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023; Ngondo and Klyueva; 2023; Holtzhausen, 2002; Curtin and Gaither, 2007). Strömbäck and Kiousis indicate that political public relations research cannot "disregard the cultural, social, political, institutional, or systemic context in which they are located – or existing power relationships" (2020, p4). The implication of this is that political PR practice must necessarily speak to the cultural context in which it is practiced.

This falls in line with the socio-cultural turn in public relations research that has emerged in the last few years. According to Edwards and Hodges, public relations is not only a practice that entails purposeful communication for the maintenance of

relationships but should also be seen as "a locus of transactions that produce emergent social and cultural meanings" (2011, p4). In other words, researching the socio-cultural dynamics of political public relations concerns looking at the production of narratives, discourses, and the symbolic work that is constituted in and constitutive of its practices.

With the relationship between political party ideology and voter decision-making coming under scrutiny in the literature, it is important to examine how political parties are pitching to electorates. In Ghana, Gyimah-Boadi (ibid) and Asante also point out that although the NPP and the NDC claim to be defined by ideologies, their source of strength is from ethnic affiliations rather than ideological persuasions (2006, p248). The dominance of the two political parties in the Ghanaian multiparty democratic governance leads to one crucial question: Which of the two political parties is utilising PR most in their attempts to win voters over outside ideological and ethnic considerations?

1.3.5 RQ5: How has the political culture of Ghana informed a decolonised model of practicing PR?

Public relations underpin communication by political parties. Amoakohene (2015) argues that if it is assumed that the political system in a country influences the media system in that country, then it presupposes that the various African political systems are accompanied by various kinds of media systems with various interpretations of freedom of speech and press freedom, affecting the kind of media relations that will exist. One can further argue that the culture of the political system will influence the kind of political PR that is practiced. For example, whereas giving gifts to journalists is seen in many cultures as unethical, it is actually expected when it comes to the Ghanaian "media culture" (Afful, 2016). What this implies is that media relations

practiced by political PR practitioners in Ghana will be different from what pertains to the UK or USA. The current study therefore interrogated how the political culture of Ghana affects the practice of PR in political parties.

1.4 Theoretical Overview

My study of decolonial political PR practice in Ghana can be located through a number of perspectives in decolonial studies and converges with the critical traditions. The study serves as points of critique for current practices of public relations and political communication.

Mahama (2012) asserts that with the development of Ghana's democracy, accompanied by media pluralism and vibrancy, the growing political awareness and interest in national affairs by the Ghanaian citizenry and the competitive nature of Ghanaian politics has certainly increased and with it, the attendant difficulties in trying to win over others for political capital. Mensah (2011, p99) examined the international perspectives that the Ghanaian political campaigns emulate. He observed that,

> Though political actors may not have the financial muscle to hire campaign experts from the US, the country may fall within the characterisation of the Americanisation theory as politicians are likely to refer to the US as a role model.

Efforts to apply PR theory in political contexts and to build theory in the field of political PR are new (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2011). In agreement with Strömbäck and Kiousis' (2011) assertion, the bulk of PR theory and research in Ghana still focuses on corporate settings (Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman, 2023). Meanwhile, most research on politics, political communication, political marketing, and election campaigning seems to pay scant attention, if any, to public relations theory and research. Furthermore,

previous research in political public relations have had a strong focus on the relationship between political actors and news media (Blumler, 2019; Van Aelst and Blumler, 2021; Baines, 2011; Froehlich and Rudiger, 2006; Xifra, 2010), which is too narrow a scope in terms of studying all approaches through which political actors seek "to influence and to establish, build and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics" (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2020, p11). Furthermore, PR from a decolonised angle could be more applicable to the lived experience of the global South since most of the research carried out on political PR emanates from the global North.

1.4.1 Political PR: Roots and precursors

Political public relations have come to be associated with spin, manipulation, and behind-the-scenes lobbying (McNair, 2017; Lamme and Russell, 2009; Morris and Goldsworthy, 2008; Stauber and Rampton, 1995). Many contemporary political public relations strategies and tactics have ancient roots.

In 64 BC, it was time for a new election for consul in Rome, which was then the highest office in the Republic. Standing against Antonius and Catiline was Marcus Tullius Cicero, who in contrast to the other candidates was from a small town outside of Rome and not part of the nobility. For many of the blue-blooded families who held most of the power in Rome, voting for such a candidate was unlikely. However, thanks to the fact that many even among the noble families and the powerful classes viewed his main contenders with scepticism, while he was considered a great orator, Marcus was a viable candidate despite being an outsider (Freeman and Cicero, 2012).

In this context, the brother of Marcus, Quintus Tullius Cicero, decided to write a pamphlet in the form of a letter to Marcus on how to wage a campaign and win an election. This pamphlet, in Latin, is called the *Commentariolum Petitionis*, and it is

probably the first publication on electioneering and political public relations. In this pamphlet, Quintus emphasised that running for office includes "securing the support of your friends and winning over the general public" (2012, p27). You should also know your enemies and those against you as well as, "impressing the voters at large" (2012, p61). Among the most important pieces of advice were "take stock of the many advantages you possess" (2012, p5), "cultivate relationships with important people" (2012, p9), "make sure your family and those closely connected with you are all behind you and want you to succeed" (2012, p29), "secure supporters from a wide variety of backgrounds" (2012, p29), "seek out men everywhere who will represent you as if they themselves were running for office" (2012, p47), "remember that there are three things that will guarantee votes in an election: favours, hope, and personal attachment. You must work to give these incentives to the right people" (2012, p33), and "the most important part of your campaign is to bring hope to people and a feeling of goodwill towards you" (2012, p79).

The contemporary history of political PR however dates back to the twentieth century where, according to Bernays (1923), capitalism brought to the fore

> An increased readiness of the public, due to the spread of literacy and democratic forms of government, to feel that it is entitled to its voice in the conduct of large aggregations, political, capitalist or labour. (cited in McNair 2017, p33)

The Democratic Party in the United States of America is credited to have established a permanent public relations office in 1928, with the Republicans following suit in 1932 (Bloom, 1973). Since then, public relations consultants have held "one or more seats on the central strategy board of virtually every presidential candidate" (Bloom, 1973, p14).

However, there is a faulty understanding that PR is a one-way communication. An example is seen in the early 1900s, when Ivy Lee, arguably one of the founders of public relations in the US, perceived and wrote of public relations as a "news management practice". Bernays, another great public relationist, wrote extensively that PR involves,

> Persuasion of the group and the herd, the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses, or the engineering of consent although this is a now infamous statement. (Bernays 1947, pp114-115)

However, many see Public Relations in general and political PR in particular as "spin" or propaganda.

1.4.2 Political PR spin doctors or propaganda?

For a profession or discipline concerned with reputation, Public Relations ironically has a reputation that needs repairing. PR has a bad reputation and is often seen as just *'spin.'* This stems from the definition of PR as the "management of communication" by organisations (Bernays, 1980; Cutlip, 2013; Moore, 2014). Per this definition, PR is usually engaged in a 'one-way' communication and conjures an image of "manipulation of opinion, promotion of the rich and powerful, puffery, slick presentation, hidden persuasion, the one-sided presentation of fact, figure and changing form" (Moloney, 2006, p1).

Pioneers in PR practice, including Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays encouraged the use of propaganda. Methods used in propaganda include censorship, suppression, bribery (or subventions). Do PR practitioners engage in these activities? Then those who view PR as propaganda will be justified.

Senne and Moore (2015) indicate that PR cannot disentangle itself from its historical relationship to the communication practices now described as Propaganda. PR and propaganda are sometimes still used interchangeably in Germany.

With such a horrible reputation, political PR has always been looked at negatively, but it has been harnessed by political actors over the years to win political power and is known to build relationships beyond elections for political actors (McNair, 2017).

1.4.3 PR in the context of Political Communication

In any society, political communication both expresses and sustains the institutions of governance, the political system, and the political culture reflected in the character of those institutions and the polity (Nimmo and Swanson, 1990). Political communication studies share many similarities with political public relations yet have to a considerable extent been occupied with researching individual campaigns of political parties, party leaders, public opinion, and the news media with an emphasis on one-way communication flows (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2011; Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2015, p383). Public relations offer a two-way communication angle aimed at creating mutually beneficial relationships. As Strömbäck and Kiousis define it, political PR "seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals" (2011, p8).

Again, political processes always produce winners and losers. Hence, stakeholders must be managed well.

1.5 Justification for the study: Why Decolonise PR?

Decolonising involves "the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p63). Decolonising does not only undo oppressive

systems but also ensures that the lived reality of victims of colonisation becomes better. Mano and Milton (2021) note that the cultural context and peculiar circumstances of Africans have not informed communication and media studies' scholarship much in Africa. Thus, combined with the harm caused by colonisers in ensuring that African languages, literature, and orature were seen as inferior by the colonised (wa Thiongo', 1986), this has resulted in the African communicating in a westernised format (Langmia, 2021).

This is critical due to the insidious harm that the Eurocentric view has done to the colonised world. I come to this research having practiced and taught public relations since 2013. My master's education in PR was taught from an Anglo-American perspective and I in turn have taught PR from a predominantly Global North perspective. Indeed, while I have strived to use Ghanaian case studies in my teaching, the comparison has always been with Global north theories and perspectives of PR theories and practices. This is what Posholi (2020, p291) refers to as "hermeneutical injustice". Miranda Fricker defines hermeneutical injustice in her book *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* as 'the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization' (Fricker 2007, p158). This kind of marginalisation subordinates and excludes some aspects of epistemic subjects that would value participants such as students. I look back and wonder how the hundreds of students I have taught over the years would have benefitted from knowing that PR is indigenous to Ghana and that local knowledge systems are applicable to PR theory rather than just Grunigian theories.

Like Gadotti (1996, cited in Hayes et. al 2021) notes, "all pedagogy refers to practice and intends to be put into practice" (p7). Decolonial praxis is even more crucial in

practical fields such as public relations and ensures that practitioners move from theory to practice seamlessly. This ensures that practitioners' lived experiences are not too far removed from the theory they are exposed to in the classroom. It also ensures that African PR practices are not examined in the context of the global north and examined through colonial lenses.

Efforts to decolonise communication theory has not only been pushed by African scholars but has become a global south concern. Yoshitaka Miike for example has raised the need for decolonisation in Asian communication theory. Miike (2019) notes that:

> Asiacentricity is the nonethnocentric and non-essentialist act of placing Asian ideas and ideals at the center of any inquiry into Asian peoples and phenomena. The Asiacentric metatheory insists on revivifying and revitalizing Asian cultural traditions as theoretical resources for Asian voices and visions. The Asiacentric agenda maintains that more theories should be constructed out of Asian cultural heritage and cumulative wisdom. Theory building in an Asiacentric sense is thus the self-conscious process of actively centering diverse and distinct traditions of Asia as essential intellectual resources and developing concepts, comparisons. (p6).

Another key motivation for PR and by extension strategic communication to be decolonised and same taught, is the proclivity for PR in its current form to be used by capitalists for 'communicative inversion' (Dutta, 2016, p251). Inversions 'shift material representations by dislocating them from their structural configuration and material bases' (ibid, p251). Chasi (2021) agrees with Dutta and adds that strategic communication and public relations by extension is violent. He makes this assertion due to how communication is used to dominate. He notes:

> Attainment of shared meaning, cooperation, organisation, and harmony involves symbolic processes that inevitably crush, distort, and harm what those who partake in them would

grasp. Communication entails *colonising* or otherwise manufacturing conceptual grounds on which *meanings and cultures are shared and formed* (Chasi, 2021, p55).

Dutta (2016) and Chasi (2021) emphasise the manner in which public relations is used by capitalists and imperialists to circulate dominant frameworks to the erasure of other multicultural paradigms due to the ownership of powerful platforms by corporations. This makes it imperative for PR teaching and practice to be decolonised to ensure that the failing capitalist system is completely destabilised. I argue that PR can be a force for good but the practice in Africa with its current overreliance on western models and theories conflicts with the African way of life.

My study of political public relations in Ghana aims to avoid the thoughtless reproduction of Western/global north theories and practises in African scholarship. Asante (2018) criticises this thoughtlessness and argues that failures of western theories often become the failures of Africans who participate in the failed theories. He, therefore, recommends that Africans examine their intellectual origins to understand that African knowledge systems are valid. Benecke (2019, p101) adds that "most normative Western PR models are irrelevant to African practice" and argues for PR which centres concepts such as "communalism, a developmental focus, a facilitation role of PR and technology with an Afrocentric touch to PR practice in Africa".

In *"Epistemic freedom in Africa: deprovincialisation and decolonisation,"* Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) also raises the need for Africa's knowledge to be globalised rather than the other way round which we have seen over the years. The current study to decolonise PR proposes to use proverbs rather than Global North theories to explain the practice of political PR in Ghana.

1.6 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the thesis. It highlights the motivation, including my personal motivation for the thesis, and its urgency, the justification for examining decolonial political public relations in Ghana, as well as the objectives and the corresponding questions that direct the research's focus, have been outlined. Chapter 2 addresses scholarly research on the concepts of public relations, political communication and their relevance in a contemporary democratic environment. The chapter also explores the concepts of Afrokology and decolonisation. Chapter 3 justifies why African proverbs can be considered as the theoretical lens through which political communication in Ghana should be examined. The chapter examines the process of the making of theories especially in the communication sciences and argues that proverbs can be categorised as theory. The chapter also proposes a conceptual framework through which political PR practitioners by taking into consideration the lived experiences of their audiences, can campaign in ways that resonate with their audiences. In Chapter 4, the methodology and the various methods that direct and shape the course of the research are discussed, while Chapter 5 focuses on the lived experiences of PR practitioners through the lenses of respondents and decolonial praxis. Chapter 6 delves into political communication activities in the two case study years, 2012 and 2016. Chapter 7 provides the findings and discussions on the media archives examined. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis and makes recommendations for further research, in addition to an outline of the original contributions that the study has made to knowledge.

1.7 Conclusion

In summary, several reasons emphasise the need to examine political PR practice in Ghana in general but more importantly through the lense of decolonisation. The chapter explores the ways in which coloniality permeates the teaching and practice of public relations and how this in turn impacts Ghana's democratic processes. Chapter 2 examines the literature on the capitalist history of public relations and how it excludes the African contributions to the practice.

Chapter 2

Public Relations, Political Communication and Decolonisation

2.0 Introduction

Democratisation in Africa has met many problems and current research from across the continent speaks to the erosion of trust in democratic institutions[6].

The challenges include weakness of political parties, manipulation of the electoral process, and international support for dictatorships on the continent. The role of public relations in Africa's democratisation is arguably adding to the existing problems. Of relevance is what Mano and Milton (2021) highlight as the significant role of communication in democratic processes in Africa informed by one's own vantage and lived experience. Hence, Cambridge Analytica's involvement in Kenya, Nigeria, and the Bell Pottinger case in South Africa raised issues about external manipulation of local political communication. Even though it received wide publicity, the question of how political communication is organised and implemented in many other African countries remains understudied.

This literature review addresses the scholarly research into concepts such as the history of public relations, public relations in the context of democracy, public relations as spin or propaganda, political communication, as well as Afrokology and decolonisation.

In the context of conceptual formulations and theoretical reasoning, African proverbs have been conceptualised as theories to underpin the practice of political public relations in Ghana. This is in alignment with the *Afrokology* heuristic tool, which aims at centring African knowledge and lived experience in media and communication

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[6] https://www.afrobarometer.org/search/trust

studies (Mano and Milton, 2021). Specifically, the literature is reviewed in the following thematic areas.

2.1 PR History

In *explaining the origins of public relations: logics of historical explanation*, Vos (2011) attributes the difficulty in defining public relations to the differences among historians in identifying the historical arrival of public relations as a social institution. On PR history, L'Etang (2008) posits that "historical explanations are not neutral and include ideological or moral components" (p322) and I daresay colonial components. Much of the literature on the history of PR has been from the global north with global south histories usually tied to colonial powers' need to communicate with their colonial subjects (see Thompson, 2018; Amoakohene, 2015; Mawerera, 2014; Kiambi, 2014; Ibraheem, 2014; Skinner and Benecke, 2014; Natifu, 2014, Mbeke, 2009 and Kanyeihamba, 1997).

Fitch and L'Etang observe that much of PR history is linked to industrialisation. They note that this link with industrialisation "downplays, in some cases, important influences from governmental PR or public information and propaganda possibly because this is an uncomfortable ideologically and ethically (2017, p122). Vos (2011) acknowledges that PR history scholarship examines the "dominant narratives" (p120). Their points make a lot of sense when examined in the light of how colonial powers used public information and propaganda in colonising Africa and how that has altered, not only the history of PR but also of other areas of African life. Much of the history of public relations practice in Africa is linked with colonialism (Sunday, 2012), and this erases earlier expressions of the practice in Africa. This assertion is shared by Nyamnjoh (2018), Mano and Milton (2010), Ngũgĩ (2009), Ansu-

Kyeremeh (2005) as they argue on the fact that African knowledge concepts and theories have been subjugated to Global North theories. They also propose a centring of African knowledge, especially in media and communication studies.

Fitch and L'Etang note that:

> Histories are profoundly important to theorisation about PR not only from a functional, empirical perspective but in terms of the role of history, history-making, and historiographies in the theorisation of PR in cultures and societies. (2017, p117)

Literature on public relations history has been dominated by the North American perspective since the 1950s (Cutlip, 1994; Cutlip, 1995; Hiebert, 1966; Olasky, 1987; Pimlott, 1951; Tedlow, 1979). Until recently, there has been little attention to non-US PR history. In fact, Krishna et al. (2020) note that one enduring criticism of public relations scholarship continues to be the ethnocentrism of North American-dominated history and models of public relations. PR practice and teaching have always been predicated on Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models of PR. This has led to scholars from other parts of the world undertaking research to ensure that the history of public relations in their contexts is also documented and acknowledged. PR histories are largely understood in these diverse histories as external communication, and there is little reference to internal communication, according to Fitch and L'Etang (2017).

Watson (2012) posits that in the last few years, there has been an increased interest in the history of public relations as a result of its growth in academic research around the world. He adds that practitioners and academics alike are asking more questions about why and how public relations and corporate communications are practiced in many different ways in different national and cultural backgrounds.

Myers (2014) established that at least in the United States (US), the term "public relations" was already being used in the press as early as the 18th century, and it was being used during the 1830s in the same context as today's meaning with the aim of

building reputation and relationships. This supports Lamme and Russell's (2010) argument that public relations did not emerge wholly in US corporations around the turn of the 20th century, as some scholars posit (Cutlip, 1995; Lancaster, 2005; Moore and Kalupa, 2007).

In *A (very brief) history of PR*, Watson (2014; cited in Garcia, 2023) indicates that in the US, historians point to public relations as having two (2) distinct beginnings: the publicity and press agentry of the circuses by PT Barnum that provided popular entertainment, and the railroads, oil companies and public utilities. Brown (2016) notes that the modern history of PR starting with PT Barnum's circuses has become very pervasive and has influenced several textbooks in the field. This researcher posits that this skewed history of PR erases other earlier forms of the practice in other places.

Wilcox and Cameron (2006) describe PR as a phenomenon of the twentieth century whose origins can be traced back to the earliest history. PR history itself is based on the *Evolving Functions,* which they identify as press agentry, publicity, and counselling. Grunig and Hunt (1984) take a theoretical approach to PR history by outlining public-relations-like activities used by practitioners over the years. According to Hoy et al. (2007), these activities are followed by four (4) models of PR: The *Publicity Model*, which includes the period from 1850 up to the turn of the century. During this period, the demands for truth are subordinated at any cost to the attraction of attention; The period of 1900–1920 saw the emergence of the *Public Information Model,* which puts true information from the public into focus as a reaction against the muckrakers; In the 1920s, the *Two-way Asymmetric Model* came up. New communication strategies based on empirical social research allowed for public feedback. This feedback, however, was mainly used to optimise processes of persuasion and manipulation by means of the "engineering of consent" (Bernays, 1947,

p113). In the 60s, the *Two-way Symmetric Model* emerged, and this model stresses mutual understanding and symmetric communication.

In Britain, L'Etang (2000) has documented that the growth of public relations was rooted in the activities of central and local government, particularly in the context of war-time propaganda efforts, the rise of the welfare state, and more recent policy trends, such as the privatisation of state assets.

Understanding the history of public relations provides a window through which to examine how public relations has been used in democracies over the years and provides a premise for understanding what public relations is.

Outside of the colonial traces of PR history, in Africa the history of Public Relations can be traced to ancient Egypt where art and architecture were used to appeal to the public and communicate the greatness and powers of the nobles, priests, and scribes. Other ancient and pre-colonial African cultures used tools, such as drumming and dancing to communicate (Sunday, 2012). Storytelling, village meetings, gongs, talking drums, and sporting activities are the other means by which communication was passed on in indigenous African communities. Adichie (2021[7]) in a speech at the Hamburg forum in Germany notes that "African art is storytelling", and symbols such as stools, wooden carvings (gods), Adinkra symbols, as well as several artefacts have more than a symbolic meaning and were used to tell indigenes happenings in the community. Sunday (2012) further adds that ancient African PR practice was among other things used to communicate religious and government information. Kiambi (2014, p68) notes for example that the Agikuyu, an indigenous community in Kenya used songs and dance to convey emotion or express messages of goodwill towards others.

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[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1Cxhq0gF6E

2.2 Definitional Paradigms

Many communication scholars agree that definitions are inherently rhetorical, and that the formations of definitions are social processes that shape reality.

Schiappa (1993) states that "definitions represent claims about how certain portions of the world are" (cited in Gordon, 1997, pp406-407).

He adds:

> Definitions function to induce denotative conformity, which is another way of saying that definitions are introduced or contested when a rhetor wants to alter an audience's linguistic behaviour in a particular fashion.

A successful new definition changes not only recognisable patterns of behaviour but also our understanding of the world. Definition is therefore crucial to the processes that society employs to understand the world.

Seitel notes that "although a generally accepted definition of public relations still eludes practitioners, substantial headway toward a clearer understanding of the field is being made" (1992, pp7-9). Public relations' definitions have most times concentrated on functions of the practice (L'Etang, 2004). Several popular or standard definitions of Public Relations will now be discussed at this point. The African Public Relations Association (APRA) at its conference in Botswana in 2018 put forward what has been called, the Gaborone Statement as its definition of public relations. The Gaborone statement reads: "Public Relations is a relationship management function that fosters understanding and unity, strengthens diversity, builds a strong brand, and encourages good governance[8]." APRA's concise definition highlights relationship management, diversity, and good governance which are critical, especially for the African continent.

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[8] https://iccopr.com/african-pr-industry-unites-around-new-ethical-vision/

The Institute of Public Relations Ghana (IPR Ghana) defines PR as:

> The distinctive and strategic management art and social science function, based on an understanding of human behaviour, that identifies issues of critical relevance, analyses trends, predicts their consequences, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships based on truth, full information, responsible performance, and the public interest. (IPR Ghana, 1992)

In order to gain management recognition and buy-in, Public Relations' definitions have over the years hammered on the importance of it being a "management function." In countries such as Ghana, public relations is still in its developmental stages, and therefore stressing PR as a management function is imperative. It is also worthy of notice that per the IPR Ghana definition of PR, relationships are mentioned. I must however quickly add that the reason organisational leaders need to be convinced about the place of PR in management can be avoided if the practice in Africa though of PR in a way that was close to the traditional governance role of the linguist or griot who held leadership roles in traditional courts due to the key communicative role they play (Ebine, 2019).

Grunig and Hunt define public relations simply as "the management of communication between an organisation and its publics" (1984, p6). The definition by Grunig and Hunt (1984) points out three (3) key words which recur in most definitions of public relations, and they are management, organisation, and publics. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition has been critiqued as being more asymmetric than symmetric. Mackey (2003) notes that by defining public relations this way, public relationists will be seen as operating in an 'asymmetrical' rather than a 'symmetrical model.' The 'asymmetrical model' represents public relations programmes aimed at advancing the course of the organisation that pays for public relations work. 'Asymmetrical' programmes are not aimed at advancing the interests of the publics involved with the sponsoring organisation to the same extent. This definition, I dare

say, can also be thought of as aligning more towards propaganda. Respondent PRPC-015[9] however questions the kind of symmetric communication that can occur between corporate organisations and their publics considering the power dynamics that are usually at play. He notes quite significantly that "symmetry is a myth". His contention stems from the belief that at every point in a negotiation process, one person or a corporation has the upper hand. His assertion also comes from the point that diversity and difference is what makes society vibrant, the myth of symmetry however posits that all interests can be served at every point in time and that is a myth; because usually some interests are sacrificed for harmony to reign but that does not take away the power relations in any negotiation process.

A second standard definition of modern public relations is by Cutlip et al. (2000). They define public relations as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Cutlip et al., 2000, p6). Again, this definition includes the concepts of management, organisations, and publics with the only difference being the choice of communication rather than relationship building. Cutlip et al. justified this definition by stating that the definition "unifies the broad range of activities and purposes in public relations practice and serves as a basis for determining what is *not* part of the public relations function" (2000, p4). Cutlip's focus on communication ensures that a key component of public relations, communication, is not lost in the definition.

The focus on relationship building implies that the definition by Cutlip et al. (2000) leans more towards symmetric communication. The recognition that the success or failure of the organisation depends on the public and ensures that the organisation will

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[9]PR-PC-015, Interviewed in June, 2023

behave more responsibly towards its public. This suggests that the organisation does not communicate with its publics with the view of pursuing the interests of the organisation, but it communicates with the interests of the public in mind also.

While these references to PR definitions may seem dated, the definitions discussed here are seminal and still influence much of PR scholarship and practice especially in Africa. Having looked at some definitions, the next section will dive into some conceptualisations of PR.

2.3 PR Conceptualisation

In his article, titled *A public world without public relations?* Nayden (2009) notes that the term "public relations" (PR) has long meant the practice of producing a positive public image with the aim of producing to the public a certain image they deem favourable. Thus, this practice leads to strategies with results that are not necessarily "the best choices for society as a whole" (Nayden, 2009, p24). In this case, PR is presented mainly as window dressing for organisations and individuals without examining how it is done as long as they look good. This conceptualisation of PR is often pejorative, and the practice has sought to dissociate itself from such descriptions of PR.

In their seminal work on public relations, Grunig and Hunt (1984) proposed the often cited four (4) models of public relations as: (1) press agentry; (2) public information; (3) two-way asymmetrical; (4) two-way symmetrical. While acknowledging that some PR-like activities occurred early in history, they indicate that the first "full-time specialists to practice public relations" began in the mid-19th century, heralding the moment in history when public relations became an actual professional field. Early public relations figures such as Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays among others are reported to

have primarily used mass media to reach publics with a one-way communication model to promote the organisations they represented. The public information model, which is the second model uncovered by Grunig and Hunt (1984), appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. Grunig and Grunig point out that this model "developed as a reaction to attacks on large corporations and government agencies by muckraking journalists" (1992, p288).

Perceiving that they needed more than propaganda to impact public opinion, public relations professionals began working to inform the public on issues by presenting information (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The third model, which is the two-way asymmetrical model, is attributed to the period that Edward Bernays practiced public relations. This third model uses a two-way communication to gather research and develop a systematic way of creating public consent for organisational purposes. The focus of this third model of communication is not on mutual understanding. It is rather on audience research to achieve objectives set by the organisation which was not necessarily beneficial to their publics. In this model, research was used to "engineer consent" from the publics of organisations. Thus, the research is aimed at understanding the public in order for the organisation to get them to see things from the organisation's perspective without changing the behaviour of the organisation. The effects are asymmetrical because the behavioural change that is needed benefits the organisation but not the public, although many practitioners believe that the manipulated public also benefit from the needed behavioural change (Puspa, 2013). Finally, a two-way symmetrical model, which is the fourth model of public relations, is recommended as the best when dealing with practices concerning public relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The reason this model is different from the asymmetrical approach is that,

It uses research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics. In the symmetrical model, understanding is the principal objective of public relations rather than persuasion (Grunig and Grunig, 1992, p289).

One of the most relevant critiques of the symmetrical model is Karlberg's contention that the model has focused "exclusively on corporate and state communicative practices... [and] continues to furnish instrumental insights (albeit more ethical and responsible ones) only to highly resource-endowed organisations" (1996, p271). One, therefore, wonders how this plays out in political public relations.

Kim and Brown (2015) argue that most public relations practitioners conceptualise public relations as engaging in asymmetrical information sharing and communication with both the press and the public. Anecdotal evidence from Ghana, for example, supports this assertion, where PR professionals engage in practices that ensure that their organisation is always seen in a positive light and therefore engage in asymmetrical information.

Cheney and Christensen argued that public relations ought to "become more intellectually expansive, more critically reflective, and more cognisant of the diverse forms of organisational activity in today's world" (2001, pp179-180).

In a similar vein, Cropp and Pincus noted that public relations fluctuate depending on "organisational, situational, and market conditions" (2001, p189). In this sense, the Grunigian model practised will depend on the context and situation presented to the organisation. Evidence abounds that the same applies in the Ghanaian political context where government ministries responsible for communication have been known to use one or the other of the Grunigian models depending on the issue at stake.

A key theory in public relations that has "been the main backdrop for many studies in sub-Saharan Africa" (Ngondo and Klyueva, 2023, p378) is the excellence theory. The excellence theory, an extension of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four (4) models of public relations, proposes seven (7) characteristics of an excellent public relations programme and five (5) attributes of organisations with excellent public relations (Grunig et al., 2002). The characteristics of excellent public relations programmes were evaluated on three (3) levels: the programme level, the department level, and the organisational level. As proposed, the excellence theory is a model for "auditing and evaluating public relations departments" (Grunig and Dozier, 2006, p20). The excellence theory proposes a better way of PR practice by suggesting that excellent organisations work towards dialogue with their publics. This enables relationship building, both within and outside the organisation. The challenge with the excellence theory is that while it is put forward like most Global north theories as a normative theory, there are contexts in which it clearly fails but it is still pushed forward as the desired way in which public relations must be practiced. As indicated by Ngondo and Klyueva (2023), a lot of research in Africa is predicated on the excellence theory (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023; Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman, 2023; Anani-Bossman, 2021; Kiambi & Nadler, 2012; Ngondo & Klyueva, 2020; Tindall & Holtzhausen, 2011; Thompson, 2018; van Heerden & Rensburg, 2005; Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2014).

Cancel et al. (1997) introduced the contingency theory of accommodation in public relations in their seminal article more than two decades ago, which posits that the practice of public relations in an organisation can be placed on a continuum from pure accommodation to pure advocacy (Cameron et al., 2008). They expressed 87 internal and external factors that influence the practice of public relations in an organisation. In a subsequent study, Cancel et al. (1999) found additional factors to add to the existing

contingent variables while finding some previous variables to be questionable. Grunig contended that the contingency theory is in essence, an elaboration of the symmetrical model because symmetry in public relations "is about balancing the interests of organisations and publics, and of balancing advocacy and accommodation" (2001, p16). Again, this brings to the fore the myth of symmetry as espoused by Respondent PRPC-015.

Even though Cameron et al. (2008) explained that the contingency theory provides an overarching framework for viewing the stance of organisations at a given time without having to classify public relations practice into separate models, the generalisability of the model inherently compromises the specificity of the model. In other words, although some of the factors may be more relevant to some organisations over others, not all variables will be relevant for all organisations, and the level of relevance will also differ depending on the organisation. For example, public relations department characteristics may not always be germane to political parties, and for the same reason excellence theory may be inappropriate for political parties.

The situational theory of publics is similar to the aforementioned contingency theory because both take into consideration the "it depends" factor. It aims to understand why and under what circumstances publics are most likely to communicate (Aldoory and Sha, 2007; Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The three (3) independent variables of the theory are problem recognition, constraint recognition and level of involvement. Several authors, however, have indicated the need to examine "antecedent factors that may help explain the development of involvement, constraint recognition, or problem recognition" (Aldoory and Sha, 2007, p351; Aldoory, 2001; Hallahan, 2001).

Two antecedent factors that are relevant to the current study include resource access (Aldoory and Sha, 2007) and source credibility (Hallahan, 2001). Aldoory and Sha

(2007) argued that the situational theory should be re-conceptualised in a way that takes into consideration the diverse nature of today's organisations. Per this theory, one wonders if in a "particular situation," PR may engage in unethical behaviour by political PR practitioners.

Cheney and Christensen (2001) contend that it is necessary for public relations scholars to be more cognisant of the diverse forms of organisations, such as political parties and organisational activities that could constitute public relations.

2.4 Public Relations in Africa

Public Relations in Africa is not a new concept, although it may not have been called that in ancient Egypt where it is credited to have started (Sunday, 2012). Pharaohs proclaimed their achievements through hieroglyphics on impressive monuments. Again, in cultures such as the Akan ethnic group of Ghana (known in colonial times as Gold Coast), no chief spoke without linguists who acted as spokespersons when the chief had visitors. The spokesmen were well-versed in all affairs concerning the customs and traditions of the area. The use of spokespersons by chiefs persists to this day in a number of traditional areas. L'Etang acknowledges that Public Relations entails "meaning management," which makes use of linguistic and cultural components (2004, p3). PR is therefore not a new concept in Africa but may have been practiced differently (Rensburg, 2002). Narty (1988) acknowledges that practices, such as marriage ceremonies and

> …other sophisticated forms of communication are epitomised in traditional music and dancing. Drums convey messages that may announce an important event in the day-to-day activities of the people in the village; it may be an accident or tidings of a joyful occasion (cited in Van Heerden, 2004, p25).

In fact, Grunig and Hunt (1984) note that communication as one key foundation of public relations' activities has a two-way relationship with culture, as it is influenced by culture and is influencing culture (Sriramesh et al., 1999, p274); a statement which supports the argument that culture definitely plays a significant role in public relations practices (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023) and must not be overlooked.

Okereke (2002) posits that contemporary PR in Africa started in the 1940s because of the colonial masters' appreciation of the importance of public information. He adds that the agitation or struggle for independence with the attendant emergence of political leaders and political parties necessitated the need for public information. Fitch and L'Etang (2017) argue that public relations developments in Africa need to be discussed in the light of the 'Scramble for Africa' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by a number of European powers, including Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom (UK), which had multiple implications for international and intercultural communications initiatives by political, governmental and economic institutions. Fitch and L'Etang further adds that:

> The diversity of conflicting interests in Africa … as Western powers sought spheres of global influence has been highly significant as a channel through which communication practices support political, economic and trade interests as well as communication technologies themselves… (2017, p127).

The impact of the British and/or Dutch colonial heritage is prominent in documented accounts of the history of PR in Africa, and it is constructed as significant in terms of the development of local PR industries in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Nigeria. Early PR was, therefore, understood in these countries as primarily government information and/or propaganda that emerged in association with colonial power in the early 20th century.

Akpabio (2009), however, disagrees with the argument that PR in Africa is only traceable to the colonial era and independent movements. He argues that PR practice in the continent predates these eras. Akpabio notes research done by Otubanjo et al. (2009), which shows that modern PR practice in Nigeria can be traced to 1859, one hundred years before it attained nationhood.

Ukono et al. (2018) lament that although Nigeria is the second biggest public relations market in Africa, the lack of earlier documentation has led to an unclear history, an identity crisis, and ultimately a poor public relations ideology. Ugwuegbu (2000) indicates that to build stronger institutions, there is the need for increased stakeholder engagement, which ensures that people in society actually have a stake. This can be done in African politics through more participation and providing electorates with information to influence their choices.

Africa is a high-ranking investment destination, second only to North America (Diop et al., 2015). Van Heerden (2004) notes that while the discourse on economic reform and democratisation has claimed that globalisation is conducive to democratisation, this is particularly a problem in Africa due to authoritarianism which has destroyed the social and political fabric of the continent. Ninsin (2000) therefore emphasises the necessity of establishing basic institutional elements of democracy in Africa. PR as the enactment of discourse (Taylor, 2011), enables the establishing of some of these institutional elements of democracy.

Public Relations provides the African continent an opportunity for the leaders to engage with the people in the society to create a system that ensures that all members of society participate in building institutions that strengthen African democracy and increase opportunities for the members of society. Benecke and Oksiutycz (2015) add that in a democratic context, public relations should aim at enabling an open, accessible, and

transparent dialogue between a diverse group of participants using relationship-building and the promotion of trustworthy and open communication, which involves a variety of media platforms. Ngondo (2019), in her article, titled *An Exploratory Study: Digital and Social Media Use by Zimbabwean Public Relations Practitioners* notes that social and digital media public relations have been embraced in several ways across the African continent. Digital and social media can be used by political parties to create an environment for relationship-building and dialogue across various groups in Africa. However, recent public relations scandals on the continent have called into question how this political communication tool is being utilised in Africa to further democracy. The Cambridge Analytica scandal[10] in Kenya and Nigeria and the Bell Pottinger scandal in South Africa[11] have raised eyebrows on the role of PR in Africa's democracy. The interesting angle to the aforementioned PR scandals is that both PR agencies were UK-based agencies. Researching on media reportage on the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Ekdale and Tully (2019, pp38-39) note that:

> most newspaper articles in Nigeria that focused on Cambridge Analytica (CA) discussed data privacy and social media campaigning. The Nigerian…press focused on Facebook and data. But very few stories wrestled with the role of foreign actors in national elections. Important questions about campaigning and election interference received less attention. This could mean that the door has been left open to ongoing foreign involvement in future elections, given that Cambridge Analytica used African elections as a testing ground for campaign tactics it later exported into more lucrative markets. It did this with little regard for the negative consequences on the emerging democracies.

While this provides a scary prospect for African democracies, it is important that PR practitioners in Africa take on the challenge of protecting African democracies to

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[10] https://www.gatescambridge.org/our-scholars/blog/how-cambridge-analytica-influenced-nigerias-elections/

[11] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/04/business/bell-pottinger-guptas-zuma-south-africa.html

prevent the reoccurrence of such scandals from multinational PR agencies that do not have the continent's well-being at heart. Like Ekdale and Tully (2019, 39) conclude:

> Revelations concerning CA's involvement in Nigeria and Kenya further remind us how often African elections serve as proxy battles between powerful global interests of which social media and technology firms are now major players. While CA received significant international attention, the company is just one example of foreign involvement in African elections that has broader implications for national sovereignty.

Anani-Bossman and Tandoh (2023) acknowledge the correlation between the political climate of a country and the development of disciplines such as public relations. They however lament the lack of PR theory form the African continent which is reflected in the under-appreciation of the practice and practitioners from the continent. Thus, they conclude that:

> Public relations practice is influenced by different styles and formats to suit a specific society. The African worldview makes it difficult to practice public relations using American and Euro-centric ideologies. Culture is essentially unique to every region and …culture greatly influences business practices in Africa, which in turn impacts the way public relations is practised. (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh 2023, p15)

They propose a framework for PR practice in Africa which embraces African concepts such as ubuntu and manifests values such as consensus building, social values, mutuality, inter-connectedness, social responsibility, and inclusiveness. The four elements of their framework propose that for PR practice to be effective in the African context, practitioners must ensure a humanistic approach that centres ideals such as social responsibility, empathy, shared values, and acceptance. The relational element of their framework appeals to principles such as mutuality, reciprocity, commitment, and interpersonal communication which Kent and Taylor (2002) include as part of the principles of dialogue. The strategic element of the framework by Anani-Bossman and Tandoh recommends that effective PR practice should have symmetrical

communication, must be empowered by strategic management and be part of management while being ethical. Finally, the communalism element advocates for PR practitioners to be consultative by engaging key publics, be inclusive as well as show solidarity to their host communities to allow for PR to align with societal needs.

Our point of departure from this brilliant framework from Anani-Bossman and Tandoh is not the call for hybridisation with western models of public relations but the argument that:

> Focusing solely on African concepts can lead to confusion and conflicts, especially where multinational organisations are involved. Also, evidence from the literature on public relations scholarship in Africa demonstrates a great, if not total, influence of western-based models (2023, p12)

Arguments such as theirs and Ngondo and Klyueva (2023) who also argue in contrast to a brilliant chapter titled *Inviting an Ubuntu-Based Approach to Public Relations Theory Building in Sub-Saharan Africa* that "Ubuntu is not a substitution of existing theories and models of public relations"(p387), relegates African strategic thought to "vanilla" and negates Chasi's argument that although the concept of ubuntu normalises harmony, it can be reconciled with the understanding that strategic communication occasions violence and warfare (2021, p58). He concludes thus:

> There is nothing alien to Africans about organisational practices, rules, and strategies to garner and harness resources, energies, or forces to produce productive orders. (2021, p63)

Chasi's argument aligns with the central argument for this thesis which is that the African thought, knowledge systems and context should not simply be considered an add on to Global north thought in public relations but should be accepted on its own merits.

2.5 Ethics and PR in Africa

Public relations ethics has been referred to as an oxymoron (Akçay, 2023) due to its focus on organisational interests rather than the public inter*est.* In *A Theoretic Perspective on the Evolution of Ethics for PR Theory,* Bowen (2023; p487) adds that cynics of PR ethics do so based on the perceived impossibility of ethical communication by professionals when communicating on behalf of their organisations and clients leading to "window dressing". In contrast, Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001) argue that PR's dichotomy with ethics stems from the vacuous nature of definitions of what the practice entails.

Debates on whether universal or culturally relative moral philosophies are better suited to a globalised environment (e.g. Kim and Ki, 2014; Toledano and Avidar, 2016) and the challenge of balancing both (Sriramesh and Stumberger, 2017) have raged on over the years. Grunig (1990) believes that PR ethics is normative and should extend across the world. Grunig (2000, p23) argued that ''the core value of public relations is the value of collaboration, which also can be found in the concepts of societal corporatism, collectivism, and communal relationships.'' Grunig believed that excellent public relations could transcend national boundaries because the principles of ethics, foundational to symmetrical public relations practice, were not culturally specific. Kruckeberg (1993, 1996) also argued that there is a universal ethics that shape public relations practices. Yet, others have argued that culture, social, political contexts, and levels of economic development all influence ethical values in a nation (Austin and Toth 2011; Lieber 2006; Yang 2012). For instance, in their 2010 study, Ki and Kim found that Korea's social and economic development had influenced how public relations is practiced. The situation is no different in many countries where political contexts (Amoakohene, 2015; Thompson, 2018), socio-cultural contexts (Anani-

Bossman and Tandoh, 2023; Wu and Baah-Boakye, 2014; Holtzhausen, 2005; Benecke, 2015) affect PR practice. Public relations ethics must therefore reflect the cultural context of practice rather than normative ideals.

Approaches to moral philosophy which guides normative PR ethics as indicated by Bowen (2023) proves that whereas western ideals of PR ethics are underlined by moral philosophy propounded by Aristotle and Kant with the three main approaches being virtue ethics (character), utilitarianism (consequentialism/outcomes) and deontology (principle/rights). African ethical philosophy on the other hand is often guided by a different set of ideals that centres the entire society and therefore tends to be communal and inclusive in its outlook (Wiredu, 2004). For instance, Bowen (2023, p492) notes that utilitarianism is a response to the 'highly individualistic approach of virtue ethics.' However, utilitarianism requires that one takes ethical decisions that produce the best consequences without defining what "best" is or in whose interests, although these theories have been used in PR with Grunig (2000) proposing that ethical decisions taken based on utilitarianism must serve the public interest. Deontology on the other hand proposes ethical decision making based on 'individual rights and moral autonomy' (Bowen, 2023, p494). Deontology assumes that moral principles are universal implying that all around the world, moral principles are governed by the Judaeo-Christian worldview which most western canons of morality are based on.

Public relations in Africa is unfortunately often guided by ethical standards that are 'universal' or in more specific terms which conform to global north ethical standards leading to 'practitioner's role as organisational moral conscience becoming hindered, suppressed and undermined by organisational leadership's directives to use opaque, complex communication, selective transparency, and misrepresentation of facts.' according to Nhedzi and Azionya (2022).

A 2023 joint research titled *Ethics and Reputation in African PR and Communications* conducted by Africa Public Relations Association (APRA) and Public Relations & Communications Association, Africa (PRCA, Africa), notes that 'PR's perceived ethical standing has gone backwards' (p11). The report revealed that when asked how ethical PR practice in their countries are on a scale of 0-10, 'the majority of respondents selected 5 (23%), followed by 7 (19%). The mean average score is 5.3 in 2023 and this presents a year-on-year decrease of 0.8 when compared to last year[12].' (p11). This speaks to a decline in ethical PR on the continent and I argue that practitioners may be expressing these kinds of sentiments as a result of the lack of congruence between their lived experiences and the ethical codes of conduct that is subscribed to by regional bodies such as APRA and PRCA whose ethical codes reflect that of the UK-based mother body, PRCA.

While not disputing the unethical nature of inducing journalists' reportage for their stories, 53% of Ghanaian public relations practitioners in a study by Chentiba and Mumuni (2021) indicated that they offer gifts (also known as *soli*) to journalists to get their stories published. Anecdotal evidence shows that this number could even be higher because as respondent PR-PC-0018, a female PR practitioner working in the banking industry in Accra told me off the record, while practitioners may not be allowed to give *soli* per their corporate guidelines, many practitioners who work with agencies find a way to incorporate *soli* into the agency charges.

Contrary to widely held beliefs, Yang (2012) aver that media bribery has a multiplicity of socioeconomic factors that include the countries' democracy, economics, education, technology availability and cultural contexts. This shows that brown envelope

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[12] https://resources.mynewsdesk.com/image/upload/f_pdf,fl_attachment/iwhhek4wtvoxsacc48vw

journalism is not only practiced in Africa but around the world. For example, Li (2013) examines the Chinese red envelope (*hongbao*) phenomenon and its impact on the practice of journalism. Onyebadi and Alajmi (2023, 2014) also examined brown envelope journalism in Kuwait and conclude that ethical journalism frowns on the practice. They place the responsibility of dealing with it on editors and supervisors in media houses, the journalist associations, and the journalists themselves.

Skjerdal (2023) attributes the ethical dilemmas journalists in non-western contexts face to how literature on journalist-source relationships are framed and the difference between professional norms and performance. He adds that brown envelope journalism is prevalent in financially weaker media systems where salaries are low. Skjerdal (ibid) continues further that placing the onus of behaving in an ethical manner on journalists places undue pressure on them however improved media accountability mechanisms and strong ethical guidelines must originate from professional bodies such as Public relations industry bodies.

2.6 Contemporary Public Relations in Ghana

Ghana is recognised as one of the countries in Africa that is advanced when it comes to PR practice and research (Rensburg, 2013; Sunday, 2012; Van Heerden, 2004).

According to Fitch and L'Etang (2017), the history of PR is often linked firmly with national developments and nation-building campaigns, and this is evident in the history of public relations in Ghana. Hansen (1968; cited in Thompson, 2018) provides that while PR in Ghana existed before the colonial era, contemporary PR has been in existence in Ghana since the colonial days. However, the Watson Commission Report of 1948 led to the establishment of an information bureau for the government in 1957,

popularly known as The Public Relations Department, now the Information Services Department (Amoakohene, 2015). Many of the practitioners were former journalists. Amoakohene (2015) notes that PR was not valued as a profession and practitioners came from varying backgrounds. Between 1966 and the return to democratic rule in 1992 (a period marked by civilian and military transitions in government), the growth of PR was stifled. The return to democracy and liberalisation of media resuscitated PR as a profession in Ghana (Thompson, 2015; Amoakohene, 2015). This agrees with Sriramesh and Vercic's (2009) assertion that PR thrives on public opinion, and hence, only highly democratised societies see growth in the profession. Anani-Bossman and Tandoh (2023) add that a more liberal democratic system enhances the ability to dialogue, and hence, promotes the growth and practice of public relations around the world.

Currently, more than 1,500 registered practitioners operate in all parts of the country. A well-established umbrella organisation, the Institute of Public Relations (IPR Ghana), serves as both a networking and refresher training platform for practitioners. The Institute was established in 1972 as the Public Relations Association of Ghana (PRAG). PRAG was re-organised, and a new Constitution, Code of Ethics, Code of Professional Standards, and Byelaws were adopted on December 6th, 1991, which transformed PRAG into the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR). IPR was consequently registered as a professional body under the Professional Bodies Registration Decree (NRCD 1973, 143, www.iprghana.com).

Public relations are context specific, and their practice is influenced by cultural experiences, value systems, socio-economic and technological development (IPRA Gold Paper No. 7, 1990; Turk, 2006). For example, in Taiwan, PR practitioners believe

that relationship-building is important. For them, effective public relations are as much about interpersonal communication as it is about media relations.

The context-specific nature of Public Relations holds true for PR practice in Ghana. Wu and Baah-Boakye identified the dominant PR model among practitioners in Ghana to be the cultural interpreter model where practitioners in Ghana "assist their international clients with understanding the culture of Ghana and help their international clients with establishing local connections" (2008, p83).

Studies by Sriramesh (1991) in India and Lyra (1991) in Greece are good examples of how cultures practice public relations differently and in accordance with social and political situations specific to their own countries (Sriramesh, 1992; Grunig et al., 1995). Studies conducted by Sriramesh (1992) in India, Kim and Hon (1998) in Korea, Wu et al. (2001) in Taiwan, Sriramesh and Takasaki in Japan, as cited in Watson and Sallot (2001), Wu (2002) in China, and Taylor and Kent (1999) in Malaysia, all stress the importance of culture in shaping the public relations function practiced in these countries.

Due to global influences, Thompson (2018) argues that public relations practice in Ghana is heavily influenced by western paradigms such as the systems theory and Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models of PR. Likewise, Anani-Bossman (2021) and Anani-Bossman and Mudzanani (2020) report that the symmetrical/asymmetrical and the personal influence models are dominant in PR practice in Ghana.

Research and anecdotal evidence exist in Ghana, which indicate that culture-specific PR practices such as paying journalists to cover stories (known as *Soli* in Ghana), PR practitioners using their personal influence to gain favours for their organisations, and female practitioners not speaking in some cultural contexts go to show that a country's culture impacts PR practice in that country (Afful, 2019; Wu and Baah-Boakye, 2008).

Contrary to widely held beliefs, Yang (2012) aver that media bribery has a multiplicity of socioeconomic factors that include the countries' democracy, economics, education, technology availability and cultural contexts. This shows that brown envelope journalism is not only practiced in Africa but around the world. For example, Li (2013) examines the Chinese red envelope (*hongbao*) phenomenon and its impact on the practice of journalism. Onyebadi and Alajmi (2023, 2014) also examined brown envelope journalism in Kuwait and conclude that ethical journalism frowns on the practice. They place the responsibility of dealing with it on editors and supervisors in media houses, the journalist associations, and the journalists themselves.

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This researcher also wonders how the political system has impacted the practice of PR in Ghana and explored this in this research.

2.7 Political PR: Roots and Precursors

Political public relations have come to be associated with spin, manipulation, and behind-the-scenes lobbying (McNair, 2017; Lamme and Russell, 2009; Morris and Goldsworthy, 2008; Stauber and Rampton, 1995). Many contemporary political public relations strategies and tactics have ancient roots.

In 64 BC, it was time for a new election for consul in Rome, which was then the highest office in the Republic. Standing against Antonius and Catiline was Marcus Tullius Cicero, who, in contrast to the other candidates, was from a small town outside of Rome and not part of the nobility. For many of the blue-blooded families who held most of the power in Rome, voting for such a candidate was unlikely. However, thanks to the fact that many even among the noble families and the powerful classes viewed his main contenders with scepticism, while he himself was considered a great orator, Marcus was a viable candidate despite being an outsider (Freeman and Cicero, 2012).

In this context, the brother of Marcus, Quintus Tullius Cicero, decided to write a pamphlet in the form of a letter to Marcus on how to wage a campaign and win an election. This pamphlet, in Latin is called, the *Commentariolum Petitionis*, it is probably the first publication on electioneering and political public relations. In this pamphlet, Quintus dwelled on Freeman and Cicero, and emphasised that running for office includes "securing the support of your friends and winning over the general public" (2012, p27). You should also know your enemies and those against you as well as "impressing the voters at large" (2012, p61). Among the most important pieces of advice were "take stock of the many advantages you possess" (2012, p5), "cultivate relationships" (2012, p9) with important people, make sure "your family and those closely connected with you", are "all behind you and want you to succeed" (2012, p29), "secure supporters from a wide variety of backgrounds" (2012, p29), "seek out men everywhere who will represent you as if they themselves were running for office" (2012, p47), remember that there "are three things that will guarantee votes in an election: favours, hope, and personal attachment. You must work to give these incentives to the right people" (2012, p33), and that the "most important part of your campaign is to bring hope to people and a feeling of goodwill toward you" (2012, p79).

The contemporary history of political PR, however, dates back to the twentieth century where, according to Bernays (1923), capitalism brought to the fore increased the readiness of the public as a result of the spread of literacy and democratic forms of government, so as to feel that it is entitled to its voice in the conduct of large aggregations, political, capitalist or labour (cited in McNair, 2017, p33).

The Democratic Party in the United States of America is credited to have established a permanent public relations office in 1928, with the Republicans following suit in 1932 (Bloom, 1973). Since then, public relations consultants have held "one or more seats on the central strategy board of virtually every presidential candidate" (Bloom, 1973, p14).

This is due to the faulty understanding that PR is one-way communication. For example, in the early 1900s, Ivy Lee, arguably one of the founders of public relations in the US, perceived and wrote of public relations as a "news management practice", whereas Bernays (another great public relationist) wrote extensively that, PR involves the persuasion of "the group and the herd, the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses, or the engineering of consent; now an informal statement" (Bernays, 1947, pp114-115). Many see Public Relations as a general term and political PR in particular as "spin" or propaganda.

2.8 The Politics of Spin

Spin, also known as propaganda, has been studied extensively in the following literature: Garnham (1992), Franklin (1994) Kurtz (1998), Jones (1995), Cappella and Jamieson (1997), Beresford (1998), van Onselen and Erring-ton (2005), Stockwell (2007), and Pearson and Mclean (2010). On the other hand, works by Harris

(1999), Harris et al. (1999) and Harris and Wring (2002) are perceived to be valuable in tracing out the adoption of spin by modern governments.

Grattan in exploring spin in Australian politics insists, "spin . . . [as] the highly professional selling of the political message that involves maximum management and manipulation of the media. That is to say that it is the heart of modern politics" (1998, p34). Grattan seems to treat 'spin' as a benign aspect of public relations:

> Spin is equally about defining and getting out the message – whether it is how good your team is or how bad the others are – and keeping the politicians, as the jargon goes, 'on message.' (Grattan 1998, p37)

Stockwell takes a benign approach when he states 'spin' simply involves:

> The backgrounding and interpretation supplied by media advisers to the press to put politicians' pronouncements in a favourable context and to ensure that the message that they (the politicians) are trying to get across, actually appears in the media. (2007, p2)

PR has a bad reputation and is often seen as just 'spin.' This stems from the definition of PR as the "management of communication" by organisations (Bernays, 1980; Cutlip, 2013; Moore, 2014). Per this definition, PR is usually engaged in a 'one-way' communication and conjures an image of "manipulation of opinion, promotion of the rich and powerful, puffery, slick presentation, hidden persuasion, the one-sided presentation of fact and figure and changing form" (Moloney, 2006, p1).

Bernays (1928) actually stated that "conscious manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society" (1928, p37). He further argued that propaganda "is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organised. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society."

Wolin (2008) agrees with Bernays (1928) and the school of thought that believes that people in a democracy must be protected from the truth. Wolin's thoughts are in tandem

with scholars such as Strauss (1995) and Lampert (2009). These scholars believe that the masses of a democracy are unable to handle the truth. As such, they need a political elite who, while pursuing the truth, promote 'the noble lies' necessary for any society to function. Mayer also provides an unsettling opinion on politics and spin when he indicates that:

> Political advertising is necessarily full of deception, half-truths, exaggerations, and falsities. It is that way because all forms of politics are that way, but political lies are not like lies about soap or cornflakes (1994, p119).

He also adds that:

> If you found a way to make all political advertising rational and accurate, or even if you improved its rationality and accuracy greatly, what would you have to do? You would have to eliminate politics as we know it.

Mayer (1994) therefore implies that politics thrives on the "full of deception, half-truths, exaggerations and falsities", and further implying that politics is less of an 'empirical' or 'hard' matter, and more of a 'soft' process involving the arousal of feelings or emotions.

Pioneers in PR practice including Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays encouraged the use of propaganda, and the methods used in propaganda are censorship, suppression, bribery (or subventions). Do PR practitioners engage in these activities? Then those who view PR as propaganda will be justified. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) models of Public Relations also mention the Press Agentry/Publicity model, which describes propagandistic public relations that seeks media attention in almost any way possible. Senne and Moore (2015) indicate that PR cannot disentangle itself from its historical relationship to the communication practices now described as Propaganda. PR and propaganda are sometimes still used interchangeably in Germany.

With such a horrible reputation, political PR has always been looked at negatively, but it has been harnessed by political actors over the years to win political power and is known to build relationships beyond elections for political actors (McNair, 2017).

2.9 Public Relations and Politics/Democracy

Strömbäck and Kiousis (2020) aver that efforts to apply Public Relations theory to politics in research is a recent phenomenon. Scholars have therefore argued that for public relations to contribute to democracy, it should cease to be regarded as a pure organisational function (Holtzhausen, 2000; Sommerfeldt, 2013). Coombs and Holladay argue that:

> The corporate-centric view of public relations as well as in the way in which public relations have been portrayed as subverting journalistic and democratic processes have contributed to the demonisation of political PR (2012, p347).

In fact, McNair (2004) posits that Public Relations is seen as part of an unwelcome corruption of democracy. The recent Cambridge Analytica and Bell Pottinger scandals in some African countries have not helped matters. Davis (2002) concludes that "the liberal description of the fourth estate media, based on an image of independent autonomous journalists seeking out news, has been severely undermined by the growth of the PR sector" (2002, p173).

Mitchie actually believes the impact of PR on politics is "deeply undemocratic" (1998, p17). McNair (1996), however, argued that public relations, "like electricity and the atomic bomb … cannot be [dis]invented" and that PR is "a necessary dimension of the modern political process" (1996, p53).

Political communication focuses on the interaction between the political actors, the media, and citizens, according to De Vreese (2006). In any society, political

communication both expresses and sustains the institutions of governance, the political system and the political culture reflected in the character of those institutions and the polity (Nimmo and Swanson, 1990). Political communication studies share many similarities with political public relations yet has to a large extent been occupied with researching individual campaigns of political parties, party leaders, public opinion, and the news media with an emphasis on one-way communication flows (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2011, p383). Public Relations offers a two-way communication angle aimed at creating mutually beneficial relationships. As Strömbäck and Kiousis define it, political PR "seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals" (2011, p8).

Again, political processes always produce winners and losers. Hence, it is important that stakeholders are managed well.

Public relations in democracy have consistently been addressed in literature by focusing on a single aspect of political media relations. This leads to a misconception of the place of PR in the political process. The purpose of PR in a democracy must be to build trust between the elected and electorates. Whitley et al. (2016) notes that there is a steady decline in perceptions of government honesty. Foa and Mounk (2017) add that there has been a notable generational decline in popular support for democracy in both the United States and Europe as a result of the lack of trust. Putnam (1993, 2000) indicates that trust is the basis for civil engagements and that without trust, civil engagements reduce. The lack of trust in political systems has led to "the hollowing of parties and shifting political loyalties" (Bennette and Pfetsch, 2018). The assertion by Putnam (1993) and Putnam (2000) may also account for the apathy that has been seen round the world when it comes to politics/democracy. The literature avers that cynicism

among the general public about the honesty and truthfulness of their political leaders can erode confidence in all governments, and erode support for the political system (Easton,1979; Heath, 2011; Pattie and Johnson, 2012; Whiteley et al., 2016). Public Relations is a meaning-making and relationship-building function (Weaver and Motion, 2002; Ledingham, 2006) and it is necessary for all organisations (Heath, 2006). Reputation-building is a useful tool for gaining trust, and by extension, legitimacy. Nayden (2009) asserts that parties have attempted to formulate the needs of the general public in a politically relevant way. In return, the public legitimates the parties' claims to political power. However, each party may also emphasise some particular interests that conflict with the general public's interests. The depth and effects of such conflicts depend upon how parties mediate the political participation of citizens.

Puspa (2013) credits internationalisation and democratisation all over the world as fields of study and practice in contributing to the growth of public relations.

Scholars who have advanced the understanding of organisational public relationship (OPR) examine key dimensions that are central to understanding relationships between organisations and publics such as trust, satisfaction, and commitment (Hong and Grunig, 1999; Broom et al., 1997).

Sommerfeldt (2013) suggests that the normative role of public relations in democracy is best perceived as creating the social capital that facilitates access to spheres of public discussion and in maintaining relationships among those organisations that check state power. He further argues that,

> To fully appreciate the role of public relations in democracy, we must understand public relations as a rhetorical communication phenomenon practiced by any social actor, be it an individual or organisation. (Sommerfeldt 2013, p, 287)

Writing in PR Week, Moore (2012) indicates that as of 1991, there were only eight (8) democracies on the continent of Africa. Apparently, the number had risen to 30 by 2012, and this trend is on the increase.

In a democracy, public relations have a public advocacy function (Edgett, 2001), and it is essential to open the doors to dialogic communication and participation. Hiebert (2005) argues that "democracy can only exist when competing interests can occupy the public sphere" (p1). Sommerfeldt (2013) adds that Public Relations provides the platform to facilitate these competing interests.

2.10 Political PR Activities

Public Relations tools and strategies are used by government agencies and private organisations but are also used by political parties to build support for policy initiatives, raise funds, recruit volunteers and new members, and of course, support their candidates. These objectives often require public relations practitioners working in politics to establish and maintain relationships with key constituencies (Stenberg, 2016; McKinnon et al., 2001).

The literature indicates that Political public relations research has oftentimes centred on media relations and pre-election activities (Baines, 2011; Froehlich and Rudiger, 2006; Xifra, 2010). This is a too narrow scope in terms of studying all approaches through which, per Strömbäck and Kiousis' (2020) political PR definition, political actors seek "to influence and to establish, build and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics".

This is because, like Xifra (2010) asserts, understanding the negotiated relationships between politicians and the public goes beyond examining the news and news management. McNair identifies the four (4) types of activities of political public

relations as media management; information management; image management and internal communications of the organisation (2017, pp129-130). He explained: media management as comprising:

> Activities designed to maintain a positive politician–media relationship, acknowledging the needs which each has of the other while exploiting the institutional characteristics of both sets of actors for maximum advantage.

Image management, he further argued was to ensure that the political image of political actors on one hand and that of the political party, on the other hand, was consciously presented to their constituencies. McNair (2017) indicated that internal communications was concerned with "transmitting information internally, coordinating activity and dealing with feedback" within the party and among campaign staff. Information management, he concludes, involves "open and covert methods of information manipulation by political actors in positions of power." While we disagree with McNair's categorisation of political PR activities, we acknowledge it as a basis to examine political PR activities in Ghana.

Jackson (2012) created a model for effective political public relations depending on the objectives and/or purpose of the political party. He outlines eight (8) public relations functions/activities within which election campaigns can be situated. First, relations with publics, which includes the identification of key stakeholders and maintenance of relationships through research-led communication. Second, symmetrical two-way communication, which includes the location of a win–win zone between an organisation and its stakeholders based on the Grunigian paradigm (Grunig, 2009). Third, hype, which means gaining attention through media relations or online public relations activities. Fourth, persuasion in essence, which means the crafting and dissemination of messages in order to inform or change attitudes and behaviour. Fifth, relational, which includes creating combinations of communication and behaviour that

are intended to build relationships with key influencers. Sixth, reputation management, which is understood in this context as protecting the image of the brand as both a long and short-term strategy. Seventh, relations in public, which includes taking part in and framing conversations about the brand and encouraging a free flow of information into the public sphere. Eighth, community building, that is, adopting a communitarian approach between the organisation and key publics through open dialogue and inclusivity.

Asamoah (2020) identifies political rallies, advertisements, press releases, and debates as the activities political parties undertake. This view reduces political campaigns to activities that only take place in the run-up to and during elections. The activities of political parties can however be categorised into pre-election, during elections, and post-elections.

Figure 2.1: Conceptualisation of Political PR Campaign Activities

The circle diagram contains the following elements:

Center circle: Political PR Campaign Activities

Top circle: Political season activities
- Political rallies
- Debates
- Media rounds
- political advertisement
- Crisis management
- Press conferences
- Image and reputation management
- Fund raising
- Social media engagements

Bottom-left circle: Pre-election activities
- candidate selection
- Congress
- candidate image/reputation management

Bottom-right circle: Post election activities
- thank you tours
- town hall meetings

2.11 Political Communication

Generally, political communication focuses on the interaction between political actors, the media, and citizens (Vreese, 2006). As democracies expand and become more ingrained across the world, the need for political actors to engage their citizenry has become imperative as well as more challenging. Indeed, Bennet and Pfetsch in their article *Rethinking Political Communication in a Time of Disrupted Public Spheres* conclude that:

> Despite the routine press/politics scenarios that still appear on the front pages of the legacy press, contemporary political communication increasingly takes place in contexts defined by diminished citizen attention, hybrid media systems, the rise of undemocratic movements and parties, and networked, often polarised, political information flows. (2018, p250)

With this, Bennet and Pfetsch (2018) attribute to digitisation, which is challenging the long held and idealised normative conceptions of democratic politics that is about media systems and press/politics interactions. Vrees (2006) adds that advances in technology, the convergence of modes of communication, as well as the proliferation of media outlets have contributed to the current state of affairs.

Blumler (2015) notes that political communication is consequential for the realisation or otherwise of effective citizenship in the creation of well-functioning democracies.

The effects of political communications of whatever kind are determined not by the content of the message alone, or even primarily, but by the historical context in which they appear, and especially the political environment prevailing at any given time.

2.12 The Public Sphere and Political Communication

McNair notes that "the importance of an informed, knowledgeable electorate dictates that democratic politics must be pursued in the public arena" (2017, p17).

This ensures that the knowledge and information which serves as the basis for electorates' political choices are circulated freely to all. Private political opinions of individuals translate into public opinion which may be reflected in voting patterns. Habermas (1996) describes the public sphere as being between the state and society, and also being fundamental to the maintenance of democracy. The public sphere was originally described by Habermas (1987) as discussions in public places among those with common interests and flourished in late 18th-century Europe. He credits the development of the public sphere to 18th-century Britain, where newspapers had begun their modern function of not only providing information but also opinion, comment, and criticism, facilitating debate among the emerging bourgeois and educated classes (McNair, 2017). Habermas (1978) argued that in the public sphere, interests such as status and wealth were temporarily subjugated in order to engage in reasoned debate with the goal of reaching a common ground in matters of commerce. Rosas and Serrano-Puche (2018), however present criticisms of the foundational public sphere concept. They, for example, note that certain groups or "counter-publics" are often excluded from engagement and that, in fact, there are many diverse public spheres.

The discourse in the public sphere does not result in binding decisions but sets the course for public opinion to be formed, which is critical for state level decision making (Fraser,1990). Castells (2008) adds that the public sphere preserves democracy and balances social stability and change. Public opinion is formed in what Habermas (1978) calls, the public sphere. The public sphere is therefore vital to the functioning of democracy.

Functioning public spheres in democratic societies are not spontaneous but emerge from civil society. Calhoun notes that "public spheres represent the potential for people

organised in civil society to alter their own conditions of existence by means of rational-critical discourse" (1993, p27).

Ernst describes the public sphere as that 'distinctive discursive space' within which "individuals are combined so as to be able to assume the role of a politically powerful force" (1987, p47). The public sphere, I argue is important in any democratic environment and while it may not be exactly what Habermas originally proposed in contexts such as Africa, they still exist.

2.13 The Concept of the Public Sphere and Africa

Habermas' concept of the public sphere has become a canon in political communication and is one of the most intensely critiqued texts with critics noting how Habermas' exclusion of women, working class people as well as his belief of a unitary public sphere (Willems, 2023; Suleiman, 2017). Of equal importance in the questioning of Habermas' conceptualisation of the public sphere despite the wholesale acceptance and usage by individuals, especially African Communication and media scholars, is his own limitations of the notion of the public sphere and the specific European context it catered to.

Habermas admitted that:

> The other peculiarity of our method results from the necessity of having to proceed at once sociologically and historically. We conceive bourgeois public sphere as a category that is typical of an epoch. It cannot be abstracted from the unique developmental history of that 'civil society' (. . .) originating in the European High Middle Ages; nor can it be transferred, ideal typically generalised to any number of historical situations that represent formally similar constellations (1989, pxvii).

As a normative liberal theory, Habermas' public sphere has become a dominant lens through which media, communication, politics, and democracy are viewed (Willems, 2023; Suleiman, 2017; Oso, 2013; Nyamnjoh, 2005). Suleiman (2017) interrogates why much of the literature in Africa on the public sphere tends to universalise its application when Habermas himself cautioned against it.

Drawing on calls for the decolonisation of communication and media studies (Mano and Milton, 2021; Mohammed, 2021; Asante, 2022) and the centring of the margins, Willems (2023) argues that Habermas' public sphere context clearly shows a history that has been whitewashed. She contends that based on the setting of the theory, the slave trade will have still been ongoing at the time, and hence his silence on it left the 'centre' intact in contrast to calls for the margins to be centred as decolonisation of knowledge that production calls for.

In calling for a critical examination of Habermas' public sphere, especially when applied to the African context, Suleiman draws on the works of Ekeh (1975) and Mamdani (1996), and posits that colonisation has created a bifurcated state for the African civil society due to the two distinct personas they had to take on in their civil and customary roles, a state which Kobina Sekyi's *The Blinkards*, a satirical play addresses (2017, p88). He further argues that because of the difficulty in reconciling the conflicting moral bases of their civil and customary roles, the public sphere of African civil society undermines democracy rather than advancing it, like Habermas' original idea proposes.

2.14 Democracy in Africa

Africa had three waves of democracy between the 1950s and the 1990s, the first of which witnessed several countries engaged in the struggle for national independence from their colonial masters. Gyampo (2017) notes that many of these post-independence countries leaned toward authoritarian regimes in the period between the 1960s and the 1990s. This period was conceptualised as clientelism, neo-patrimonialism, personalism, prebendalism, and rentier state (Lindberg, 2004, p4).

The 1990s, however, saw reforms on the democratic front in Africa. These reforms included multiparty elections in 44 out of the then 48 African countries over a 15-year period (Lindberg, 2004; Lindberg, 2006) and ushered in what scholars have called, the third wave of democracy (Huntington, 1991). The period swept away many dictatorial regimes and their one-party systems that had dominated several African states since independence in the 1960s. The third wave of democratisation was also occasioned by the failure of both military and civilian regimes over the years to deal with poverty, unemployment, oppression, and the lack of essential services, such as healthcare, housing, and education.

Osei (2013) opines that studying the democratic systems in Africa often poses a challenge to researchers. This is because:

> …they are often characterised by one-party dominance, exhibit little ideological competition, and do not reflect the classical cleavages (urban/rural, church/state, labour/capital, and centre/periphery) that have shaped Western European party systems. (ibid, p578)

Manning, therefore, concludes that democratic systems in Africa do not conform to those in industrial democracies (2005, p708). The question however is why African democracies must conform to so-called industrial democracies when the contexts are different. It is worthy of mention also that scholars, such as Erdmann (2004) have

become even more sceptical regarding the applicability of 'Western biased' concepts of party research to Africa.

2.15 Democracy in Ghana

Amoakohene (2012) notes that Ghanaians are obsessed with politics. This, she traces to historical antecedents in the setting up of newspapers in both pre-colonial and colonial eras. This obsession is evident in the number of political morning shows on radio every morning. Ninsin agrees with Ghanaians' age-old "obsession" with politics and notes that:

> As many as 8 political parties emerged between 1954 and 1957 to participate in the struggle for self-determination against British colonial rule. Between 1969 and 1972 when the country freed itself from the first military regime, between 5 and 12 political parties were formed to join hands in the agitation to restore democratic rule in the country. In 1979 when the country had to reclaim her government from the military and place it on a democratic basis there was an explosion of political parties: 11 political parties mushroomed; by 1981 the scramble to form political parties had simmered down reducing the number to 6 that existed at various levels of engagement in the political process until the last and longest military regime usurped power from December 1981 to December 1992. (2005, p3)

Ghana's political history has undergone a number of political transitions; from slavery to colonial rule, to multi-party democracy after independence, to military dictatorships, and has currently shifted back to multi-party democracy since 1992 (Austin, 1961; Monfils, 1977; Anebo, 1997; Handly and Mills, 2001; Mensah, 2011). The country has also seen a number of coups d'états which have seen the constitutions of 1958, 1969, and 1979 overthrown in military coups in 1966, 1972, and 1981, respectively. The military interventions weighed heavily on party configurations and the media system as well as other democratic institutions, such as the Electoral Commission (Mensah, 2009; Amoakohene, 2012).

The April 1992 referendum in Ghana ushered in a new dispensation in the socio-political life of Ghana. Ghanaians had the opportunity to vote in a referendum to go back to constitutional multiparty democratic governance after the 1981 military intervention. This ushered in the fourth republican constitution of Ghana. The referendum also allowed the setting up of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, which conducted the December 1992 multiparty democratic elections and subsequently the 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and finally the 2016 elections. Multiparty systems and free and fair elections are generally regarded as the trademark of democratic societies (Ninson, 2005).

Ghana's democracy is known to be the most mature in Africa, making Ghana the model of democracy in Africa (Carothers, 2002). Osei (2013) adds that Ghana is one of the most democratic countries in Africa. Ninsin (2006) acknowledges that Ghana has always had a rich democratic history even before becoming a nation. He observes that:

> Political parties became important as instruments in Ghana's democratic practice as early as the 1950s when the country was in transition from colonial rule to an independent sovereign nation-state. As many as 8 political parties emerged between 1954 and 1957 to participate in the struggle for self-determination against British colonial rule. Between 1969 and 1972 when the country freed itself from the first military regime, between 5 and 12 political parties were formed to join hands in the agitation to restore democratic rule in the country. In 1979 when the country had to reclaim her government from the military and place it on a democratic basis there was an explosion of political parties: 11 political parties mushroomed; by 1981 the scramble to form political parties had simmered down reducing the number to 6 that existed at various levels of engagement in the political process until the last and longest military regime usurped power from December 1981 to December 1992. (Ninsin 2006, p3)

Ghana has held seven successive democratic elections since 1992 and has chosen its national political leaders through the ballot box, making campaigning for votes, and marketing of candidates, parties, and policies indispensable. The literature observes that

the party/voter relationship has moved beyond ideological leanings (Baines et al., 2002; Needham, 2005; Reeves et al., 2006). The continuous decline of ideological identification among voters means that political parties should now look for diverse ways of forging relationships with voters (Mensah, 2011). This has led to several research studies being carried out on political marketing and communication using the Ghanaian case study. Although political public relations have been practiced for a long time, both theoretical and empirical research is hard to find in public relations research (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2011). Moloney (2006) believes that even UK academic literature in sociology, communications, media, and political studies does not pay enough attention to public relations as a subject worth critical attention in its own right.

2.16 Political Parties in Ghana

Many scholarly works on elections and voting behaviour in Ghana have shown that the Ghanaian electorate vote for political parties rather than individual candidates (Ayee, 1997; Ayee, 2002; Smith, 2002; Boafo-Arthur (ed.) 2006; Fobih, 2008; Daddieh, 2009; Jockers et al., 2010; Osei, 2013; Brierley and Ofosu, 2014).

Mensah (2009) notes that since the fight for independence till now, the relevance of political parties in Ghana's democratic process cannot be over emphasised. He further adds that political parties are the main platform for political participation, especially for elected office. The evidence for this is in the number of candidates elected as President and Members of Parliament (MP) on party tickets, as against those elected as independent candidates. Whereas both presidential and parliamentary offices have seen a number of attempts by independent candidates to defeat party candidates, it is the latter that has been successful with just four (4) and one (1) independent candidate elected to parliament in the 2000 and 2004 elections, respectively.

Ghana's 1992 constitution currently combines both the American presidential system of government and some elements of the British Westminster parliamentary system. This makes it possible for the President, selected through party primaries if running on a party ticket, to be elected directly by popular vote in the same way as Members of Parliament.

In her 2013 article, titled *Party System Institutionalisation in Ghana and Senegal,* Anja Osei found that Ghana's fourth republic party system is marked by stability and a comparatively small number of parties with power alternating between the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) since the 1992 constitution came into force. In recounting the reason for this trend of events, Osei (2013) traces the history of political parties and notes that an early split in the nationalist movement on the eve of independence paved the way for this pattern of competition. The first political party, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), was politically moderate and dominated by the wealthy and educated Akan elite in southern Ghana. In 1947, Nkrumah left the UGCC to establish the radical and left-wing Convention People's Party (CPP), which led Ghana to independence in 1957. Nkrumah was overthrown a few years later, in a military coup, and between 1964 and 1992 Ghana experienced a rapid alternation of various military and civilian governments. After a period of military rule under Jerry John Rawlings, founding elections were held in 1992 as earlier indicated. Although party development was interrupted now and then over the years, each new republic saw the resurgence of two political traditions: the Busia-Danquah tradition (as the successor to the UGCC) and the Nkrumahists (following the spirit of the CPP). Each party of the Busia-Danquah tradition claimed to stand for the rule of law, liberal democracy, a free-market economy, and individual freedom. The Nkrumahists, in contrast, presented themselves as defending the interests of the average

person (Jonah, 1998, p90; Nugent, 2007, p260). As soon as the ban on political parties was lifted in 1992, the old distinctions resurfaced, with the NPP representing a revival of the Busia-Danquah tradition, in opposition to a number of splintered Nkrumahist parties. This time, however, the competition was altered by the presence of the NDC, a party formed to secure Rawlings' re-election. In the beginning, the NDC placed itself in the middle, between the two older traditions, but it soon began to take over the space on the left that had once belonged to the now seriously weakened Nkrumahists. In fact, the NDC and the Nkrumahists share a certain anti-elite stance and a focus on the poor, vulnerable, and socially disadvantaged as their targeted support base. In addition, the NDC has absorbed some Nkrumahist networks and has attempted to exploit the memory of Nkrumah in several ways (Amponsah, 2006, p290; Nugent, 2007, p261). Mensah (2009) adds that the early traditions of political parties in the 1950s aligned with the left/right ideological continuum as socialist and capitalist. They were also inadvertently aligned along the characterisation of their forbearers, Nkrumah and Danquah, the pacesetters in party politics in Ghana. Thus, Nkrumah and his "radical" Convention Peoples Party (CPP), the first to govern independent Ghana, is of the left whilst Danquah and the UGCC party, the first active political party to be set up, which later metamorphosed into the Progress Party (PP), United Party (UP), and now NPP, is of the right in ideological terms (Anebo, 1997). The NDC, which emerged as a third force after the 1992 referendum, took over the CPP's position to a large extent as a social democratic party, and became the new reference point for radical politics (Carbone, 2003, p10). Having won two consecutive elections, one in 1992 and the other in 1996, the NDC became the main opposition party pushing the CPP to a distant third. Unfortunately for Ghana, these ideological leanings have gradually translated into other subliminal identifications such as tribes, religion, and other sectional divisions as the

nation departed further from the early years of independence. Although political parties and their interests are proscribed by the constitution to be formed along these lines, the political parties have significantly reduced the potency of the ideological cleavages to mobilise voters (Nugent, 2001; Ninsin, 2006). This confirms Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) assertion that political parties in Africa "exhibit little ideological competition, and do not reflect the classical cleavages (urban/rural, church/state, labour/capital, and centre/periphery) that have shaped Western European party systems" (cited in Osei, 2013, p578).

2.17 Decolonisation, Public Relations and Political Communication

This section examines the argument for decolonization and dewesternisation, as well as the connection to political communication and public relations in an African context. It explores the literature on decolonisation and attempts to examine how attempts to decolonise are conceptualised in the literature. It traces the link between modernity and coloniality and transitions into decolonisation.

2.17.1 Modernity and Coloniality

Modernity is often defined in glowing terms and with associations to concepts such as industrialisation, democracy, scientific reasoning, humanism, etc (Shome and Hegde, 2002a). This disguises the ills of modernity and the harm it caused several nations around the world. In *Decoloniality as the future of Africa*, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) notes the disruption and demonising of other cultures especially from what has been referred to as the global south.

Modernity provides what Mignolo (2000) refers to as a shine and possibility that many people even in the global south get enamoured with leading to the production of coloniality which become entangled with local histories. In his book *The Darker Side of Modernity*, Mignolo adds that:

> …the rhetoric of modernity is a rhetoric of salvation (by convenience yesterday, by development today), but in order to implement what the rhetoric preaches, it is necessary to marginalise or destroy whatever gets in the way of modernity. (2011, pp xxiv-xxv)

This effort to "destroy whatever gets in the way of modernity" has seen countries in the global south being forced to take on Euro-North American-centric culture and European languages according to Mazrui (1980). Indeed Wa Thiongo' (1986) enumerates the carefully orchestrated efforts by colonialists to dismember the culture, language, and knowledge systems of entire continents in order to replace them with Anglo-Euro cultures and languages.

Modernity heralded colonialism which saw the scramble for Africa and other long term impacts such as the unwilling incorporation of Africa into the capitalist world economic capitalist systems by using African labour to the economic growth of Euro-North American economies, the incorporation of Africa with global with north moral order which is mostly dominated by Christian thought, Africa incorporated into the modern technological age and as already mentioned the incorporation of Africa into Euro-North American-centric culture and European languages among others (Mazrui, 1980; cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

There are however scholars who disregard the impact of colonialism on Africa and argue that colonialism was simply an episode in Africa's history (see Taiwo, 2010; Ajayi, 1969). Taiwo (2010) for example underscores African agency in the making of history by arguing that if colonialism had such a deep effect on colonised nations why

had other nations picked themselves up from where the colonialists left them when African have not been able to do same.

Mignolo however questions the idea of a 'single and primary modernity surrounded by peripheral and alternative ones' (2011, p5). Taiwo (2010) agrees with Mignolo and argues that Africa for example had its own form of modernity predating colonialism. He adds that the colonial 'missionaries midwifed the introduction of modernity to Africa' (2010, p8).

Nonetheless, the entwining of modernity and coloniality is something that cannot be denied. Modernity works together with coloniality. Indeed Mignolo (2007, p466) emphasises how deeply intertwined modernity and coloniality are by stating that: 'modernity not only needed coloniality but that coloniality was and continues to be *constitutive* of modernity. There is no modernity without coloniality.'

Quiajono (2000) defines coloniality as the violence caused by modernity. Coloniality is a system that perpetuates the organisation and dissemination of epistemic, material, and aesthetic resources that reproduce modernity's imperial project (Andreotti et al., 2015). On the other hand, Maldonado-Torres (2007, p243) explains coloniality as the 'long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations.' In other words, coloniality extends colonial-like power structures even after colonialism has ended. Grosfoguel (2007; p219) puts it succinctly when he argued that:

> One of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a 'postcolonial' world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. We continue to live under the same colonial power matrix.' With juridical-political

decolonization we moved from a period of global colonialism' to the current period of 'global coloniality.'

The reality of Africa and other countries in the global south in the postcolonial world is one of 'structural, systemic, cultural, discursive, and epistemological pattern of domination and exploitation' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p3). This has created a 'postcolonial neocolonized world' (Spivak, 1990; cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). It is therefore not surprising to see an African child living in Africa who cannot speak a single African language or a lawyer or judge in Ghana who wears a blond wig in the sweltering heat. While some people may argue that an African child unable to speak an African language in the 21st century globalised world should not be a cause of worry or even be blamed on colonisation, I argue that when a people have been told for centuries that their culture, language and ways of knowing are barbaric, then it will take a deliberate re-centring of African indigenous ways of life in the postcolonial world to correct the harm that modernity and colonialism has inflicted on the global south.

Africans will have to use every arsenal in their possession including its media which Mano and milton argue can 'shape and direct geopolitical contestations informing politics, culture and knowledge' (2021, p1) to decolonise.

2.17.2 Decolonisation

Decolonisation has been used variously to describe the end of colonial rule in previously colonised countries (Sondarjee and Andrews, 2023) but more recently to describe attempts to shed colonial ways of thinking and systems that perpetuate the Anglo-American/Eurocentric hegemony (wa 'Thiongo, 1986). The decolonial turn now describes the call for liberation from 'intersubjective power structures based on racial hierarchies in modernity, racial capitalism and epistemic violence' (Sondarjee and

Andrews, 2023, p2). Ndlovu-Gatsheni on the other hand argues that decoloniality is aimed at liberating formerly colonized people from global coloniality but it is also a way of 'thinking, knowing and doing' (2015, p485).

For centuries, global thought and knowledge systems have been upheld the Euro-American knowledge systems as the gold standard, disregarding other knowledge systems especially from the global south. This has led scholars in these societies being heavily dependent on western thought and knowledge systems.

Critiquing the fundamentalistic nature of western thought and knowledge systems, Grosfoguel (2007, p213) notes that in addition to perpetuating 'class, gender, sexual, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies', he argues that:

> Western philosophy and sciences are able to produce a myth about a Truthful universal knowledge that covers up, that is, conceals who is speaking as well as the geo-political and body-political epistemic location in the structures of colonial power/knowledge from which the subject speaks.

I argue in agreement with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) that such a flawed knowledge production system will therefore exclude other legitimate ways of knowing by discrediting its knowledge production systems through the construction of 'superior and inferior knowledge' and subsequently, 'superior and inferior people' (Grosfoguel, 2007, p214).

Decolonisation is conceptualised in this study as 'epistemic freedom' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). In *The Dynamics of Epistemological Decolonisation in the 21stcentury: Towards Epistemic Freedom*, he contends that:

> epistemic freedom is about democratising 'knowledge' from its current rendition in the singular into its plural known as 'knowledges.' It is also ranged against overrepresentation of Eurocentric thought in knowledge, social theory, and education. Epistemic freedom is foundational in the broader decolonisation struggle because it enables the emergence of critical decolonial consciousness. (p18).

Epistemic freedom is necessary not only to acknowledge other forms of knowing but also because western and Eurocentric knowledge systems have failed to adequately meet the needs of the world (Andreotti et al, 2015). Santos (2014) in arguing about the inadequacy of global north knowledge systems avers that they are showing signs of exhaustion which manifest as "irrelevance, inadequacy, impotence, stagnation" (p19). Decolonisation in and of itself is not enough, global south scholars will need to provide an alternative to the Eurocentric paradigm. Like Chilisa et al (2017) argue that:

> decolonisation is followed by indigenisation, where researchers invoke indigenous knowledge embodied in languages, proverbs, folktales, stories, songs, music, taboos, artifacts, cultural and lived experiences to envision new topics, themes, indigenous-centred conceptual frameworks, methods, processes, and categories of analysis not easily obtainable from conventional methods.

This study contributes to the indigenisation agenda by applying indigenous knowledge to public relations research and practice.

2.18 African Philosophy, Afrocentricity and Afrokology

According to Gbolonyo (2009), any research that centres indigenous knowledge and cultural values has philosophy at its core. Brown (2004) defines traditional African philosophical thought as perspectives of the people of sub-Saharan Africa before the infusion of Judeo-Christian and Islamic thought (157). Gyekye, on the other hand, defines philosophy as "essentially a rational, critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas underlying human thought, experience, and conduct" (1995, p4). He further adds that this enquiry "includes epistemological concepts and categories."

African knowledge systems and philosophical thought have been put on the back burner and marginalised in a lot of academic discussions (Mohammed, 2019; Langmia, 2018; Smith, 2012; wa Thiong'o, 1986). Colonialism ensured that African philosophical

thought and knowledge were deliberately undervalued and destroyed (wa Thiong'o, 1986). Gyekye (1995) attributes the marginalisation and scepticism regarding African philosophical thought to the general belief that African philosophy historically was unwritten and the notion that African thought is not regarded as philosophy in the same way as say Chinese philosophy. I however agree with pro-African philosophers who believe that African philosophical thought existed in pre-literate Africa (Gbolonyo, 2009; Gyekye, 1988; Gyekye, 1995; Gyekye, 1997; Mbiti, 1969; Mbiti, 1970; Mbiti; 1975; Oruka; 1975, Oruka, 1978; Oruka, 1990; Wiredu, 1980; Wiredu, 1990; Wiredu, 1996). As I have argued elsewhere in this work, the written form is not the only form of communication there is and the view that Africans had no written forms of communication pre-colonisation is erroneous. Indeed, pro-African philosophers believe that African philosophy is embedded in the songs, proverbs, arts, symbols, socio-political institutions among others (Gbolonyo, 2009). Busia (1962, p11), for example, notes that "Akan drum language is full of riddles that conceal reflective thought and philosophy" (cited in Gbolonyo, 2009).

Critics of African philosophical thought notes that, unlike other philosophical schools of thought, like Chinese and French philosophies, African philosophical thought is collective and therefore not attributed to any one person.

Asante explains Afrocentricity as "African agency and the centrality of African interests, ideas, and perspectives in social, historical, behavioural, and economic narratives (2020, p48).

Asante adds that the concept of Afrocentricity offers a lens through which the "decentredness" among dispersed Africans with the recognition that Africans in the diaspora have been decultured by colonisers (2013, p31). Afrocentricity also helps Africans to explain phenomena from their perspectives, according to Asante

and Mazama (2004), and to interpret concepts with the African at the centre and to liberate them from the "tentacles of Eurocentric epistemes" (Asante, 2020, p49). Mazama (2003) notes that the Afrocentric paradigm helps the African to examine phenomena from the African's standpoint. This is critical in all areas of the African's life but especially critical in communication and media studies because like wa Thiong'o (1986) notes in *Decolonising the Mind*, "communication is the basis and process of evolving culture" (1986, p14). Mano and Milton (2021) acknowledge that Afrokology has its roots in Afrocentrism.

As a heuristic tool, Afrokology presents a transdisciplinary, "epistemological conviviality and inter-connectedness" (Nyamnjoh, 2018, p269), that helps to rethink and reposition African communication and media studies in a way that engages the perspective of the African and centres their experiences (Mano and Milton, 2021). It draws on past experiences of the African, as well as the outlook of the continent. For Mano and Milton,

> Afrokology is a mode of intellectual inquiry which, much like the concepts "cultural studies" and "post-colonial studies" constitute an analytical framework that allows for multiple entry points, nuanced explanatory concepts as well as transdisciplinary vantage points to inform the object of study, which is African media and communication studies in this case. (2021, p12)

Afrokology argues that the marginalisation of African knowledge systems replicates the economic, social, and political side-lining of the African continent. Wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that this marginalisation of the African and their way of life was subtly and deliberately done and maintained by undervaluing the African's culture, language and very essence, the colonisers set up and the colonised's way of life to be thought of as inferior. Indeed, Asante (2020) discusses the domination of Pan European epistemologies in the Academy to the neglect of other epistemologies mostly of the global South.

As a mode of intellectual enquiry, Afrokology serves as an analytical framework that "allows for multiple entry points, nuanced explanatory concepts as well as transdisciplinary vantage points to inform the object of study, in this case, African media and communication studies" (Mano and Milton, 2021, p12). Afrokology thus provides a framework for which a nuanced exploration of political public relations in an African democracy can be examined. The field of communication and media studies itself has issues of being regarded as legitimate fields of study and must therefore allow for engagement in ways that are not just superficial and Afrokology allows for this.

The call for de-westernising communication and media studies has gained momentum over the years and especially in the African context, Afrokology makes very useful suggestions for this to proceed. Mano and Milton (2021, p23) propose "Afrokology as a heuristic tool that can help to resolve the theoretical impasse and bring nuance to our perspective on the emerging field of African media and communication." Afrokology uncovers African heritage including proverbs as epistemological frameworks about what it means to be African and human and how communication and media studies influences these.

2.19 Decolonising Communication and Media Studies

Much of the research and knowledge production on communication and media studies centres on the Global North. This has resulted in calls for decolonising communication and media studies to reflect the pluriverse of knowledge systems that exist worldwide (Mano and milton, 2021; Mohammed, 2022; Mohammed 2021, Asante, 2019; Chakravarty et al., 2018; Langmia, 2018).

In *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media,* Shohat and Stam note that,

> Eurocentrism sanitises Western history while patronising and even demonising the non-West; it thinks of itself in terms of its noblest achievements-science, progress, humanism - but of the non-West in terms of deficiency, real or imagined. (1994, p3)

Shome and Hedge (2002) add that focus on Eurocentric theories in public relations, for example, ignores the complexities of other cultures. Mohammed (2021) notes that when universities develop a curriculum that pushes Pan-European views to the marginalisation of other knowledge systems, it creates the impression that indigenous knowledge systems which have been preserved for centuries by indigenous communities are pushed to the peripheries of knowledge production and made illegitimate. Many of the curricula in universities around the world and even on the African Continent Centre Global Northern thought (Mano and Milton, 2021; Mohammed, 2021; Asante, 2019; Langmia, 2018) have been influenced. This situation is compounded by the dearth of African scholars in communication and media studies who theorise from within the continent and centre indigenous African epistemologies (Mohammed, 2021).

Efforts to decolonise knowledge production on the African continent to dismantle anti-imperialist approaches to knowledge production is long overdue. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) believes that if the African is to break free from coloniality, then elevating African knowledge production systems will ensure that the dissonance between what the African is taught, and their lived experiences is disbanded. In advocating for the decolonisation of knowledge to consider African knowledge systems, African scholars are simply reiterating the well-known but often-brushed-aside view that knowledge is not "one size fits all," and that "there are other ways of viewing reality" (Asante, 2018, p18). There are contexts for knowledge that must not be overlooked, therefore what happens in one part of the world must not be used as a standard for everyone across the

world. Knowledge in its purest form is pluralistic and this pluriverse must be factored into knowledge production and dissemination.

To counter calls for decolonising theory in media and communication studies, arguments have been made in public relations settings for example for a globalisation perspective (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023). This globalisation paradigm argues that public relations theory should be informed by blending global and local elements of theory which provides an approach "where some universally applicable principles of public relations are harmonised to develop communication strategies that suit local cultures" (Sriramesh and Vercic, 2009, p4).

We however argue that this attempt to "glocalise" while noble in what is referred to as a global era, it is still aimed at imposing North American and Eurocentric theories on the global south since little to none of the proposed theories arise from research done in the global south and reinforces the knowledge production pecking order.

Efforts at decolonising communication and media studies has seen some excellent work from some African academics (Mano and Milton, 2021; Mohammed, 2021; Asante, 2019; Langmia, 2018; Nyamnjoh, 2018; Ansu-Kyeremeh, 2005; Wilson, 2008), and there remains more to be done to ensure that African epistemes are integrated into the curricula on the subject. This study contributes to the efforts to decolonise communication and media studies by proposing African proverbs as theory. For a subject such as public relations, decolonisation is imperative because even its imperial beginnings are shrouded in propaganda and controversy. Public relations in its current form contributes to the circulation of the dominant framework of imperialism and capitalism and the erasure of other multicultural paradigms (Dutta, 2016). We argue that by incorporating Afrocentric theory, such as the *Maatic* theory of communication (Asante, 2018), Public Relations can be practiced for the collective good of the society.

The theory fosters effective and persuasive values using principles of engagement that uphold human dignity. African systems of engagement and communication, such as *Ubuntu* and *Maat* have as their basis the dignity of every human being.

African proverbs have often been looked on as pedagogical (Osseo-Asare, 2019; Dei et al., 2018; Gbolonyo, 2009; Appiah, 2006; Opoku, 1997; Kudadjie, 1996) and linguistic tools (Yankah, 2000, Yankah, 1989; Appiah-Amfo and Diabah, 2015; Ogede, 1993; Kalu, 1991; Achebe, 1958). While these are critical frames from which one can look at African proverbs, we argue that proverbs are one of the key frameworks/concepts from which the subject of decolonising communication and media studies can be looked at. Proverbs are witty sayings handed down from generation to generation which convey lessons (Yankah, 2000). They are based on observations over the years and validated by the acceptance of generations due to their applicability. In the current study, selected African proverbs that align with political public relations will be used as theories to explain the practice of political public relations in Ghana.

2.20 Gap Addressed by the Study

Research in political public relations is few and far in between. Although political public relations have been practiced for a long time, both the theoretical and empirical research is hard to find in public relations' research (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2020). Moloney (2019) believes that even UK academic literature in sociology, communications, media, and political studies does not pay enough attention to public relations as a subject worth critical attention in its own right. The situation is even worse when looked at from the African perspective. Ghana is seen as a poster child in democratic governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, an understanding of the interplay between public relations and democracy in Ghana, therefore, sets the pace for

researchers in other African countries. This has become imperative, especially following Cambridge Analytica's interference in the elections of some African countries (Nigeria and Kenya) and the Bell Pottinger case in South Africa. There is therefore an urgent need to investigate the role of PR in emerging democracies as it is raising new challenges and, in some cases, undermining the processes and procedures of democracy. The research applied African knowledge concepts to the concepts under study while attempting to create theories that contextualise African and particularly the Ghanaian practice of political public relations based on the foundation of *Afrokology*.

2.21 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on PR and narrowed down to PR practice in Africa and Ghana. The chapter shows that because it is seen as a foreign concept, PR history in Africa is deeply entwined in coloniality and has always been traced to the colonial era. The chapter also examined political PR and Ghana's democratic journey since the return to civilian rule in 1992.

The chapter concludes by touching on the concepts of Afrokology and the need to decolonise communication fields such as public relations to be reflective of the lived experiences of the African. The next chapter delves into why African ways of knowing needs to be accepted into the academy and centred in the teaching and practice of public relations and political communication.

Chapter Three

Conceptual Framework

3.0 Introduction

This section will consider the theoretical basis of political Public Relations (PR). A review of the literature in the previous sessions necessitates the establishment of a theoretical basis for this research taking into account the linkages between the concept of political PR and democracy. Subject to Mano and milton's (2021) concept of Afrokology, which calls for the centring of African theories based on African epistemology and considering the African's lived experiences, this study will use African proverbs as a guiding idea and model to analyse through the data. These proverbs will be applied as the guiding tool for the themes that emerge in the data analysis. The ultimate aim of Afrokology is to centre African theories and challenge the supposed universal validity of Western definitions of media and communication. (Mano and milton, 2021, p258).

Appiah argues that,

> The transfer of theories, be it from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another, needs to be understood fully within the context of the political and cultural affiliations of the theory from whence it originated, and the conditions of its creation and writing. (1991, pp266-267)

In effect, theories must speak to the context in which they are being applied to. This section will position African proverbs as a theory that can be used to explain public relations' practice in Africa, Ghana in particular.

3.1 The Afrokology Standpoint and Theory Building

Knowledge production has for a long time been seen from the perspective of the Global North leading to the marginalisation of the knowledge produced in non-western contexts (Willems, 2014). Willems (ibid), further notes that knowledge production is "driven and constrained by particular dominant social, political, or economic interests" (Willems, 2014, p418).

Media and communication provide a good entry point for discussions on marginalised and silenced epistemologies and ontologies. This is because media and political power combine to shape which voices are marginalised and the ones that are centred. Media and communication are therefore important for understanding the centres of power and need to challenge themselves in projecting theories that centre on the Global North. Afrokology argues that marginalising African epistemologies is akin to the economic and political exclusion of Africans. Again, the hegemony that the Global North theories hold over those of the South is not viable anymore because it leaves no room for decolonising Global South societies to solve their own problems. Global North theories and knowledge frames pose as obstacles to understanding contemporary human issues based on their context (Mano and Milton, 2021).

Nyamnjoh (2018), Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005), and other African media and communication scholars have decried how Western-based theories shaped by colonial institutions and texts have systematically moulded theories of media and communication thereby marginalising African voices in Academia.

Waisboard (2017) and Min (2002) add that media studies theory is dominated by an Anglo-American accent and call for a de-westernisation of media studies to allow for other voices and perspectives in the field to emerge. Mano and Milton (2021) call for a

questioning of how media and communication studies are researched, and this thesis takes on that challenge.

Just like communication, theories must speak to the context in which they are applied to. The situatedness of theoretical concepts in both historical and geographical contexts call into question the relevance and accuracy of the ways in which media and communication are conceived in distinctly non-Western, post-colonial settings (De Valck and Teurlings, 2013, pp10–11). Thus, Afrokology aims at ensuring that indigenous African knowledge finds a place in African Media and Communication studies. Mano and Milton argue that "Afrokology is a de-colonial heuristic tool that is collaborative, convivial, and transdisciplinary" (2021, p19).

Afrokology gives voice to African knowledge and academics in the media and communication space, which is essential to societal building and democracy.

The section that follows will therefore look at proverbs as a theory to explain political Public Relations in a way that gives agency (Asante, 2007, p58) to African knowledge systems and to honour the interdisciplinary nature of political communication (Karam, 2018).

3.2 Proverbs

Proverbs permeate cultures. They are described as being present in most cultures. However, a few cultures, such as the Australian Aborigines, American Indians, and the Bushmen of Southern Africa are known for not having proverbs (Yankah, 2000). A proverb is defined as "a terse and witty philosophical saying that conveys a lesson" (ibid, p205).

Nabifar (2013) defines proverbs as:

A short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorisable form, which are handed down from generation to generation and since they belong to the common knowledge of basically all native speakers, they are indeed very effective devices to communicate wisdom and knowledge about human nature and the world at large. (cited in Kambon and Dzahene-Quarshie, 2017, p2287)

The Akans in Ghana define proverbs as, *"Nyansa kasa a yede twa asem tenten tia ma badwemba te ase."* This translates as proverbs are "wise sayings used to shorten conversations for the wise to understand" (Dei et al., 2018). Kipuri agrees with the Akan definition of proverbs and adds that they provide a summary of an idea that would have otherwise needed a long explanation (1983, p76). Achebe (1958, p5) describes proverbs as, "The palm oil with which words are eaten" (cited in Nyamnjoh et al., 2021). The Yoruba people of Nigeria consider proverbs to be the horse that can swiftly carry one to the discovery of ideas. To Nnolim:

A proverb is a sentence or phrase which briefly and strikingly expresses some recognised truth or shrewd observation about practical life, and which has been preserved by oral tradition. Proverbs are generally accepted as truths ascertained through experience and are marked by the epigrammatic and figurative turn in expression. (2014, p120)

All these definitions point to the depth of proverbs and address the manner in which they are used, observed and how they came about. Proverbs originate from communities and their people. They "contain a people's history," (Bhebe and Viriri, 2012). Appiah (2006) quotes Firth (1929, p263) on positioning that proverb origination goes through the following process:

a) An individual formulates the proverb

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b) An acceptance by the people is made at large as being appropriate to a more general situation.

c) A possible modification of phraseology or meaning is provided as time passes.

Bonsu adds that for the Akans, proverbs come about through:

> …careful observation of diverse events in their everyday lives in which the Akan sages coin witty sayings or proverbs to preserve such events for future use and reference. Farmers, hunters, palm-wine tappers, herbalists, priests, handicraft men, chiefs, and so on coin witty sayings or proverbs to preserve such events for future use and reference. (1994, p1)

According to Okpewho (2000), African proverbs could also arise from folktales, and these are sometimes used to explain the proverbs. Nyamnjoh[13] corroborates this and notes that proverbs and folktales enable the elderly in society to pass on wisdom to the younger generation and to teach community values and ethics. The lessons in folktales are therefore condensed into proverbs (Appiah, 2006). Arewa and Dundes summarised it thus:

> A parent may use a proverb to direct a child's action or thought. But by using a proverb, the parental imperative is externalised and removed somewhat from the individual parent. The guilt or responsibility of directing the child is projected onto an anonymous past… [a] child knows that the proverb used by the scolding parent was not made up by that parent, rather it is a proverb from the cultural past whose voice speaks truth in traditional terms... [The] parent is but the instrument through which the proverb speaks to the [child]. (1964, p2)

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[13] Nana Kennedy-Kwofie in conversation with Francis B. Nyamnjoh on the role of proverbs. https://soundcloud.com/user-291789877/a-conversation-on-proverbs, accessed on 19th January 2022.

According to Appiah (2006), Proverbs are also created from careful observation of nature in its interaction with society and culture. She cites the Akan proverb: A*p)tor) wu a, na wohu ne tenten*, to wit, "it is when the frog dies that we see its true length," as an example of proverbs culled from observing nature.

Contrary to the general belief that there is no African philosophy because it is not written, Gyekye (1997) believes that African traditional thought is a philosophy and must be regarded as such. He adds that while various Africans may have their peculiar philosophy, what he means by African philosophy is that there is a body of knowledge that is related to the African life and thought just as there is Oriental philosophy or European philosophy (Gyekye and Gbolonyo, 2009). Gyekye (1995) further notes that African religious beliefs and practices are an important basis of African philosophical thought. Gbolonyo believes proverbs and aphorisms can be seen as the basis of African intellectual and philosophical thought (2009, p187). Kwame Gyekye quotes a work by J. G. Christaller, a German scholar and missionary who is reported to have collected over three thousand Akan proverbs in 1879, as saying:

> May this collection [that is of proverbs] give a new stimulus to the diligent gathering of folklore and the increasing cultivation of native literature. May those Africans who are enjoying the benefit of Christian education make the best of this privilege but let them not despise *the sparks of truth entrusted to and preserved by their own people* and let them not forget that by entering into their way of thinking and by acknowledging what is good and expounding what is wrong they will gain the more access to the hearts and minds of their less favoured countrymen. (Christaller, 1995, p15)

Rattray, a British Anthropologist in 1916 shared Christaller's views and made these comments about Ghanaian proverbs:

> The few words [of the Author's Note] the present writer has felt it duty bound to say, lest the reader, astonished at the words of wisdom which are to follow, refuse to credit

that a "savage" or "primitive" people could possibly have possessed the *philosophers, theologians, moralists, naturalists, and even it will be seen philologists, which many of these proverbs prove them to have had among them.* (Gyekye, 1995, p15, emphasis added)

Proverbs are dynamic. They can be explained in several ways depending on the context. While Finnegan (1970) argues that proverbs are cultural context specific due to the cultural allusions in them, Assimeng-Boahene (2006) and Yankah (1989) argue that African proverbs are the universalised truths applicable to the human condition. Proverbs are thus dynamic and fluid and can be used outside the cultural context.

3.3 Proverbs as Theory

Littlejohn and Foss suggest that theory "is a unified, or coherent, body of propositions that provide a philosophically consistent picture of a subject" (2009, p958).

They add that theories are the way in which we make sense of facts or experiences. Theories conceptualise reality. Deetz (1992) adds that, "A theory is a way of seeing and thinking about the world. As such it is better seen as the 'lens' one uses in observation than as a 'mirror' of nature."

For Wacker, emphasis added, a theory is a systematic explanation of *habits and patterns* that have been tested and proven and helps us interpret the whys and hows of reality (1998, p362). Theories are key to research for these three major reasons:

1. They provide a framework for analysis.

2. They provide an efficient method for field development.

3. They provide clear explanations for the pragmatic world.

According to Kerlinger (1973), a theory is:

A set of inter-related constructs, definitions and propositions that give a systematic view about a phenomenon by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting such phenomena. (cited in Solomon et al., 2012)

Theories, therefore, explain diverse phenomena in a way that can easily be understood. Theories provide a way to make meaning of the things around us.

Nyamnjoh et al. (2021) acknowledge proverbs as an abstracted wisdom drawn from human experiences. Dei et al. (2017) add that proverbs are forms of knowledge in local communities used to shorten long conversations to bring meaning.

African proverbs are a phenomenological tool that explains the African way of being and doing. While the wording and sometimes structure may differ from culture to culture, the import of most African proverbs is the same. Kambon and Dzahene-Quarshie (2017) opine that the similarities in proverbs across Africa may be due to its shared cultural and historical practices. This shows that occurrences happening all across Africa have influenced the interpretation of the life around Africans. For example, the Fantse proverbs, *"Wɔse kɔ man kɔto, wɔnnse kɔ man kɛsen",* and *"ɔman wɔto ana wɔatsenamu",* to wit "the stranger cannot be more knowledgeable about a community more than the indigenes no matter their level of expertise", are explained to mean that indigenous people have more knowledge of their environment that experts may not have. Therefore, the experts must engage with local knowledge for a better understanding of the issues that local people deal with. Politicians cannot therefore produce solutions for local communities without engaging with them to find out what really matters to them. This is consistent with Mefalopulos' (2008) empowered participation, where he recommends that outside experts work with indigenous communities to create solutions that are arrived at based on joint decision-making. African proverbs are therefore not just aphorisms but a theory that hold truth, and the

Global North's disregard for oral knowledge in favour of written knowledge prevents other epistemologies from gaining grounds and thriving in academia.

Littlejohn and Foss acknowledge theories as constructions created by people. The term "theories as constructions" mean that they can be created, and African epistemes, such as proverbs can be considered as theories (2011, p19). In an online interview with Respondent PRPC-017, he notes that proverbs show a way of thinking and has the ability to explain complex issues as well as human behaviour[14].

Karam (2018) calls for the decolonisation of political communication theory due to its multi-disciplinary nature. Citing Asante's (2007) concept of Afrocentrism, he argues that political communication in Africa needs to relexicalize African knowledge, such as proverbs in order to centre them. Doing so decentres and recentres western values, cultures, and ideas to the margins (ibid., p31). African proverbs hold a lot of sway in ways that are different from the way the West conceptualise proverbs in general. In the African context, proverbs are not just aphorisms or witty sayings. Instead, they are a way of expressing reality. This makes proverbs indispensable in African communication. Nyamnjoh et al. describe proverbs in the African context as "condensed wisdom drawn from human experiences, provide a rich resource for understanding, inter alia, how African communities have, through the ages, negotiated and navigated questions of being and belonging" (2021, pp3-4).

Ansu-Kyeremeh, emphasis added, has highlighted the superior effectiveness of "drama, storytelling, *proverbs*, poetry and other such indigenous forms of communication" (2005, p2).

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[14] PR-PC-017, Interviewed in March 2023

Proverbs are universal phenomena, and though there are potentially negative messages embedded in proverbs, they are the embodiment of "the wisdom of many and the wit of one" (Cooper, 2004, p11). Cooper adds that proverbs are concise, rhythmic, and balanced. This study attempts to recover and recentre proverbs by explaining the nuance of African proverbs in political PR. We argue that African proverbs are epistemes that should be recognised as such. As Moyo and Mutsvairo (2018) point out, all knowledge sources are relevant and must be included in knowledge production and sharing. Mohammed (2021) also recommends using African knowledge systems to build theories that fit the context of Africans.

3.3.1 Dimensions of Proverbs as a Theory

The four dimensions provided by Littlejohn and Foss (2011) by which theories are weighed include the following:

1). Philosophical assumptions

2). Concepts

3). Explanations

4). Principles

Philosophical assumptions are made up of three branches: epistemology, ontology, and axiology. In this case, epistemology will refer to how we know proverbs are part of us as Africans and how they came to be.

Epistemology deals with how we know knowledge. Littlejohn and Foss, raise some questions which need to be explained in answering the epistemology question (2011, p30). They include the extent to which knowledge exists before experience, the certainty of knowledge, how knowledge arises, how knowledge is conceived (whether

in part or whole), and the explicitness or otherwise of knowledge. African proverbs have been conceived as based on the experiences of people in communities. The "repercussions" of the actions of individuals in the community form the basis of proverbs. As Yankah puts it, proverbs are "grounded upon years of experience and *close observation of life and natural phenomena.* The proverb, through metaphorical language, may warn, advise, or reprimand by drawing attention to the moral or ethical consequences of human behaviour" (2000, p205, emphasis added).

This agrees with Wacker's (1998) assertion on the notion that theories systematically explain tested habits and patterns which are proven and help us interpret the whys and how of reality. Asante (2018) notes that in Africa, truth resides in the proverbial wisdom passed on from one generation to another. He adds that based on the certainty of knowledge in proverbs, no one argues when proverbs are used in communication. Orwenjo (2009) believes that challenging the veracity of African proverbs is akin to challenging the wisdom of the whole community.

For example, the Akan proverb, *Abaa a wɔde bɔɔ Takyi, ɛno ara na wɔde bɔ Baah*, loosely translated as "The rod that was used to punish Takyi is the very same one that will be used to strike Baah." It explains the consequences of actions on different individuals given the same circumstances. This proverb could only have been crafted based on observation over a period of time. Jackson (2018) advances that, theories provide us with conceptual tools to make sense of our observation. Proverbs, we posit are theories.

Regarding the question of how knowledge, and in this case African proverbs arise, we argue that proverbs arise out of rationalism, empiricism, and constructivism. This agrees with Appiah (2006) and Dei's (2000)'s notion that there are multiple ways of

knowing when it comes to indigenous knowledge systems like proverbs. Proverbs, therefore, come from human reasoning, their perception of life around them and the meaning people make based on the world around them.

This, we believe makes African proverbs pass the epistemology dimension of theories.

On the question of ontology, Littlejohn and Foss believe that ontology focuses on how humans interact (2011, p23). These interactions are underlined by the extent to which humans make real choices, how human behaviour is best understood whether by traits or states, the individuality or social experiences of people, and the extent to which communication is contextual. The ontological question that proverbs as theory answer is the question of the nature of the reality of proverbs. This arises due to the fact that African proverbs have no known author(s). According to Orwenjo (2009), they are communally owned, and generally attributed to "the elders and ancestors" (Yankah, 2000). Orwenjo (2009) posits that proverbs are the origins of people's collective social, political, and cultural wisdom. He adds that African proverbs are the custodian of people's collective wisdom, philosophy of life, experience, fears, and aspiration (ibid., p123). They also act as "analytic tools of thought" (Oluwole, 1997, p100).

McQuail considers theory as "not only a system of law-like propositions but as any systematic set of ideas that can help make sense of a phenomenon, guide action or predict a consequence" (2010, p13). McQuail lists and explains the five dimensions of theory as a social, scientific, cultural, normative, operational, and everyday theory. Social theories, McQuail believes, are "systematic and objective observation of media and other relevant sources", whereas cultural theories seek to show the differences between "cultural artefacts" (2010, p13). Normative theories, according to McQuail (2010), are about how the media ought to behave and are reflected in regulations, the

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laws, and the ethical conduct of the media personnel. On the other hand, operational theories, according to McQuail, are "practical ideas assembled and applied by media practitioners in the conduct of their own media work" (2010, p14). On the other hand, what he calls the everyday common-sense theory deals with the knowledge the media audience gains from their association with and exposure to the media. We believe proverbs can fall under both cultural theories and everyday common-sense theories.

Littlejohn and Foss (2011) also ask the ontological question of whether human experience is individual or social. In the context of proverbs, while proverbs may speak of an individual, they are usually used for the good of the whole community. It therefore takes on the nature of communal wisdom, as already stated. According to Gbolonyo (2009), the collective ownership of African philosophical thought and indigenous intellectual products such as proverbs contradicting other philosophical thoughts, such as Greek and Chinese philosophy, which have individual authors. Proverbs being owned by whole African societies simply points to the collective nature of African life. Hence, it is a philosophical thought. Kambon and Dzahene-Quarshie (2017) emphasises that African proverbs show the shared African worldview. Agyeman (2021) corroborates the communal nature of the African social structure and uses the Akan proverb, *Ɔmanbɔfo) na yɛtwa no asu.* This means that the "destroyer of the state that is banished," and it is to show that the lack of a community was seen as the highest form of punishment in ancient African society.

The final ontological question that Littlejohn and Foss (2011) ask is the extent to which communication is contextual. While proverbs are largely contextual, they are also known to be universal in their outlook. Yankah (1989) notes that while proverbs are sometimes presented as though their meanings are fixed, they are actually dynamic and can be used to address several social, political, and cultural issues. While (Yankah,

ibid.), for example, examines how proverbs are used in the traditional arbitration in a chief's palace, Dei et al. examined how proverbs can be used as a pedagogic, instructional, and communicative tool to further the objective of decolonising education due to what they consider as the value and salience of proverbs as epistemologies for contemporary times (2018, p1).

Axiology, the final philosophical assumption, examines the place of values in the research process. African proverbs are value-laden because they are tools for moral education (Yankah, 2000). Iyamu (2021) argues that proverbs assert Africa's unique traditional and cultural values. Wa Thiong'o (1986) summarises that African knowledge systems, such as proverbs are used to pass the society's worldviews, values, norms, and expectations from one generation to another. Therefore, proverbs serve as moral guidelines and belief systems, while at the same time providing wisdom and advice. Dei et al. (2018) believes that African proverbs challenge the competitive and individualistic models of learning and definitions of success that neoliberal Western value systems propagate. By using African epistemes, such as proverbs as a theory, African researchers will be forced to work with the value systems that drive Africans rather than foisting other value systems on Africans. It will also result in rethinking the methodologies used to research indigenous people (Bosch, 2022; Magallanes-Blanc, 2022)[15].

In discussing concepts, Littlejohn and Foss believe concepts refer to what theorists consider important (2011, p24). By observing human interactions, communication theorists can group concepts according to perceived patterns. The literature is replete

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[15]Presentations made during CAMRI online event on **Decolonising Approaches to Users and Audiences in the Global South: Context, Theory and Method**. Available via: https://camri.ac.uk/blog/articles/5297/

on how African proverbs are embedded with indigenous peoples' concepts of self, community, social responsibility, mutual interdependence, notions of accountability, and leadership among others (Dei et al., 2018; Gbolonyo, 2009; Appiah, 2006; Opoku, 1997; Kudadjie, 1996; Yankah, 1995, Yankah, 1989; Ogede, 1993; Kalu, 1991). This is similar to several communication theories where concepts are grouped according to perceived patterns. The Gonja proverb, "*ndibi damte a le kupo*" literally translates to mean "many trees make a forest." Dei et al. (2018), for example, speak to the need for a leader to receive the support of the masses to succeed. Here, the concepts of leadership, participation, respect, and reciprocity are at play. There are many more of such proverbs that speak to the African's total concept of what life is and should look like. Therefore, we argue that African proverbs pass the concept dimensions of a theory according to Littlejohn and Foss (2011).

In theory development, explanations, which are the next dimension of a theory, according to Littlejohn and Foss (ibid) identify the "why" which connects variables to each other based on the hypothesis. As already stated, proverbs are developed based on observation of life around societies. These observations help create a hypothesis that can be explained using proverbs. For example, the Akan proverb, "*so antie enti na owam otu k)) yɛ,*" to wit "stubbornness made the bird fly away," is the causal explanation between wilfulness and missed opportunities. Many of such proverbs in African societies have both causal and practical explanations. Proverbs, therefore, pass the explanation dimension, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2011).

Principles are guidelines that help in making judgements and interpreting events. The research study conducted by Littlejohn and Foss (2011, p26) note that in theory construction, principles have three parts, and they are:

1). To identify a situation or event

2). To include a set of norms or values

3). To assert a connection between actions and possible consequences

African proverbs meet these dimensions effortlessly. At its very core, proverbs are regarded as principles for living.
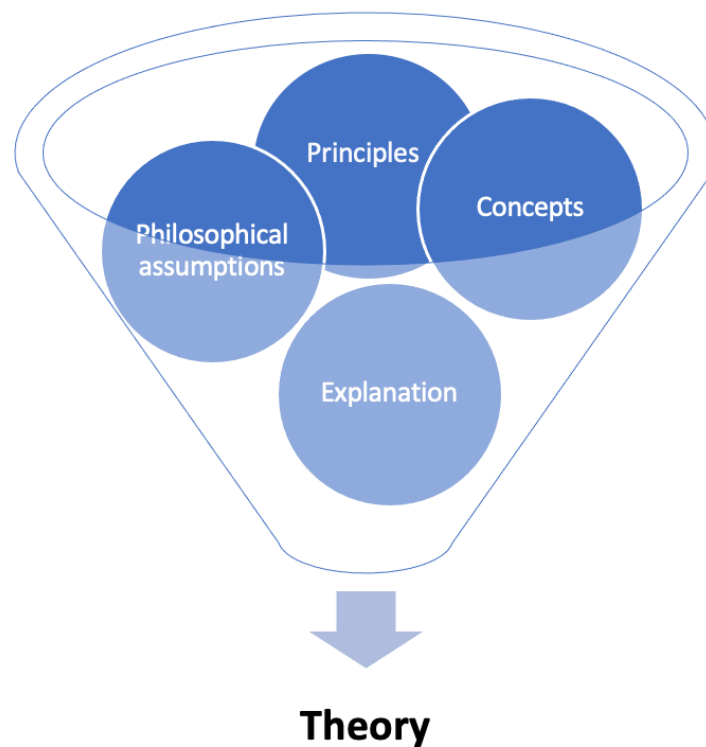
Figure 3.1: Author's construct of dimensions of theory by Littlejohn and Foss (2011)

Nyamnjoh (2020) believes that proverbs, like a theory, must lend themselves to be accepted, taken seriously, or dismissed.

3.4 Proverbs and Governance

African proverbs transcend every area of the African life. This is because there is hardly an aspect of the African life that proverbs do not cover. Nyamnjoh (2020) calls them "democratic facilitators[16]". Dei et al. (2018) in their book titled, *African Proverbs as Epistemologies of Decolonisation* lists several proverbs that show ways in which proverbs, as a form of knowledge, shape the African way of life, including leadership and governance. They note that misconceptions about democratic leadership in Africa are often fuelled by the international media portrayal of the continent in a negative light. This portrayal negating the strong leadership values which undergird many African communities. Leadership in African communities tends to be egalitarian with community support being key to the success of leaders.

Dei et al. posit that "communal work, care for one another and families, mutual aid, honesty, and selflessness are essential for day-to-day life in many African communities" (2018, p236).

They further explain the Gonja proverb, "*Ndibi damte a le kupo,*" translated to mean "many trees make a forest" as why leaders need the whole community's support to flourish as leaders.

The African by nature is communal in their outlook, and this is reflected in the relationships that surround them. Hofstede (2001) notes the collectivistic culture of the African. Wu and Baah-Boakye add that PR practitioners in Ghana consider this collectivist culture in order to build good interpersonal relationships with both internal

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[16] Nana Kennedy-Kwofie in conversation with Francis B. Nyamnjoh on the role of proverbs.
https://soundcloud.com/user-291789877/a-conversation-on-proverbs, accessed on 19th January 2022.

and external publics because building a good interpersonal relationship is a key for business success in a collectivistic nature" (2008, p85).

The concept of *Ubuntu,* for example also points to the fact that relationships matter to the African and needs to be incorporated into our political system for our democracy to thrive. The question to ask is whether this relationship-building perspective is reflected in the political public relations practiced by the two major political parties. Mano and Milton recommend that it is critical to "re-imagine media and communication studies and to reunite its practice and theory with philosophical roots in Africa, a concept termed as, Afrokology" (2021, p257).

Wa Thiongo' (2009, p50) argues that the isiZulu proverb most associated with "*ubuntu, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" (a person is a person with other persons), should not be read as a mere proverb (cited in Chasi, 2021). He argues that Ubuntu is not just a common expression of truths shared by a community. Instead,

> …it reflexively engages with the non-viability of human existence without others and poses a complex antinomy; a thesis, antithesis, and synthesis to elucidate that without others a person cannot be a person with the vital force to achieve a meaningful life. To reduce this complex aphorism to a mere proverb is to deny the complexity of African moral cultures and to deny that for Africans who often live in the harshest of circumstances. As for all humans "culture is a struggle." (Wa Thiongo' 2009, p52)

Ubuntu is usually offered as a supposedly unique African concept that promotes the communitarian idea of human inter-connectedness (Ngondo and Klyueva, 2023; Mbigi, 1997; Kamwangamalu, 1999).

Therefore, while Ledingham's (1998) relationship management theory can be used to examine political PR practices in Ghana from the Afrokological standpoint, could the concept of *Ubuntu* rather give a better context to political PR practice in Ghana? *Ubuntu*

may give a better context and understanding of political PR practices than the relationship management theory, which is a North American theoretical concept. This study will therefore use African proverbs such as *ubuntu* as a theory to explain political PR practice in Ghana. This is because we argue that while one may think *Ubuntu* should work better, practitioners may need to intentionally decolonise to engage Ubuntu as they ought to.

Another Ghanaian proverb that resonates and can explain Mefalopulos' (2008) participatory communication theory in governance is, "*There is peace and happiness in unity expression.*" Grant and Asimeng-Boahen note that:

> Participatory citizenship stresses active participation through collective, community-based action. This concept stresses that good citizens understand how government and communities work and take an active role in efforts to care for others. (2006, p18)

The proverb "*there is peace and happiness in unity expression*" encourages participatory citizenship, and this can be achieved through participatory communication and engagement. There are several of such proverbs that can be used to interrogate the political PR terrain in Ghana. It, therefore, behoves political public relations practitioners to pursue participatory communication. The question, however, is whether they actually pursue participatory communication, and that is what this research seeks to investigate.

3.5 Afrokology, Proverbs, and Political PR

It is evident from the discussion above that communication and media studies can and must be decolonised if we are to recentre global south knowledge systems. Our understanding of public relations generally and political public relations, in particular, will be greatly enhanced if it is looked at from the angle of the African. This will help

avoid what Wa Thiongo' (1986) calls "the lack of congruence between colonial education and the African reality" in his book, titled *Decolonising the Mind*. We argue that there are African knowledge systems, such as proverbs that can explain our political PR reality better. An example is a question posed by Hofstede (2011) that seeks to find out how political parties communicate to the collective society at the same time as pertains to many African cultures. The proverb, "*Abusua tesɛ kwae, wo gyena akyia ebom, nanso woben a na wo hu se ebiaa gyena ne dabre",* translated by Dei et al. (ibid) to mean "A family is like a thick forest; often dense from outside but when you get closer or go inside you will see that each tree is independent" (2018, p102), could be used to explain the need for communication professionals to communicate in ways that appeal to the masses but also in a way that individuals can identify with.

Mano and Milton decry "the study of Africa without Africa" and the extent to which even African universities design programmes without using and exploring African knowledge systems and theories (2021, p1). The result of this is not only evident in the confusion of our students when in practice but also in African knowledge systems and theories that seem not to be growing. This also includes the rejection of scholarship from Africa unless it meets the "western standards" often presented as "global standards." According to Mano and Milton (2021), these western or global knowledge "standards" that Afrokology argues are incomplete without global south knowledge systems, such as proverbs, folklore, etc. By continuing to ignore our knowledge systems as Africans, we are promoting other knowledge systems apart from ours and enforcing coloniality and perpetuating epistemic violence. Afrokology as a heuristic tool can be used to break this pattern and ensure that African scholars and scholarship opportunities, especially in media and communications, reflect the continent's knowledge systems.

Below in Fig 3.2, we pictorially show how Afrokology as a heuristic tool can inform the teaching of communication and media studies, especially public relation
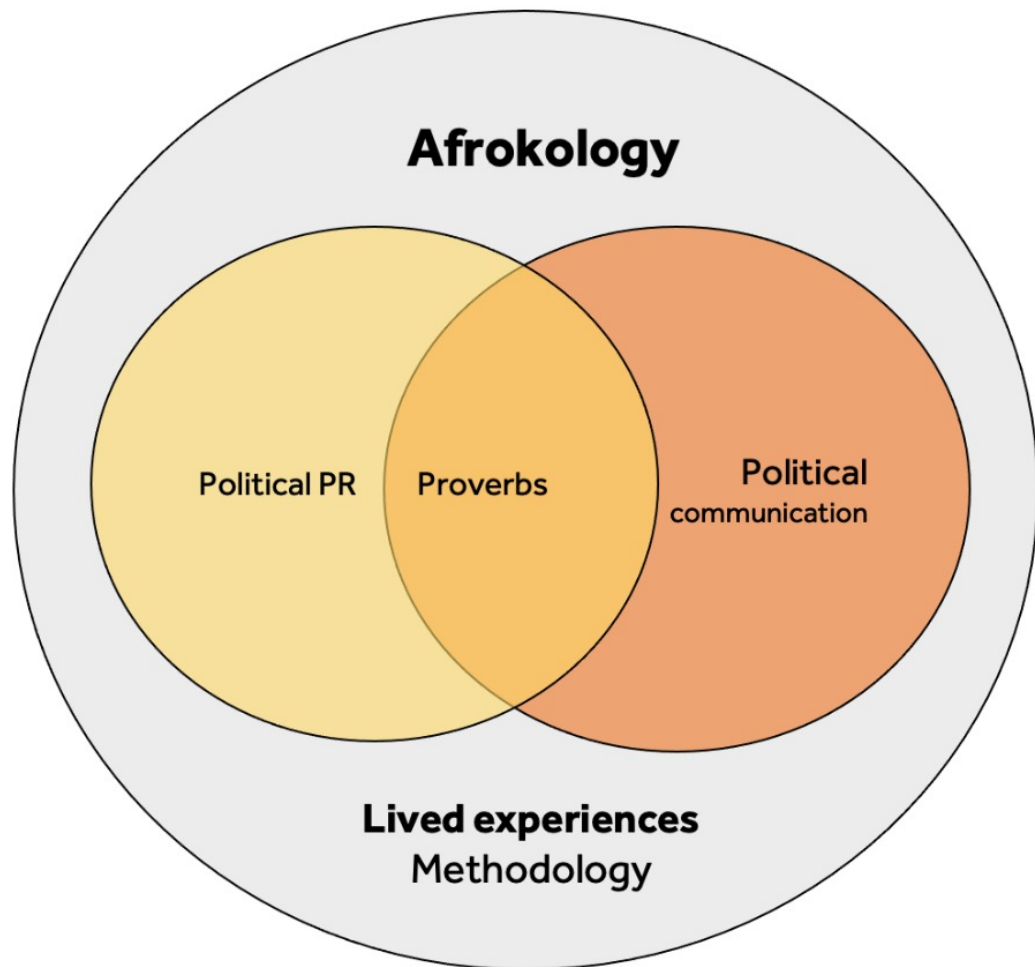
Figure 3.2: *Conceptual framework.*

3.6 Conclusion

This section justified why African proverbs can be considered as the theoretical lens through which political communication in Ghana should be examined. The chapter

examined the process of the making of theories especially in the communication sciences and argued that proverbs can be categorised as theory. The chapter proposes a conceptual framework through which political PR practitioners by taking into consideration the lived experiences of their audiences, can campaign in ways that resonate with their audiences.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter explored and critically analysed the qualitative research methodology and went ahead to identify and discuss the different methods which are used for this study.

Silverman notes that "methodology defines how one will go about studying any phenomenon (2011, p53). Methodology simply reflects the choices that the researcher makes in the process of studying a phenomenon.

4.1 Research Design

A qualitative method was used for this research to ensure that the researcher acquired the stories that were conveyed by the research participants, who were the respective political parties' representatives, political communication experts and public relations experts. Qualitative research simply examines the *why* behind the questions researchers ask. Qualitative research is a broad umbrella term that covers many research designs, including case study, phenomenological study, historical research, and ethnographic study. These approaches have some related features, yet different goals (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). Creswell (2007) recognises the five traditions as narrative, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, and phenomenology. On the other hand, Yin (2016) described twelve (12) qualitative traditions as action research, arts-based research, auto-ethnography, case study, critical theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, oral history, and phenomenology.

The study used qualitative ethnographic methods to investigate party political public relations by interviewing political party officials and experts in public relations and political

communications. In effect, the method for this study was designed to gain a set of thorough insider perspectives, knowledge of experiences and views on how political actors are using public relations tactics and strategies. The methods for this research were informed by the following research questions:

- What is the ontological and epistemic basis of decolonising public relations and democratisation in global South/non-western contexts?

- To what extent has PR been decolonised in Ghana and what has been its impact on African politics? How have political parties in Ghana deployed such decolonised PR since the country's return to democratic rule?

- What are the decolonial political PR strategies the political parties deploy to mobilise for political power?

- How and with what implications has decolonised public relations informed PR and political communication in Ghana?

- How has the political culture of Ghana informed a decolonised model of practicing PR?

4.2 Data Collection

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasise that the guiding principle of sampling in qualitative research is one of convenience (cited in Baxter and Jack, 2008). They argue that another important consideration in sampling is whether there are people available who will allow the researcher to collect data about them. The study will use a purposive sampling strategy for collecting materials for data analysis. Bryman provides that the advantage of using purposive sampling lies in that it offers the researcher the latitude to select units of analysis that are relevant to the research questions (2012, p418), while Patton states that "the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases… whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (1990, p169).

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used in research when the only appropriate means available to the researcher to choose a sample is based on his/her knowledge of a population, its elements, and the aim of the research (Babbie, 1992). In all, I interviewed twenty (20) experts made up of PR Academics and Practitioners, Political Communications academics, and political actors of the two main political parties. These respondents were purposely sampled due to their expertise on the subject and also based on similar studies done by Asante (2020), Stenberg (2016) and Mensah (2014).

4.2.1 In-depth Interviews using Video Conferencing Platforms

Sedgewick and Spiers (2009) acknowledge the increasing use and application of video conferencing technologies in health care, business, education, and research. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic throughout the world has influenced how people engage with one another in geographical spaces. According to James, stay-at-home orders and social distancing have reduced people's bodily presence and social interactions in public spaces (2020, p1), thereby making the need for video conferencing even more imperative. The advent of modern technologies has transformed ways of qualitative data collection for qualitative research. As a result, face-to-face interviewing is no longer the only method used in qualitative research to collect rich data (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Gill et al., 2008; Opdenakker, 2006). The University of Westminster therefore directed that as much as possible research should be carried out remotely. That meant that at the time data collection took place for this study, interviews had to be carried out via video conferencing platforms.

Zoom video interviews can be used as an alternative method to face-to-face interviewing when the participants are "geographically dispersed, unable or unwilling to travel," (Gray et al., 2020, p1292). The online platform was originally developed "to facilitate long-distance or international communication, enhance collaborations and reduce travel costs for business," and

these attributes of Zoom video interviews can be easily harnessed in conducting qualitative research" (Gray et al., 2020).

Zoom video interviews allows the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews with respondents in various parts of Ghana without being physically present.

Though they have some similarities with face-to-face interviews, video conference-based conversations do not replicate face-to-face, in-person interactions. Video conferencing, however, has several advantages which make it very appealing to most people as a research tool. A major advantage of Zoom is that it allows two or more participants in different geographical locations to synchronously engage in video conferencing in real-time (Gough and Rosenfeld, 2006). Participants are more comfortable being interviewed in their natural habitat "without disrupting their usual work and home schedules" (Gray et al., 2020, p1297). The participants can also exit from the interview session at any time, and this is "less intimidating than leaving an in-person interview in an unfamiliar environment" (ibid). Participants also have a wide range of other options to choose from: they can either connect to zoom using a mobile telephony, tablet, or desktop computer.

Video conferencing is however more effective when it is supported by efficient "hardware and high-speed internet access" (Gray et al., 2020, p1293). In addition, the participants also need access to a reliable supply of electricity to derive maximum benefits from the video conferencing platform. In developing countries like Ghana, where access to uninterrupted electricity and the internet is often difficult, video conferencing may not be ideal for both the participants and the researcher. In addition, it is also vital to devise contingency measures in the event of power cuts due to electricity load-shedding. That is why it is vital to have a backup plan in the event of technical problems or loss of internet access. The backup plan I have

thought about is to use WhatsApp video and telephone calls should the zoom video conference fail as a result of power or internet failure.

The other major advantage of Zoom is that it is user-friendly. The platform has key features that can be used to generate an "electronic meeting invitation" and "a live link that only requires a click to join the meeting" (Gray et al., 2020, p1294). In addition, these features also allow the researcher and participants to share and discuss key documents like the consent form. Zoom's features also help to protect the confidentiality of participants. The video conferencing software also includes "password protection for confidentiality and recording capacity to either the host's computer or Zoom's cloud storage" (Gray et al., 2020).

However, it is also imperative for the researcher to take precautions to ensure that any data saved on the personal computer is secure to ensure confidentiality. To this end, it is advisable to avoid saving data on a computer with multiple users as this might make the information vulnerable (Buchanan and Zimmer, 2012).

Zoom also offers the researcher the latitude to observe the participants at a close-up. It provides a rare opportunity for the researcher to observe the participants' non-verbal cues and this "may provide the interviewer with a glimpse into the participant's life" (Gray et al., 2020, p1297). In this regard, Miller and Slater argue that "the media can provide both the means of interaction and modes of representation that add up to 'spaces' or 'places' that participants can treat as if they were real" (2000, p4).

However, we should always remember that while the interviewer and the participants may be able to see each other through Zoom "they do not occupy the same physical space resulting in missed opportunities for the researcher to observe the participants' physical space and respond to body language and emotional cues" (Cater, 2011, cited in Gray et al., 2020, p1298)

In addition, while Zoom allows both the researcher and participants to choose their own area, the location might be unsuitable for online interviewing because of distractions. In that case, researchers may get around issues of distraction and privacy by using private spaces and advising participants to take similar precautions to protect their privacy and confidentiality (Gray et al., 2020, p1298).

Another advantage of using video conferencing is that it is cost-effective and allows the researcher to recruit participants from different localities without worrying about travel costs (Kenney, 2005; Rupert et al., 2017), and also removes mobility barriers for participants who might have problems in accessing the research site (Benford and Standen, 2011; Egan et al., 2006; Nicholas et al., 2010; Synnot et al., 2014).

Despite its numerous advantages, using zoom video conferencing for data collection comes with its own challenges. The costs of video conferencing hardware (i.e., smart phone, tablet, or desktop computer) can be prohibitive and out of reach for the majority of people, especially in a developing country, like Ghana. Again, a disadvantage of video conferencing interviews might be experienced when discussing with participants information of a highly sensitive nature or those perceived as particularly difficult for them (Sedgewick and Spiers, 2009). Another disadvantage is that satisfaction with the interaction might be influenced by the bandwidth of the connection. Higher bandwidth connections generally result in greater satisfaction with the video conferencing experience.

Using zoom video conferencing, the researcher interviewed twenty (20) respondents who are political party representatives, political communication and public relations academics, public relations practitioners and two professors of decolonisation studies. By doing this, the researcher gained insights from these experts on how they perceive public relations has been used since Ghana's return to multiparty democracy.

4.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Wheeler and Hunter (2010) acknowledge semi-structured interviews as the most used qualitative interview method. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) agree with the assertion and confirm that semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews are widely used in qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews consist of a list of open-ended questions based on the themes the researcher intends to study. The open-ended nature of the questions provides opportunities for both the interviewer and interviewee to discuss some issues in more detail. Unstructured interviews on the other hand aim at obtaining in-depth responses (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 2002).

Adams (2018) posits that a semi-structured interview sits between closed-ended and open-ended interviews. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) also note that semi-structured interviews allow respondents to express themselves freely. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to explore issues that arise spontaneously due to their flexible nature (Berg, 2009; Ryan et al., 2009). They also allow the researcher to vary the order and wording of the questions (Power et al., 2010), depending on the direction of the interview, and to ask additional questions (Corbetta, 2003).

With the help of an interview guide, this research used in-depth semi-structured interviews to find out from respondents how political parties in Ghana used political public relations in the 2012 and 2016 general elections.

Due to the retrospective nature of this study, respondents' recollections may likely not match events that took place at the time. This has been acknowledged as a limitation that can be held against the qualitative interview as a method in general, making semi-structured interviews problematic when it comes to establishing direct access to facts, events, or to the interviewees' direct experiences (Silverman, 2011, p168). Another potential limitation of using the semi-

structured interview data collection technique for this research is the so-called elite interviews phenomenon (Daymon and Holloway, 2011, p236; Littig, Menz and Bogner, 2009). The vast majority of respondents are much older than I and possess several years and decades (in some cases) of professional experience within the fields, especially in politics and political communication. Platen and Young argue that interviews with respondents in management positions, or experts for that matter, tend to be asymmetrical and can be affected by power imbalances due to their skills in their area of expertise and can potentially steer the discussion in their favour (2014, p27).

4.2.3 Documents as Sources of Data

The advantage of using document analysis for this study was that raw data retrieved from these sources are available for independent inspection (Baxter and Jack, 2008). According to Creswel (2003), analysing documents improves the validity of the case study as it enables the researcher to track and organise data sources. In this study, therefore, the document analysis also corroborates Stenberg's (2016) work which employed similar methods.

Grundel (2014) argues that in research, inspired by matters of political discourses and context, the researcher must include a wide range of documents from a manifold of actors in order to be able to account for how ideas are produced and reproduced in different settings. This research will employ targeted sampling (Silverman, 2011, cited in Stenberg, 2016). This is a process where the researcher collects a variety of documents in order to form an overall yet nuanced picture of the problem under investigation. This process is fruitful for researchers who wish to understand "the emergence, persistence and/or evolution of a particular social construction" (pp270–271).

The research analysed communication policies/strategies of the political parties in addition to directives, protocols, and press releases covering the election campaign seasons of 2012 and

2016. In addition, documents such as the Institute of Public Relations Ghana and Africa Public Relations Association code of ethics and conduct were analysed.

The pervasive nature of documents for organisations makes them an obvious choice for analysis in qualitative research (Bergström and Boréus, 2005, p13; Bryman, 2011, p494; Silverman, 2011, p248). Daymon and Holloway (2011) point to several different advantages of collecting and analysing documents. First of all, documents can indicate how particular organisations interpret their past, present, and future actions, and achievements. Consequently, documents may also signal how organisations justify and publicise themselves to those individuals or organisations they regard as important, as the majority of documents (press releases, promotional material, yearly reports, and so on) are well-crafted texts with strategic purposes aimed at specific audiences. These documents are not neutral, but they can provide insights into cultural dimensions pertaining to the society in which they circulate. Stenberg argues that in some cases, certain documents might even be more comprehensive than other methods as "documents that provide the researcher with insights into past processes and events not available for immediate observation" (2016, p81).

Finally, Daymon and Holloway argue that the collection and analysis of documents are unobtrusive, particularly valuable if access to individuals or organisations is restricted or even denied (2011, pp277–278).

Bryman argues that there are four (4) principles that need to be considered in the assessment of the researcher's documents: (1) the documents' *authenticity*, or, if the documents can be regarded as stemming from an unambiguous source; (2) their *reliability*, or, if the documents can be regarded as truthful; (3) its *representation*, or if the documents can be interpreted as being representative of the phenomenon the researcher investigates and (4), their *meaningfulness*, or if the documents can be properly understood by the researcher (2011, p488).

4.2.4 Newspapers as Sources of Data

Using the constructed week sampling method (Riffe et al., 1993; Lacey et al., 2001), the two state-owned newspapers, *Daily Graphic* and *The Ghanaian Times* were analysed to gauge the media engagements by the political parties in the years under study. Temen and Smith underscore the importance of the media in the electioneering processes of emerging democracies and note that they (media) shape public perception of political issues while nurturing a "symbiotic relationship" with political parties (2002, p586). Agyeman-Duah (2000) adds that the role of the media in consolidating elections is particularly critical for both established and entrenched democracies. Osei-Appiah (2019) also underscores the role of the media in emerging democracies. The two newspapers were selected because Article 55 (sections 11 and 12) of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, stipulate that "the state shall provide a fair opportunity to all political parties to present their programmes to the public by ensuring equal access to the state-owned media" and "all presidential candidates shall be given the same amount of time and space on the state-owned media to present their programmes to the people".

An analysis of the state-owned newspapers therefore gauged the engagement by the political parties as well as examined if this constitutional provision was adhered to by the state media in the elections of 2012 and 2016.

4.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was done following Creswell's (1994) systematic process of analysing textual data. During the analysis process, thematic coding, attribute coding, structural coding, pattern coding, and focused coding was employed (Saldana, 2009). Bryman argues that data analysis is an essential data reduction aimed at "reducing the large corpus of information that the researcher has gathered so that he or she can make sense of it" (2012, p13).

The researcher accordingly identified and extracted key phrases, terms, themes, ideas, and meanings from respondents' recollection of events during the election campaigns. Data analysis was be done using NVivo, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), and Thematic Analysis (TA).

Transcribed data was exported into Qualitative Data Analysis software, (NVivo). NVivo 12 Plus helps to address the major shortcomings of qualitative research by providing a set of tools to analyse data sets more objectively. In addition, the software helps to make analysis "easier, more accurate, more reliable and more transparent" (Gibbs, 2008, p11).

NVivo 12 Plus can be used to store, manage, examine, code, and analyse data sets (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). The software also supports key tasks such as the creation of nodes as part of data analysis (Gibbs, 2008). In a nutshell, the software is quite efficient as a data management and analysis tool. The memo function of the software will be used to make notes about, or tag specific passages to clarify the context of the codes created. At data saturation (coding all the transcripts), field notes will be reviewed from each interview session and codes revised to reflect additional information. Descriptive quotes will be used from the interviews to illustrate each theme and to write descriptive summations from respondents.

Qualitative content analysis is one of the several qualitative methods currently available for analysing data and interpreting its meaning (Schreier, 2012). As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). In content analysis, data is required to be reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) by creating categories, concepts, conceptual system, conceptual map, or a model (Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990). The goal of content

analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p314).

Content analysis helps to gain "direct information from study participants without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives" (Hseih and Shannon, 2005, p1279).

A major downside in using qualitative content analysis is the time-consuming nature of this data analysis method. There is a need to check the accuracy of the data and to ensure its representativeness (Burnham, et al., 2008). In a nutshell, the method "can only be as good as the document on which the practitioner works" (Bryman, 2012, p306).

Scott (1990) suggests that research texts should be scrutinised for "authenticity, credibility and representativeness" to ensure the best outcomes.

Scharp and Sanders (2019) note that thematic analysis is a qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within a data corpus. Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that thematic analysis requires researchers to ask themselves a variety of questions, typically surrounding "What is a theme?" They argue that a theme captures a salient aspect of the data in a patterned way, regardless of whether that theme captures the majority of experience. Therefore, instead of asking questions of quantity, researchers engaged in thematic analysis need to ask whether a set of data answers the research question in a meaningful way.

Braun and Clarke (2006) set out a six-steps iterative process for conducting thematic analysis: (1) becoming familiar with the data; (2) generating coding categories; (3) generating themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) locating exemplars. Becoming familiar with the data might include transcription or (re)reading the data. Generating codes requires marking interesting features of the data in a systematic way and then collating the data. Generating themes requires the researcher to collate initial codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to the particular theme. Reviewing themes is the process of checking

whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. Defining and naming themes consists of determining the heart of what each theme conveys: knowing what it is and what it is not. Finally, locating exemplars requires the researcher to make a selection of compelling examples that provide evidence of the theme and relate to the research question.

A major advantage of using thematic analysis is that it is flexible and can be easily modified to suit the needs of different studies and provide rich and complex data sets (Braun and Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) and King (2004), the method helps to unpack similarities and differences within the data sets. By so doing, it helps to summarise key points of large data sets by selecting salient themes. However, while flexibility is a major advantage of thematic analysis, it can also be included among its limitations. This is due to the fact that flexibility can result in inconsistency and incoherence in developing themes from the research data sets.

The use of these data analysis methods, taking into account their advantages and drawbacks, is to enable the researcher to triangulate in order to produce a thesis that adequately answers the research questions set out at the beginning of this study.

Another key factor that was considered in the data analysis was the importance of hearing the voices of respondents. This was necessary to ensure that context was not lost but more importantly, it was necessary to use large block of quotes from respondents since there were seen as co-creators in this research (Chilisa, 2017; Berger-Gonzalez et al. 2016; Smith, 2021). Conducting a study on decolonisation meant that decolonised methods were employed for the research.

4.4 Ethics

Different research paradigms call for different ethical considerations (Lincoln, 1990; Wax, 1979). The reflective nature of qualitative research makes it necessary that ethical

considerations are taken seriously since it has "intellectual, emotional or political outcomes, including power relationships between researcher and researched" (Bresler, 1996).

Lincoln and Guba's (2000) model on qualitative research is instructive in discussions on ethical issues in media and communication studies. The model comprises five paradigms namely: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory action research.

The positivist theoretical paradigm argues that ethical issues are outside the research process (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Proponents believe the researcher has total control over the research output and can determine what is acceptable or not. In this regard, the researcher can use deceptive methods to collect data if this helps to contribute to knowledge production. Thus, positivists are guided by teleological ethics and believe that "the end justifies the means; deception is acceptable" (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p14).

Post-positivists generally concur with the position of positivists but believe that the researcher should take responsibility for "the effects of the research-on-research subjects" (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p14).

Lincoln and Guba's (2000) third paradigm category is non-positivism, which comprises three (3) types of researchers: the critical theorist, constructivist and participatory. This perspective views "the moral dimension of the research as intrinsic" (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p14).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) contend that the critical theorist should always act in the interests of the research subjects and be motivated by the need to act morally and minimise harm. On the other hand, constructivists and participatory researchers argue that research subjects need to be involved at every stage of the research process, and this includes making ethical decisions.

This researcher worked with the knowledge that ethical research is imperative and was therefore guided by the non-positivist theoretical perspective. The researcher aimed to minimise harm to the research subject and include them in ethical processes.

The researcher, being mindful of ethical considerations in qualitative research, endeavoured to protect the anonymity of respondents where sensitive issues are raised (Givens, 2008), seek their consent, and protect the data received from them. Saunders et al. (2015) posit that anonymity, which is a form of confidentiality, should not have the idealised view that a respondent cannot be traced from the data. They agree with Van den Hoonaard that complete anonymity in qualitative research can be an "unachievable goal" (2003, p141).

Responses of the party interviewees have been identified with the code PP, indicating "political party respondent" to comply with the promise of anonymity which was offered to respondents prior to the data-gathering exercise. Public relations and political communications scholars and experts have been identified with codes PR-PC to ensure anonymity.

Finally, it should be noted that ethical issues do not only involve the researcher and the research subject. Other stakeholders, like the university's ethical committee are also involved. This study is bound by the University of Westminster's ethical procedures and guidelines. In this regard, an ethical form was submitted to the University's Ethics Committee and subsequently approved before undertaking any data collection.

The need to follow the university's ethical policy before undertaking any research cannot be overemphasised. The policy's guidelines help to protect the researcher and subjects from any form of harm and also "reduce the likelihood of legal action by research subjects against researchers and their institution" (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p15). Bertrand and Hughes argue that institutional ethical policies "should be seen as an opportunity to be taken advantage of, rather than a burden to be circumvented" (2005, p15).

4.5 Researcher Positionality

My positionality as a public relations professional influenced my choice of this topic. As a member of the occupation (Loxley and Seery, 2008), I come to this research with a priori, intimate knowledge of

the field and the context in which PR is practiced in Ghana. While this has some advantages including how my pre-existing knowledge of the context of the research and enabled me to interact with colleagues and ask meaningful questions (Meriam et al., 2001), I had to deal with the critique of insider research being subjective and bias by ensuring that I do not project my views and opinions on respondents (Van Heugten, 2007). As a mitigating factor, being an inside researcher also meant that I had to reflect on my practice as a professional as well as how I have taught over the years as a Public Relations lecturer as suggested by Van Heugten (ibid). This "interviewing of myself" through self-reflection led to sharing my opinions in certain portions of the study. While I strive for objectivity as an inside researcher, like Mohammed (2022) I agree that objectivity is socially constructed thus whether a researcher detaches themselves from their subject or not the researcher's positionality filters through anyway.

4.6 Conclusion

The research employed the qualitative method approach to examine political PR practice in Ghana. By using in-depth interviews as well as qualitative content analysis of newspapers. This allowed the researcher to probe into the lived experiences of public relations and political communication practitioners.

Chapter 5

Public Relations, Political Communication and Lived Experiences

Decolonial Praxis

5.0 Introduction

The chapter makes propositions on what decolonised PR teaching, research and practice should entail. Benecke (2019) notes the incompleteness of global North theory in public relations practise in Africa, she adds that taking on theories and models that are not situated in the context of African practitioners does not advance the practise in the continent. In practical fields such as PR, theory helps us appreciate praxis, like Kurt Lewin famously observed "there is nothing more practical than a good theory" (Lewin 1952, p169). What this translates into includes an ethical system that is different from what global north practitioners espouse. For example, in many African countries paying journalists to carry a story is considered 'normal', PR practitioners have been known to do what is considered unethical in global north settings due to the differences in cultures between PR practise on the African continent and western PR practice. This chapter will explore the several ways in which public relations and political communication reflect and affect the daily lives of Ghanaians. I argue that just like Mano and Milton (2021) propose in Afrokology, PR and political communication practices are embedded with "Ghanaianness". The chapter is based on interviews with political PR experts and practitioners. The chapter, therefore, analyses current Public Relations and political communication practices to answer the study's research questions.

5.1 PR Curriculum, Teaching and Practice in Ghana

While Public relations education started in 1960 with the establishment of the Ghana Institute of Journalism by Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah (Blankson, 2004), the curriculum in Ghana is heavily influenced by global North theories (Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023; Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman, 2023; Thompson, 2018). This agrees with Nyamnjoh's (2019, p2) assertion that whereas most African Universities have succeeded in Africanising their personnel "but not their curricula, pedagogical structures, or epistemologies in a systematic and productive manner". As earlier noted, public relations practice in Ghana is heavily influenced by the cultural context of practitioners, but this is often explained away with global north theories (see Wu and Baah-Boakye; 2009, 2006). Even research on the lived experiences of public practitioners tends to examine these lived experiences in the light of these same theories (see Anani-Bossman, 2021; Eshun, 2013; Amo-Mensah, 2009). The result is that public relations practice in Ghana tends to be heavily influenced by theories such as Grunig et al's (1992) excellence study according to Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman (2023) because like Thompson (2018) explains, the teaching and research in educational institutions tends to centre this more.

Indeed, Respondent PRPC-008 recounts his experience on an interview panel:

> So, I sat in an interview where the interviewee was asked about the Excellence Theory and her perspective, she was a woman. A GIJ MA PR graduate, and they asked that because at the position she was going to work under the Head of Business Development, so they wanted to find out her perspective of what the Excellence Theory says. She insisted that PR had to be a part of the dominant coalition and therefore should not be under the Head of Business Development.
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> She was finding it very difficult to apply it in the local context because while the excellence theory says that for PR to be effective, it must belong to the dominant coalition or it must be part of the executive team or executive management team, so she insisted on her point. The panel asked her

so if you come in and PR is not part of the senior management team, how are you going to find it? She persisted in her argument that it was not the best because the best is what the PR Excellence Theory says. My point is that at the end of the day because she was taught the spirit of that theory as it was done from the West, she couldn't contextualise it.[17]

Several such examples of public relations practitioners who cannot contextualise the theories they learn, and their lived experiences abound causing what Wa 'Thiongo in *Decolonising the Mind* calls the paradox of the African civil servant/elite; a lack of connection of what is learnt in the classroom to everyday life.

The call for PR practitioners to be able to connect theory to practice must not be limited to the theory learnt in the classroom alone because as Nabudere (2006; pg. 9) posits we need to regard 'all sources of knowledge as valid within their historical, cultural or social contexts and seeks to engage them into a dialogue that can lead to better knowledge for all.' However, in most instances the "knowledge" that is accepted as valid is the knowledge emanating from the global north. Ghanaian PR practitioners come to the practice many times not just with 'classroom learning but also with experiences and knowledges that come from what Respondent PR-PC-015 in quoting Curtin and Gaither[18] refers to as their 'positions of privilege or oppression and identity differences'. These experiences must count in their PR practice journey and inform how they are taught. For example, Respondent PR-PC-006 believes that "PR starts locally". He recounts a bid for a contract where his lived experience from childhood won him the contract. I therefore argue like Curtin and Gaither (2005; p 91-92) that 'theory is needed that privileges the processes through which identities are made and contested

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[17] PRPC-008, Interview, May, 2022

[18] Curtin and Gaither (2005)

and power differentials shift given situational variables to inform public relations practice in its wide variety of forms.'

The development of curriculum must centre local contexts rather than what Allais (2016) refers to as western thought. Writing about how decolonising philosophy might look like, Allais argues that:

> Both decolonising the curriculum and Africanising the curriculum could mean a number of things. For example, one thing that could be meant is having more of the curriculum taken up with African philosophy and less with so-called Western philosophy… (2016, p537)

It is critical that curriculum development decentres global north thought and theories because like Wiredu suggests, we must work at 'divesting our thought of all modes of conceptualization emanating from the colonial past that cannot stand the test of due critical reflection' (Wiredu 1998, p17, 2002, p56, 2004, p15) and the evidence clearly indicates that our over reliance on global north theories discounts and disparages our lived experiences (Mano and Milton, 2021).

Respondents were unanimous in their belief that PR teaching and practice should be a hybrid of both western and African thought because like PRPC-001 notes it will be "difficult to totally decolonise[19]." His argument corresponds with Posholi (2020, p284) who also argues that:

> …we are already immersed in, and have internalized, Eurocentric thought. We cannot get 'outside' of it. The idea that Western thought is unavoidable suggests that despite their dubious implications in colonialism and other forms of injustice, Eurocentric conceptual tools are, in some ways, capable of helping us comprehend the world.

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[19] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

Their arguments reveal that as a practice, PR teaching and practice has been so ingrained with Eurocentric thinking and knowledge that practitioners cannot envisage a practice that challenges the dominant hegemonic world view.

While also calling for a balance, PRPC-006 argues, "Our knowledge of PR and political communication must be balanced because I believe that every PR starts locally. Cultural relevance is key."[20] PRPC-009 in acknowledging the influence of the global north in the life of the Ghanaian presently maintains that:

> There is actually a balance, it is not even about acknowledging one or the other. Anyway, the local is obviously important because of who we are but at the same time it makes sense to be aware of what is happening internationally and what we can learn and pick from them. No man is an island. Because at the end of the day, what we don't realize is whether we like it or not locally we are being influenced by what happens abroad. People don't even realize how lobbyist set the agenda and things like that.[21]

I however ask if their opinions are so unanimous because western thought is what they have always been exposed to? As earlier indicated in my introductory chapter, my postgraduate education in PR was heavily western theory based and therefore that was the way I taught students for over five years. While processing my thoughts and developing the conceptual framework for this study, I shared my thoughts with some colleagues who thought it should be aligned with concepts such as grounded theory and other such Western thought on research.

 I am however of the opinion that it is time to decentre western theory in our teaching and practice of PR in order to own it because like PRPC-009 notes, it seems impossible until it is done. While I agree with Nyamnjoh's (2019) call for convivial scholarship

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[20] PRPC-006, Interview, April 2022

[21] PRPC-009, Interview, April 2022

which "is scholarship that neither dismisses contested and contrary perspectives a priori nor throws the baby out with the bathwater." And with Gopal who argues that:

> Monocultures do not produce good thinking and are in themselves a lethal form of unmarked narrow identity politics. An intellectually expansive curriculum that, taken as a whole, puts different ideas, texts and traditions in conversation is pedagogically sound (2021, p877).

I argue that it is time to act beyond the rhetoric of decolonisation because as Gopal further describes, references to decolonisation especially in the academy has become capacious. Mignolo (2011, p277) adds that decolonial awareness must lead to 'epistemic disobedience' and with it a resistance against the self-appointed custodians of knowledge, the global North.

Decolonial public relations must start from the classroom. Mano and Milton (2021) decry the teaching and learning of communication and media studies outside the context of Africa. This has led to the creation of practitioners who cannot relate what they are taught in the classroom with their day-to-day experiences. African scholarship has been implicated in the colonisation of the African (Mohammed, 2022; Dutta and Pal, 2020). The African academy is unwittingly a site of and for coloniality. In an attempt to fit in to "global standards," much of the scholarship on PR barring a few aims at presenting the practice as fitting in to widely accepted Anglo-American perspectives and theories of PR. This legitimises Western ways of knowing and perpetuates the *othering* of African knowledge systems. Indeed, even research scholarship that proposes African knowledge systems and philosophies such as *Ubuntu* as a key approach almost always ends with a caveat that makes it seem as though African PR scholarship is begging for a place in the global PR landscape (Ngondo and Klyueva, ibid; Anani-Bossman and Tandoh, 2023). Nyamnjoh (2017) acknowledges the conviviality of the African, but I opine that conviviality has been our undoing. In *Theorizing from the Global South*,

Dutta, and Pal (2020, pp356-357) note the unbalanced power relations and politics of knowledge that theorists from the Global South deal with:

> The nature of theorizing from the Global South is rooted within the empirical contexts of the South, emergent from observations and concepts rooted in the South. Whereas some forms of theorizing from the peripheries put forth conceptual frameworks emergent from within the empirical contexts, other forms of theorizing engage dialogically with metropolitan theories. In the realm of Communication Studies, the politics of the discipline constitutes the dynamics of theorizing from the South, with pressures for empirical investigations from the South to fit into the metropolitan, predominantly U.S.-based theories. In other instances, empirical investigations emerging from the South create openings for "rendering impure" metropolitan theories, depicting their limits and simultaneously creating new conceptual openings.

I contend that African PR scholarship and practice will need a radical and well thought-through approach to decolonise PR. Respondent PRPC-015 recommends that PR scholarship and practice needs to go back to the real meaning of PR. He notes:

> Okay, so in my view, a decolonised PR practice would be the kind of PR, doing PR in a way that supports the new and proper definition of public relations. You know, various PR Institute's, think tanks, and professional groupings, like the Public Relations Society of America, even IPR Ghana, have various definitions of public relations, which generally speaks to it being, the strategic management of communication for the benefit of multiple stakeholders. Although we define PR, from a social justice perspective, which speaks to the fact that there are multiple stakeholders, and that their interests must be served in a mutually beneficial manner. However, when the rubber meets the road, the real value of PR seems to only privilege, the powerful, the dominant coalition, making it really discriminatory. And has contributed to giving the organisation and the profession, quite a bad name, or a bad reputation. So, with decolonial, PR, we are talking about PR that is true to its definition of serving multiple stakeholder perspectives, which means that it's a kind of PR that departs from what some people call the modernist perspective, which only seems to privilege the powerful and symmetric agreement, which seems to only support the view that PR practice is only for the benefit of the powerful in society. But we're living in an era where society

is marked by difference; is marked by the need to oppose social justice, the need to respect multiple stakeholder perspectives not just the interests of the powerful in society. So, when we when we try to decolonise public relations, we are living up to its own definition as envisioned by professionals and as we have defined it.

There is this clamour for public relations to be used as a positive and a powerful tool for bringing the two sides together, for lifting society up and for driving society in a needed direction that will help it contribute to the greater good. So decolonised public relations practice will help contribute to the real and proper intention of what PR is supposed to be. And the role that PR is supposed to serve in society. [22]

He further argues like Holtshausen (2002) that:

… we need to move PR away from modernist perspectives, that privilege consensus that only serves those with money and power; to a desired state where PR is used more to achieve the greater good, the common good, which means that PR will become a positive tool, a powerful medium that will serve everybody's interest. Because everybody's interest matters, whether race, whether based on ability, whether based on creed, or belief system, we all matter, because we are all one. So, in the definition, if we're really practicing the definition, then PR really should be a decolonised activity or practice rather than what we see currently where big corporations use it for the benefits against the weak in society.

While Allaise (2016) argues that demarcating Western thought for exclusion in curriculum might lead to the perpetuation of certain influence on western though by other regions, Mohammed (2021, p130) on the other hand argues that:

When departments design curricula and professors teach material only produced by white, northern scholars while marginalizing the work of Africans in African Media Studies, they are reinforcing the notion that African students and African scholarship do not belong in the academy.

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[22]PRPC-015, Interview, June 2023

I agree with Mohammed (2021) and further argue that it is even more egregious when this is done by Africans. In undertaking this research, I have had senior colleagues in academia ask why I am being so radical in my call for decolonising the curriculum for communication studies and by extension PR.

On curriculum development and decolonial PR teaching, PR-PC-018 diagnoses the challenge succinctly and notes that:

> We've not really developed curricula you know; we've just reproduced curricula from elsewhere. Whenever we are teaching PR, we just look for what is in American textbooks and elsewhere. Our PR syllabi is not homegrown but modelled along Eurocentric PR syllabi models.[23]

He further recommends PR curriculum that encourages students to be reflective, gain cultural intelligence as well as receive a mindset shift from the dominant Eurocentric PR models. He added the need for documenting and using local case studies to ensure that examples resonate with students. Whereas some scholars (Waisboard, 2017; Appiah, 2007; Held, 1995) call for cosmopolitanism in an attempt to decolonise and dewesternise media studies, I argue that PR curriculum must first centre the African ways of knowing and living in the teaching and practice of PR if we are to "rescue" it from the capitalist inclinations. Austin and Toth (2011, p506) posit that 'although there can be differences between public relations education and practice, education has an influence on practitioners, especially recent graduates entering the job market.' I therefore contend that PR education must reflect as closely as possible, the lived experience students when they start practice.pr-pc-018

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[23] PRPC-018, Interviewed in June 2023

5.2 PR Roles and Function

Research on public relations practice in Ghana examining the experiences of practitioners contradict each other in terms of the place of PR in the corporate organogram. While Wu and Baah-Boakye (2009, 2006) conducted a study that found that public relations practitioners in Ghana practice at the managerial level, Anani-Bossman (2021) found that practitioners in Ghana do not engage in strategic functions. These contradictions in the literature show that while they may be in management positions, practitioners may be more implementers of management decisions. While this deviates from what global north theorists such as Grunig et al (2002) propose, the anecdotal explanation also tends to favour a narrative that suggests that organisations do not understand the role of public relations in Ghana. I however argue that the premise on which PR is taught is wrong in the first place. The concentration of the teaching from global north angles and with global north case studies presents practitioners with a cognitive dissonance of sorts with their lived experiences being different from their theory. On a personal level as a teacher, I have often answered this question of the difference in what is taught and what is practiced by insisting that practitioners persist in explaining to their organisations about the role of PR. I have however come to recently argue that if public relations was for example taught from Ghanaian traditional governance principle based on Ghanaian traditional courts/chief palaces practices, practitioners will understand their role better but more importantly, even corporations and political parties will understand the PR function better.

This lack of understanding of public relations as a function is also translated into the political parties and the political PR space which has seen 'Directors of Communication' of the two main political parties being seen as people more with 'a gift of the gab' rather than strategic partners in the democratic process. Until recently,

there was an influx of untrained people, holding themselves out as PR practitioners just because they had a gift of the gab. Respondent PR-PC-006 adduces the argument that the failure to see communications as strategically important and not an afterthought makes political parties choose communicators who have no training in PR and communications. He surmises thus:

> To lead the communications unit, you must be able to talk and insult and defend your party's position. But I always tell them that there is more to communication than talking. The strategy part of communications is the most important, it's not the talking. (Interview, May 2022)

Practitioners lived experiences when it come to the roles they play day-to-day is certainly different from the Eurocentric models and roles of PR. I argue that rather *othering* these differences by comparing them to what pertains in the global north, we need to accept these differences and build our practice based on African values that promote respect, dialogue, and reciprocity.

5.3 Public relations Lived Experiences-Ethics

Additionally, another key area of the lived experiences of public relations practitioners that differs from what they are taught theoretically is in giving monetary inducements, what is popularly referred to as *soli*/brown envelope to journalists. The practice while considered unethical seems prevalent in the Africa. In *Brown Envelope Journalism: The Contradiction between ethical mindset and unethical Practice*, Skjerdal (2011, p137) reports that:

> …from Maseru to Marrakech, Dar es Salaam to Dakar, the brown envelope is spreading like an Arab Spring in newsrooms across the continent. In Cameroon it is known as *gombo*, in Ghana as *soli*, in Liberia as *gatu,* in Nigeria as *kola*, in Ethiopia as *buche*, in Tanzania as *mshiko*—and the list goes on and on.

While PR practitioners do not think *soli* is payment for coverage, the practice is unethical and Kasoma (2010, p18) believes it influences journalists to 'report legitimate development news to a public relations model where news is heavily influenced by source payment'. Chentiba (2021) avers that public relations practitioners offer financial inducement to journalists to avoid paying high commercial rates for publicising their products and services. Like Kasoma (2010) I opine that PR practitioners perpetuate the payment of *soli* first because of their inability to build mutually beneficial relationships with journalist, but also it creates a power dynamic that ensures that journalists publish their stories so that they can be invited to cover subsequent events. Public relations practitioners are aware of the poor remuneration and working conditions of journalists, therefore in paying *soli*, PR practitioners create a power dynamic that ensures that journalists are beholden to them. Like the Akan proverb says, *obi yɛ wo papa aa wa ha wo*, to wit you become beholden to one who does you good.

Nhedzi and Azionya (2022) observed that public relations practitioners in South Africa for example sacrifice their ethics and moral conscience for the organisational reputation and recommend the implementation of an African based value system within organisational settings to reduce the ethical dilemmas practitioners deal with as "they toggle and struggle between their marginalised African mores and value systems and the western capitalist-driven work contexts" Nhedzi and Azionya (2022, np). African ethics is understood to be 'constituted by the deeds, habits, and behaviour patterns considered worthwhile because of their consequences on human welfare' (Gyekye[24],

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[24] http://seop.illc.uva.nl/entries/african-ethics/

2010), meaning that it is heavily tied to the individual responsibility as well as the need to act in ways that benefit one's society. Gyekye (2010) explains the link between the African's concept of ethics and character and adds that for the African:

> …humanitarian ethics spawns social morality, the morality of the common good, and the morality of duty that is so comprehensive as to bring within its compass what are referred to as moral ideals (such as love, virtue, compassion), which are considered supererogatory in Western ethics. But central or basic to the African morality is character, for the success of the moral life is held to be a function of the quality of an individual's personal life. A moral conception of personhood is held in African ethics, the conception that there are certain basic moral norms and ideals to which the conduct of the individual human being, if he is a person, ought to conform.

Following in the footsteps of Kasoma (1994, 1996) and Chasi (2021), Mano (2021) advances the 'need for African-centred moral and ethical codes' from an Afrokological standpoint to prevent Africans from being sucked into supposed global ethical systems which differ in context and practice from what people in the global north. This is especially important in the case of Ghana where the industry body, Institute of Public Relations, Ghana admits to subscribing to the "Code of Athens[25]." Such global codes tend to centre global north ideals, like Shome and Hegde (2002, p179) posit regarding matters of globalisation:

> …while indeed (a) nation does remain an actor in globalization, it is only "an" actor in the complexities of globality; and while the power of certain nations continues to be rather strong, that power however is not always enacted in the same fashion as in earlier times.

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[25] https://www.iprghana.com/ethics/

By this, public relations practitioners from countries such as Ghana lose their mores and ethical values and take on that of others leading to the conflict Nhedzi and Azionyi (2022) referred to earlier.

Predicting the future of PR ethics, Bowen (2023, p498) argues that:

> In the future, public relations ethics will be challenged in myriad unpredictable ways. These challenges will come in the forms of loss of privacy rights, information warfare, AI warfare, political division, recession, pandemics, over-crowding, famine, violence, information suppression, natural disasters, climate change, and the crises, scandals, and collapses borne of selfishness. The future communication environment is one that is surrounded in habitable areas with instantaneous worldwide communication, no longer subject to editing, fact-checking, and gatekeeping as we understand them in mass communication theory. In this vortex of unfiltered information, critical thought, varying levels of media literacy, and verifying information will be of vital importance.

I daresay that African PR practice is already in this future and has seen western public relations agencies such as Bell Pottinger and Cambridge Analytica try to subvert the will of the African people and its democracy. It is important that African PR practitioners craft ethical standards that reflect our culture to stem against unethical PR practices that have been used against the African people.

5.4 Decolonial PR Research

In *Development of public relations research in Ghana: A systematic review*, Nutsugah and Anani-Bossman (2023) note that in the last ten (10) years, only twenty-six (26) peer reviewed articles from academic search engines on public relations research in Ghana. This shows the dearth of Public Relations research in Ghana despite the growth of PR education and practice in the country. I theorise that this dearth of research of PR in Ghana on the global front could be because in the past, PR lecturers have been more

inclined towards practice than research. While this is not an excuse not to publish, practitioners tend to be impatient with academic publishing processes (Anani-Bossman, 2021; Anani-Bossman and Fella, 2017). Respondent PR-PC-011 recounts an incident in 2018 that shows a lack of research into communication studies in general and public relations in particular in Ghana:

> I came to the communication department when I was doing my research, I think in 2018, and I attended one or two of the lectures and I was amazed to see that these very old and over used theories were still the ones that are being taught. And I thought wow. So, they haven't moved away from the old sort of, in my opinion, obsolete theories. No, they haven't. They are still using them, and they haven't made allowances for these newer theories that help us to better explain the communication situation that we have in the world.

Researchers from the global south have had cause to raise questions about how exclusionary journals have been towards them. Indeed, Mignolo (2011, p277) notes that for global south scholars who 'dare' to be epistemically disobedient, they 'will pay the price, for journals, magazines, disciplines in the social sciences and humanities as well as the social sciences and professional schools, are territorial.' I however argue that in some cases we have not put in the work necessary for PR research to grow and thrive in Ghana. I further posit that as an academy, we will have to create our own journals that while not being substandard, is fit for purpose and speaks to our peculiar circumstances.

Respondent PRPC-015 recommends that there needs to be more acceptance of other theories and worldviews by journals in the global north. His sentiments align with those of Sriramesh et al (2013) who recommend that:

> If public relations practice and scholarship are to evolve from the current ethnocentricity, there is a dire need for greater numbers of studies from different socio-cultural environments that not only describe how public relations is currently being practiced in those cultures but more importantly, why such a practice exists and what purposes it serves. Unless we have empirical data from a

variety of socio-cultural environments, existing public relations theorizing at the global level will remain conceptual and not empirical.

Decolonial communication scholars (see Mohammed, 2021; Asante, 2020) have argued that while research from the African perspective is critical for the growth of the discipline, how that research is carried out is equally and important in the decolonisation process. Respondent PRPC-017 advocates that academic researchers become co-creators/collaborators with their subjects in acknowledgement of their wisdom and expertise in their indigenous contexts. This agrees with Chilisi's (2017) argument that people with indigenous knowledge on various subjects must have their knowledge exposed and their reputation as sages celebrated.

5.5 Globalised Public Relations Practice in Ghana

Public relations and globalisation or global PR have become an oft-used phrase given the influence globalisation has had on PR practice. Surma (2016, p394) summarises globalisation as 'the accelerated movements and flows of people, finance, trade and services, and ideas and communications between and across state and continental boundaries.' Her definition of globalisation as with others posits that with technological advancement, the world has become a so-called 'global village.' Scholars such as Dutta (2012), Dutta and Pal (2020) have however questioned the motive towards globalised PR practice. Their critique of a globalised PR practice is shared by several global south scholars in the field of media and communications who argue that a globalised practice benefits the global north more than the global south (see Mignolo, 2011; Shome and Hegde, 2002). For example, Surma (2016, p394) argues that:

> Globalisation is experienced and responded to differently by each of us, depending on our material situations, on the relationships which support and structure our lives and work, and on our relative capacity to exercise our agency and choices in terms of those movements and flows. In this sense,

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the boundaries transforming our lives are not only geographical, but also political, social, and gendered, since patterns of human relationships in the family, at work, and in local, state, and global communities affect and are affected by globalising forces. Thus, for privileged individuals and communities, borders and boundaries may be opening up in exciting and perhaps also confronting and challenging ways. Conversely, for people who are disadvantaged or marginalised, those borders and boundaries (both their existence and possible transgression) may be experienced by turns as either restrictive, protective, or exclusionary.

There is no doubt that for countries in the global south, while scholars such as Anani-Bossman and Tandoh (2023, p57) may argue that "the spread of globalisation affords public relations scholars and practitioners on the continent the opportunity to expand their scope by critically examining the current state of theory and practice within an African context.", globalised PR is tends to centre global north theories due to what Mignolo (2011) refers to as the othering of knowledge production systems that do not originate from the global north. And as already established, with a curriculum that is heavily dependent on the global north, one can safely argue that globalising public relations in Ghana will only lead to a perpetuation of global north ideals.

As previously mentioned, the consensus view among respondents seems to be that public relations and political communication knowledge must be a blend between local and global practices, what PR-PC-004 refers to as 'glocalisation'. Respondent PRPC-003 professes that:

> …communication is definitely culture specific so I definitely think there should be a blend. The upsurge in debate for instance is something that we've seen based on global political communication practices. Debates have been used more and more in Ghana and even debates for smaller politic parties, the outdooring of the Vice President and also the launch of the manifestoes and the speeches that accompany it. I think all those are global communication practices.
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> But then we've also had our won local ways of doing rallies, we've also had our own local ways of having walks, we've also had our own way of having vans blare out music, we've also had our local ways of involving musicians in our political communication. So, I think that's a good blend

of global best practices and also trying to make the political communication culturally relevant and situated in order for democracy to be understood and well embraced by the very different sections of Ghanaians, is very important. [26]

Respondent PRPC-005 adds:

I think that the political communication must be two-headed, global at the same time local. So, you must have which people will say global best practices but locally relevant. So, in as much as we are fused within the global setting, there is no way you are not going to be exposed to the global practices because every day you are watching CNN, you are listening to the press, they are telling you how Joe Biden won the elections and how he did this, he did that. So, in the first place you are sold that there is a practice that can help you win the election. So, you bought into that, or you have been exposed in one or the other having schooled abroad, having interacted, having watched these things. So, you feel there is a compelling approach to elections and so naturally you are aligning by it, or you align to it.

But it has to be locally responsive and that is where our nuances, our sociocultural nuances come in. So yes, you have heard that Joe Biden won the elections by doing some research, understanding the people what they need etc. Okay, so you have conducted research but when you conducted the research you are not leaving away the idea that you have to give gifts because yes, you have understood the issues, their problems, but that only will not win the election. Going to tell them that I have understood your issue, I think you need school you should know that that alone will not help so you have to give alms. So, then these things come in to play, so you try to adapt what is called the global practices or global best practices but then make it responsive to the local needs or the local nuances of the people. So yes, you are adopting global practices, best practices but making sure that it is responsive to the local conditions in order that you can have an effective approach. So, I think these are some of the things we need to understand.[27]

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[26] PRPC-003, Interview, December 2021

[27] PRPC-005, Interview, January 2022

Respondent PRPC-003 however cautioned against local exclusionary practices in the adoption of globalised political communication strategies:

> … because we have such a huge digital divide in Ghana, you do not expect that everything will play out on social media or on the internet, otherwise, it's going to be disadvantaging a certain section of the population vis a vis those in the rural areas, those with lower socio-economic background, those who are less literate, I mean those people will be disadvantaged. And so there needs to be other indigenous culture specific ways of reaching out to these demographics or specific groups of people. So, I do think that a good blend of it will be very helpful.[28]

His argument is supported by Shome and Hegde (2002, p176) who argue that globalisation 'utilizes spaces and places in ways that produce complex planes of exclusion and inclusion, empowerment and disempowerment'. In the case of Ghana, political PR practices that adopt global best practices may increase the inclusion of certain marginalised people in the conversation (as we will see in the next chapter) but may also exclude others in the lower socio-economic bracket.

Practitioners' current lived experiences clearly shows a leaning towards globalised PR rather than decolonised PR. While their argument that globalisation is our current reality has some merit, it is important that PR practice and by extension political PR practice in Ghana develops locally first before taking on a global appearance to avoid us losing ourselves and our culture altogether (Shome and Hegde, 2002).

Again, one wonders if globalisation is not just an excuse by the African elite to deeply examine itself, throw out its affinity with global north ideals and knowledge systems which have been projected as superior to African and other global south ideals and develop homegrown theories that meet our reality rather that contorting ourselves to fit a mold that we will never fit in.

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[28] PRPC- 003, Interview, December, 2021

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined the lived experiences of public relations practitioners in Ghana currently and established that a PR curriculum that centres the global north has created a pool of practitioners who live between a matrix that differs from their lived experience, creating a disconnection between what they are taught and how the practice actually is. The next two chapters will highlight how political PR played out in the 2012 and 2016 elections in Ghana.

Chapter Six

Election 2012 and 2016

6.0 Introduction

The in-depth interview sessions were carried out to understand how political parties use public relations. It aims to offer a detailed analysis of the public relations' efforts that political parties adopt in relation to strategies and techniques employed by the parties in the run up to the 2012 and 2016 general elections. The political party respondents shared the reasons behind their respective decisions while the political communication and public relations' practitioners examined the practice of political communication and PR by the political parties, benchmarking it against best practices.

The study used purposive sampling to ensure that respondents had an in-depth knowledge about the subject being discussed (Mensah, 2011; Neumann, 2000). Public relation experts and communication directors of the two main political parties in Ghana were therefore interviewed. Respondents were chosen based on their expert knowledge in the research subject. This means that a good fraction of the respondents had over ten years' experience in the practice of PR, while some had researched and published on political communication and others were part of the decision-making processes of the political parties' communication process. Based on these criteria, the interviews covered two politicians, four academics and seven public relations practitioners. As observed in the methodology chapter, the identity of the respondents is replaced with codes to ensure anonymity.

Nyamnjoh (2021), Nyamnjoh (2017) and Nyamnjoh (2012) posit that there is the need to understand that knowledge is incomplete and that there is a pluriversality of knowledge. He recommends that all these need to be acknowledged, and therefore

proposes conviviality as a solution. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), likewise, call for epistemic freedom by 'deprovincialising Africa' and diffusing the knowledge radiating from the global North hegemonic centre. He agrees with Comaroff and Comaroff who argue for the shifting of the "epistemic scaffold" of knowledge to Africa as a site for understanding and interpreting the world (2012, pp1-2). Ni and Sha (2023) acknowledge that theory is not culture-free, and that theory development cannot be done without the influence of the inherent cultures therein. I contend that as an epistemological tool, proverbs can serve as a theory to analyse and explain political PR practices in Ghana. This research takes on this challenge and attempts to interpret political PR in Ghana by using proverbs rather than global north theories.

In this chapter, data analysis was tied to the research questions and themes were drawn based on respondents' answers.

6.1 Political Communication and Democracy (It is the people that constitute chieftaincy[29] - BogoN proverb)

RQ2: To what extent has PR been decolonised in Ghana and what has been its impact on African politics? How have political parties in Ghana deployed such decolonised PR since the country's return to democratic rule?

McNair (2002) notes that public relations has become a prerequisite if a political party intends to win elections despite its negative influence on Britain's democracy. Amoakohene (2004) credits media liberalisation and by extension public relations for

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[29] Kleinewillinghofer, 2007, cited in Dei et al. (2018)

the improvement of Ghana's democracy. Like McNair, Arllen (2011) notes the corrupting influence of former politicians who complete their term and join public relations firms as lobbyists (cited in Blach-Ørsten et al., 2017) in Sweden. This shows that whereas in Europe public relations has had a corrupting influence on democracy, the reverse is true in Ghana.

When respondents were asked about the impact of public relations on Ghana's democracy, there was a unanimous consensus on the notion that PR has a positive impact on democracy. The common thread in all respondents' arguments was that after more than a decade of military rule, the liberalisation of Ghana's media space ensured that citizens got informed and could participate in the democratic process. A respondent notes:

> The fact that in the non-democratic state, in authoritarian regimes or military regimes, for instance, one of the major features that distinguish such societies from a democratic society is the restriction of free speech, which is the limitation in the ability for people to communicate, especially in authoritarian regimes as compared to democratic regimes. So, before 1992, we had the suppression of the press, we had the suppression of people's ability to express themselves freely and culminating in what was called the culture of silence within that dispensation[30].

Another respondent adds that:

> I would say that it has definitely been very influential and impactful in setting the agenda, in determining what the narratives are. … narratives on either side of the political divide. And then you know the agenda, the national agenda[31].

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[30] PRPC-003, Interview, December, 2021

[31] PRPC-009, Interview, May, 2022

Respondents' views are borne from the oppressive years of military dictatorship in Ghana from 1982-1992, where media freedom and the rights of citizens to express themselves were curtailed. Temin and Smith (2002) explain that Ghana shed its oppressive years of "culture of silence" from the military Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) years just before the 1992 elections. Like the Akan proverb says, "Sɛ wosi)seb) hene a, ɛmmisa w'aponkye bere a wayera", which literally translates to mean "if you crown a leopard king, don't ask about your lost goats", military dictatorships have been known to curtail free press and freedom of expression around the world (Gadzekpo, 2008; Amoakohene, 2007; Karikari, 1998; Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari, 1998). Temin and Smith (2002) add that the repeal of the criminal libel law in the early 2000s ensured that the media was truly liberalised, leading to a proliferation of media in the country. The opening up of the media space meant that political parties had an array of media with which to send across their information when campaigning, but more importantly, citizens had a choice in media selection and were better informed about happenings in the country and could therefore make informed political choices. Martinelli (2021), however, cites Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance to posit that media proliferation does not necessarily promote the idea of a marketplace of ideas because "people tend to narrow their focus along ideological lines to allow for cognitive shortcuts that bypass potential dissonance and silence an ideas marketplace" (1957, p50).

In Ghana, as in elsewhere, there are major news outlets that openly align with the political ideologies of the two main political parties. This has resulted in a very polarised media landscape where even the oft-cited "objective" media houses put the two political parties against each other in political debates on national issues that do not necessarily demand these kinds of engagements.

Despite the polarised media, media freedom is recognised as a catalyst for free speech, which in turn crystallises public opinion towards political events. Durham and Kellner (2006) argue that free speech enables individuals to communicate their thoughts, interests and needs, and hence influences political practice. This exchange of communication between the ruling class and the citizenry ensures that democracy is deepened. PRPC-003 acknowledges communication as providing the channels through which people participate in democracy and enables those seeking public office to make their intentions known to voters.

The deregulation of the media landscape has however culminated in what respondent PRPC-011 calls, "a colonisation of politics by the media". While this may not necessarily be detrimental to Ghana's democracy, media ownership, which is largely private and mostly belongs to politicians (Ahmad et al., 2016), means that there is an over-politicisation of issues. Thus, respondent PRPC-011 continues:

> Media organisations in these talk shows will bring someone from the various political parties, but it is always someone from NPP, someone from NDC and you would hardly hear an NPP commentator criticising what the NPP is doing or the NDC commentator criticising what the NDC is doing. So, in that sense you have political commentary that is so politically biased that it does not really give the right sort of information to the voters who are listening[32].

Fosu et al. (2019) contend that in Ghana the political class influences the media's agenda setting and therefore a media space largely owned by politicians with such biased political commentary may not really inure to the benefit of the citizenry (Asante, 2020). I argue that the current media ownership regulation is detrimental to Ghana's democracy since it entrenches partisanship therefore inhibiting democratic discourse

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[32] PRPC-011, Interview, May 2022

that is in the national interest. A former Chairman of Ghana's National Media Commission (NMC), Kabral Blay-Amihere, is reported to have said that political ownership of media outlets poses a threat to media freedom in Ghana. He is quoted as saying:

> If you look at the more than 400 radio and television stations in Ghana, it looks good for media pluralism, but a lot of them are owned by politicians or their surrogates. It does a lot to affect the integrity of the media[33].

As agenda builders, politicians and their interests are centred rather than issues that may be vital to voters, and this contradicts in some ways the agenda setting study conducted by McCombs and Shaw (1972). McCombs et al. (1997) believe that understanding how agenda setting is done underpins understanding contemporary democracy. Curtin and Gaither (2004) explain agenda building as the process through which agendas come to be absorbed or propagated by the media and political publics. PRPC-011 notes that politicians who understand agenda setting and agenda building have become more performative in their political actions rather than really taking political action. PRPC-011's assertion corroborates Chadwick's (2013) study in the US and UK which concluded that political power is wielded by those who can aptly make use of both old and new media. One therefore wonders if Ghana's democracy, which centres the agenda set by politicians and the ruling class, will experience growth. Gyimah-Boadi and Asunka indicate that while many Africans like democracy, they are becoming disillusioned by what they get from democratic structures in their countries creating a "democracy disappointment gap" (2021, p4).

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[33] https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/press-freedom-under-threat-from-politicians-who-own-media-organisations.html
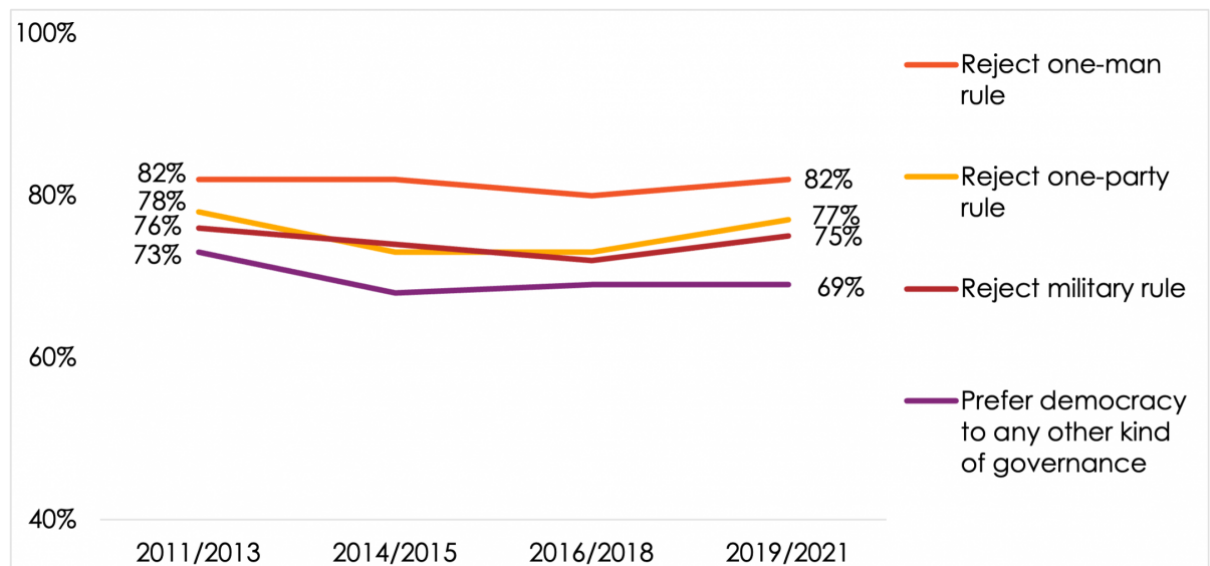
Figure 6.1: Africans' preference for democracy. Source: Afrobarometer[34]

This brings into sharp perspective concepts, such as Habermas' public sphere, and how it plays into political communication and democracy in Africa. The idea of the public sphere assumes that citizens are rational and informed and can trust the accuracy of the information they receive from the media. Critique of the concept includes its disregard of certain groups or "counterpublics" (Rosas and Serrano-Puche, 2018), and the lack of engagement of diverse public inherent in the public sphere. They further argue that the idea of a public sphere "idealises a communicative rationality that does not take into account the empirical complexities of political reality" (Rosas and Serrano-Puche, 2018, p2032).

These empirical complexities may lead to a top-down approach to political communication which Macnamara refers to as an "architecture of speaking" rather than an "architecture of listening" (2018, p10). For Africans and our democracy, Habermas' normative idea of a public sphere ignores what Ekeh (1975, cited in Suleiman, 2017)

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[34] https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/do-africans-want-democracy-and-do-they-think-theyre-getting-it/

refers to as a dichotomy in the moral foundation, shapes the private and public behaviour of the individual resulting in a bifurcated and racialised civil society, which is a creation of colonial powers (Mamdani, 1996). This kind of public sphere has created a democracy in Africa where leaders who are living in a conflicted state of customary and civil power are prone to corruption and speak down at citizens rather than engaging them in the governance process. Citizens are only seen as their votes which put politicians in power.

Respondent PRPC-002 agrees that public relations have had a positive impact on Ghana's democracy and bases his assertion on the PR's ability to shape and influence opinions. He notes that:

> Public relations have helped us to build that strong perception against coup d'état. And that is how come even today although everybody agrees to the fact that the NPP and NDC are not taking us anywhere, nobody would opt for a coup[35].

Respondent PRPC-002's sentiments align with other respondents who posited that while Ghana's democracy is still maturing and may not meet all the expectations of citizens, it is better than a military dictatorship. This is confirmed by Gyimah-Boadi and Asunka (2021) who maintain that African governments are not meeting the expectations in areas, such as the fight against corruption and the provision of citizens' daily needs through jobs and basic social amenities leading to citizens' democratic aspirations not being met. Respondent PRPC-002 notes that while PR has helped to build an aversion for coups, this may not have been deliberately done by politicians. However, discourse on the democratic process has created a perception that military

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[35] PRPC-002, Interview, December 2021

take-over of government is not in the interest of Ghana. Other respondents further add that PR has ensured that politicians and political parties engage with citizens as key stakeholders in the governance of the country. PRPC-005 adds that:

> Now have a lot more diverse stakeholders within the system. In the past, because of the restrictions we had, obviously coming out of the Rawlings' administration – PNDC era – the stakeholders were very few. We wouldn't have quite a lot of people who otherwise were interested in the political system for one reason or the other. Others were basically restricted from participating within the political system[36].

This corroborates Afrobarometer's Round 8 research which spanned 34 countries on the African continent and established that Africans "remain committed to democracy and democratic institutions". The Afrobarometer research continues that Africans believe that the military has no place in democratic governance which should be the preserve of political parties although imperfect should be the main way of electing leaders[37].

Stakeholder engagement and participation is a key component of any democratic process, and public relations enable this engagement in a way that brings value to both citizens and politicians/political parties. Respondents believe PR plays a critical role in stakeholder engagement as well as in relationship management. Respondent PRPC-005 emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement and argues that:

> Having had a broader space, having had a wide set of stakeholders participating in the political system means that we have to devise different tools, different approaches and then you have to have different strategies in appealing to all these diverse groups. And so, one of the surest ways we know is using PR. Because when we talk about stakeholder engagement, it is about public relations. And I think in a very direct manner, it has actually helped because it has one way, or

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[36] PRPC-005, Interview, January 2022

[37] https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2022-08/will-africans-calls-better-democracy-be-met

the other, improved the efficacy of the political parties' strategies. They've learnt a lot, in engagement for example[38].

Other respondents agree and cite the example of political parties and politicians making the effort to engage with market women, student groups as well as "everyday people," as a testament to the effect PR has had on democracy in Ghana. Seltzer (2020) points to the achievement of political goals as the motivation of these stakeholder engagements.

Strömbäck and Kiousis note the critical role of stakeholder relations/engagement in political PR in their definition as:

> The management process by which an actor for political purposes, through communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with *key publics and stakeholders* to help support its mission and achieve its goals. (2020, p11)

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of political PR since it ensures that messages are tailored to the various stakeholder groupings. According to Dewey (1916), a fully informed citizenry is critical in democracy (cited in Martinelli, 2020).

In the 2016 elections for example, a stakeholder group that had the two main political parties falling over themselves to engage were head porters popularly known as *kayayei* in Ghana. This unlikely group of stakeholders had the parties promising them varied options from skills training to hostels should either of the political parties come to power[39]. Respondent PRPC-007 extolled the role of public relations in advocacy and notes that it is critical in political campaigning. Though an underrepresented group, head

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[38] PRPC-005, Interview, January 2022

[39] https://citifmonline.com/2016/09/ndc-to-employ-10000-kayayei-mahama/

porters became a key stakeholder group in the 2016 elections, and this points to the manner in which political PR benefits citizenry in a democracy.

PRPC-004 explains why political parties/candidates cannot circumvent stakeholder engagement by stating that:

> In a democracy, you are bound to do PR. Because you are a government that would have to retain power or you are a government that would have to appeal to a range of stakeholders and therefore you would need to develop a plan that cuts across the different stakeholders and in terms of how you're going to communicate differently to each segment, target and grouping[40].

A key challenge of PR practice in democratic practices, such as the ones practised in Ghana is the not-so-subtle deployment of propaganda by political parties under the guise of public relations and/or communications. Propaganda is often times associated with lies, deceit and glaring ethical violations with the intent to "shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that favours the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowette and O'Donnell, 1999, p6).

Respondents identified the use of propaganda in the 2012 and 2016 elections and mentioned a few instances of its use by the political parties. Respondent PRPC-004 posits that propaganda made a lot of difference, especially in the 2016 elections, and had an impact on voter behaviour. She mentions that:

> Propaganda also contributed to demonising a lot of situations as well. So, while it worked in the positive, particularly with the NDC that didn't start it off early, it went against them. I remember the whole conversation about JM saying the economy is hard and the rest. We all started developing this tagline called #FixIt. Half of those conversations were in Twi. And it was from I think Peace FM or so, and it was literally circulating round. And it was quite impactful. You

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[40] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

only just had to click on it and just view and listen to the audio. So, I mean it sold good news, but that propaganda also worked against several others because I also think there were a lot of untruths that were also circulated[41].

Respondent PP-002 noted how easy it is to fall for propaganda in political discussions and mentions that:

> We are vulnerable to some extent, most of us are vulnerable to some extent that we easily fall, succumb to I mean, believing lies and propaganda and things that our opponents will say. For instance, you and I will never believe it, we will not be naive to believe that somebody was given money. For instance, you say Northern Development Authority, rearing Guinea fowls, flying to Burkina Faso, majority will believe it isn't? So, for me, the lies alone and the fact that most of us are vulnerable, we are not educated, we don't have access to information, sometimes people are tempted to believe anything that the politicians are saying[42].

Moloney and McGrath (2019) argue that historically, public relations have been a weak propaganda in the US and UK, and this has negatively impacted democracy. Mensah (2011) posits that much of the political communication practices in Ghana are borrowed from the US. Therefore, it makes sense that political parties will employ some form of propaganda in their communication efforts to sway voters.

Public relations have over the years tried to distance itself from propaganda by insisting that PR fosters dialogue, builds mutually beneficial relationships and ensure values, such as truth telling and honesty, at the forefront of practitioners' minds. Respondent PRPC-009 therefore recommends that PR helps in stamping out propaganda in political public relations by helping to "counter misinformation".

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[41] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

[42] PP-002, Interview, February 2022

Heibert (1992) credits PR as playing a role in the fall of communism. A 2005 study by Holtzhausen in South Africa found that post-apartheid, PR practitioners noted that democratisation had resulted in increased participative practices, which ensured that multicultural perspectives were included in communication efforts.

She added that "practitioners played a role in the social development and upliftment of previously marginalised people, thus, assisting in building and strengthening democracy in the country" (Holtzhausen, 2005, p414).

Respondent PRPC-003 believes PR plays an especially vital role in politics by emphasising how PR has improved political campaigning in Ghana. He notes:

> We have seen a lot of upsurges in communication and public relations practice since 1992 and all have been for the better because people have been able to take different innovative and creative ways, you know, to engage in Public Relations. Advertisements, the upsurge in billboards, the use of posters and of course the very major one, Media Relations as a very important part of Public Relations, has seen exponential growth and you'd imagine that this was not the case before 1992[43].

This view was shared by other respondents who mentioned political campaigns had improved over the years due to public relations. They credit public relations as ensuring that issues are discussed rather than throwing insults at each other or engaging in personality politics which characterises politics after the return to civilian rule. Respondent PRPC-001 sums it up by saying:

> There's been communication bordering on personalities, there's been communications bordering on emotions, there's has been communication bordering on facts, hard core facts, which were targeted at different groups of people. So, I would say that in a nutshell,

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[43] PRPC-003, Interview, December 2021

the use of crisp communication really impacted fortunes of political parties in this case of the two main political parties; the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party[44].

Respondent PRPC-002 also mentions how issues of the economy, education and social interventions have taken centre stage in political campaigning rather than politics of insult. The assertion by Political communication and political PR experts was agreed to by both parties' communication directors that in effect, PR has sanitised Ghana's political space and reduced the politics of insults. Bob-Milliar and Paller (2018) agree that the 2016 elections saw programmatic campaigning coming to play rather than campaigning based on personalities and insults. Political party respondents mentioned how as a strategy, their campaign messages have moved from personalities to aspects of the economy:

> On our campaign, we usually would decide we'll take the entire economy and classify it into sectors and every week we had a sector we wanted to concentrate on. So, if you noticed, in our campaign, we may concentrate on energy for this week and we hold press conferences raising issues in the energy sector for this week. In the next week, we'll focus on education, we'll raise the issues in the education sector and some of these press conferences we would have two, three press conferences in a week[45].

Respondent PP-02, on his part, mentions that their communication centred core facts on the economy. These included what they had done in terms of infrastructural development, education, agriculture, etc.

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[44] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

[45] PP-01, Interview, March 2022

Like Bob-Milliar and Paller (2018), Respondent PRPC-005 believes the involvement of PR in political campaigning in Ghana ensured that the political parties catered to the middle class by crafting messages that speak to the issues that the middle class cared about. He notes that the NPP, for example, tried to woo the middle class:

> I think that there was also some form of middle-class appeal. They were sort of lurching around the middle-class issues. If you look at the Occupy demonstrations that they did, making use of quite a lot of civil society actions. So, they sort of moved their campaign to the very middle class in order that they could actually draw in the anger of the middle class and to seek their support, knowing that when they say a lot of things, the other classes will follow[46].

Another key issue that came up when the role of PR in politics and democracy is how as a practice, PR/Communication is taking its place in political parties.

Respondents from the political parties acknowledged that unlike previously, political parties are taking political communication and PR seriously by appointing people with the right qualifications to head their communications efforts.

Respondent PP-001 revealed that he is a trained communications professional:

> I got into politics because I was recruited as a professional and I was even sent abroad to Cardiff university to study communications, and then after that, that is why since coming back I have worked in the political space. So, we actually recruit and train communications professionals[47].

In contrast to the assertion by respondent PP-001, Anani-Bossman (2021), in a study on how strategic PR practice in Ghana is, argues that PR practice in Ghana is not strategic

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[46] PP-01, Interview, March 2022

[47] PP-001, Interview, March 2022

and that PR practitioners are not part of the strategic decision-making level of organisations. The lack of strategic PR practice is often pinned on the lack of requisite qualifications by practitioners and the lack of appreciation of the role of PR by senior management. Political parties in Ghana are however showing an understanding of the importance of the PR function by appointing trained professional and ensuring continuous professional development. Both respondents from the political parties mentioned that they are trained professionals[48] and ensure that members of the party communication teams receive continuous professional training to enhance the discharge of their duties. Like the Akan proverb says, *deɛ adeɛ wo no na odie na ɛnyɛ dia ɛkom di no* to wit "the one deserving of the inheritance gets it not the hungry person," it is key that the communication function in political parties be handled by trained professionals to ensure the highest standards.

Whereas the deployment of PR at the beginning of the fourth republic was fraught with challenges, the growth of PR practice and Ghana's democracy has strengthened political PR in Ghana. Political parties' fixation on traditional media channels has slowly given way to their adoption of social media and an improvement in how even traditional media is deployed.

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[48] However, at the time of this research the National Communications Officers of both the NPP and NDC are not trained professionals.

6.2 Public Relations Strategies (You would end badly if you do not start well -

Embu Proverb)

RQ 3: What are the decolonial political PR strategies the political parties deploy

to mobilise for political power?

Communication strategies are critical to the practice of political PR. They ensure that while everything may not go according to plan in political campaigning, there is a level of structure and predictability that can be controlled. The Embu proverb from Kenya translated to mean "you would end badly if you do not start well," explains the significant role of strategy in the political PR process. Whereas many of the strategies discussed in this section may not be peculiar to Ghana, the distinct nuances of the political culture and the environment are particular to our context.

While Dzisah (2018) provides that political communication tools are a relatively recent phenomenon in Ghana, he notes that its acceptance and reach have been overwhelmingly positive. Respondents agreed that the two main political parties seem to have learnt over the years and adopted some sort of strategy in their political communication.

In his review of van Aelst and Walgrave's book, titled *How Political Actors Use the Media*, Blumler acknowledges that political communication strategies differ depending on whether it is a "political consultancy-led" or "movement-led" political communication strategy (2019, p192).

The functions of public relations in political communication takes eight (8) forms, according to Jackson (2012), who outlines them as hype, relations with stakeholders, two-way symmetrical communication, persuasion, relations in public, relational and reputation management.

As previously indicated in this research, political party's PR activities can be categorised into pre-election, during election and post-election activities. Respondents noted that the two political parties employed some form of communication strategy and while they may be inadvertent, there have been glimpses of a PR strategy at work. This goes to corroborate the assertion made by Watzlawick et al. (1967) that "one cannot not communicate".

Respondents from the political parties mentioned they had communications strategies but could not share them. Indeed, for Respondent PP-001, when asked whether they had a strategy document they were working with, they mentioned that:

> Yes, we did have, even for us even in 2012, we had a strategy for our general communications for the campaign and also had a social media strategy in particular. The way our politics work, these are not documents that we share[49].

Respondent PP-002 also declined to share their party's communication strategy document with the researcher.

The inability of the political parties to share their communication strategy may corroborate the political communication, and PR practitioners' views that the political parties do not really have a communication strategy they work with. Respondent PRPC-006, for example, believes that political PR practice by the political parties is more tactical than strategic. He attributes this lack of strategy to the way political parties select their directors of communications:

> In the political party, to lead the communications unit you must be able to talk and insult and defend your party's position. But I always tell them that there is more to communication than talking. The strategy part of communications is the most important

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[49] PP-001, Interview, March 2022

one. It's not talking. So, they do a lot of tactical things. It's never a strategy. And they

will never allow a professional to guide them[50].

Respondent PRPC-004 agrees that the political parties do not work with a strategy and cites the disjointed and tangential nature of their campaign communication that sometimes this continues when they get into power.

> … not on the basis that even when they're campaigning. If you look critically, they are always running two campaigns. There's the campaign which is being run by candidate X as a candidate, and there's the campaign, which is being run by the party headquarters, which is party HQ, and sometimes you find that both are communicating two completely different things; they're not on the same tangent. It's not the same personalities running it.
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> And also, as soon as the party comes into power, again you find that they're still running two separate communications, not necessarily holistically on the same page. So, you'll find that in the office of the president, you'll find a whole communication machinery running and then in the grass root you find that the political party itself is running. So how they do that will be for instance the going on the morning shows, the arguments about different things and you find that playing now. Wontumi doesn't have a place in NPP's government necessarily, to communicate with President Akufo-Addo. Wontumi runs for the party and then you have the candidate himself and others literally also running for themselves. So, they're not always necessarily in tangent. Sometimes they run on two completely different communication elements and different reputation management issues. Sometimes they even disagree among themselves[51].

Respondent PRPC-005 on the other hand agrees with the political party respondents that they have a communications strategy document having consulted for one of the parties in the 2020 elections. He notes that while they may have the strategy document, they do

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[50] PRPC-006, Interview, April 2022

[51] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

not strictly follow it and have a more fire-fighting approach to communication especially during election years. Respondent PRPC-007 calls this "street political communications". He surmises his point thus:

> Largely, it has been without structure, it has been without much strategy, and I think they've been engaged a lot more in what I call street political communications. I call it street political communication because it's like it is left on autopilot. No proper coordination no properly defined key messaging, no attempt at understanding exactly who the audiences are at a particular point in time, and tailoring messages to suit the needs of the audience[52].

The political party respondents however shared some of the PR strategies they used in the 2012 and 2016 elections, and they include the following: media relations and media monitoring, press conferences, press releases, social media content, advertising, crisis management, reputation management, grassroots engagements, rallies, among others.

6.2.1 Media Relations/ Media Monitoring

Martinelli (2020) notes the intricately interconnected nature of political PR and media relations. This is evident in Ghana where the two main political parties have created a press corps to ensure that their messages get to voters. Respondent PRPC-002 likened it to what happens in corporate PR:

> When I talked about media relations for example there are almost some kind of a you know it unofficial but some kind of a press corps for the various political parties. The NDC have people on their database; some of them they put them on their WhatsApp groups. And they tell you that it is not because we want to influence you. It is just because we want to keep you updated on what we are doing, so that they don't come to you only

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[52] PRPC-007 Interview, April 2022

when they are ready to campaign. The same things we do in our corporate organisations. I see them do that also. That's what I can give to them as a very deliberate thing from a PR perspective[53].

While the parties seem to engage the media consistently, respondents mentioned that the media relations done by the two parties do not match up to the same scale when compared. Respondents were of the view that the NPP's media relations were stronger than that of the NDC. Respondents PRPC-007 and PRPC-009 put it in the following ways:

> And I say very often I mean, what persuades me, what convinces me that the NDC guys are not politicians. I mean, it's my own experience as a journalist, when I was practicing as a journalist, every leading NPP member of some substance drew close to me, because they felt I was a visible journalist, they felt I had a constituency. I was the editor of a newspaper and the majority of them moved close to me. Call me, have chats with me, Kufuor was my friend. He will call me to his house, we will sit, we will debate, we will talk, talk, talk, Akuffo-Addo was a friend. He will never organise a party in this house and will not invite me. Who else? Kan Dapaah, Konadu Apraku, Alan Kyerematen, Dan Botwe, I mean talk about them, they all had a personal relationship with me. I don't have a single personal relationship with any leading NDC person. I don't. None of them will call me, and none of them will reach out to me. But you see the NPP guys knew what they were doing and that is what I meant by they are politicians. The NDC guys are not politicians. I remember I had a chat with Aseidu Nketia some time ago when I told him that, you guys your media relations very poor I mean, you don't build relationships with the media, your relationship with the media is very poor[54].

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[53] PRPC-002, Interview, December 2021

[54] PRPC-007, Interview, April 2022

> The NPP have figured out in the opposition what they needed to do, and they have done it. They have made sure they have sympathisers in the media. They have made sure they have engaged the media actively and I do not want to mention any more things, but I think that they have been very good at manipulating the media[55].

Asked if it is because the NPP repealed the criminal libel law in Ghana, Respondent PRPC-008 had this to say:

> The whole posturing of the NPP towards the media is more strategic. They are able to bring the media closer to their agenda. They are able to bring the big players in the media, they are able to go into their space. They are able to work with them. They are able to invite them into their fray much more than the NDC[56].

The NDC's somewhat frosty relationship with the Ghanaian media can be traced to their antecedent Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) revolutionary government which clamped down on media freedom (Gyampoh, 2017). This has resulted in a rather frigid relationship with the media which continues to this day.[57] Respondents posited that the party needs to be more intentional in their engagement with the media.

Respondent PP-002 mentioned that one of the key tactics they used was media monitoring. This, he said, enabled them to counter their opponent's lies.

> We were monitoring. So, we would also try to respond to what our opponents were saying, right. In most instances, if they try to lie, we try to correct[58].

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[55] PRPC-009, Interview, May 2022

[56] PRPC-008, Interview, May 2022

[57] https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Asiedu-Nketia-makes-U-turn-appears-on-Peace-FM-s-Kokrokoo-after-NDC-s-2-year-boycott-1601933

[58] PP-001, Interview, February 2022

Respondent PP-001, on the other hand, notes that they use media monitoring to track crisis situations to be able to respond to it quickly.

Studies on political parties' ability to attract media attention show that incumbent parties often attract more media attention than opposing parties (van Praag and van der Eijk, 1998; Djerf-Pierre and Weibull, 2005; Dı́ez-Nicolás and Semetko, 1999; Hopmann et al., 2010; Schneider et al., 1999). Hopmann et al. (2012) believe that the reason why incumbent parties often attract more media attention than opposing parties is because while the opposing party usually talks, the incumbent rather acts, and this makes the incumbent party more newsworthy. While the NDC may garner media attention in the years that they are in power, which is in 2012 and 2016, the coverage is usually critical (Morrison, 2004). Hopmann et al. (2012) recommend that for political parties to make the most of media coverage, they need to build a better relationship with the media beyond sending out press releases on topical issues.

6.2.2 Crisis Management (when you see a brother's beard on fire, fetch water in readiness to protect yours – Akan Proverb)

Coombs (2021) asserts that crisis questions the social legitimacy of organisations and leads to reputational damage. Tench and Yeoman (2006) add that crisis situations tend to disrupt normal business operations in addition to the reputational damage they cause. The nature of complex stakeholders in which political parties and politicians have to deal with makes political PR more prone to conflict situations than corporate PR (Strombåck and Kiousis, 2013). In crisis management, while the political party respondents allude to their prowess in managing the crisis that their parties have had to deal with, the professional respondents observed that there has been little to no strategy to crisis management by the political parties. Respondent PP-006 believes the political

parties simply "pray" away crisis by hoping another crisis hits their opponents. Respondent PP-007 agrees with this assertion and adds:

> Crisis management has never been a strong point of political parties and governments. I hardly see any approach to crisis management in any of the governments. And I say so because anytime there is crisis, you don't see any structure behind their attempt to manage the crisis, because even in crisis, you see high ranking members of government contradicting each other[59].

The lack of coherence during crisis is re-echoed by Respondent PRPC-008 in response to how the political parties handled the death of late Prof Attah Mills by noting that:

> So, you see that there are a lot of voices, then there is no coherence in their crisis communication. This person is saying that, party organiser says Mills died of this. Then the family of Mills come to say this, Koku Anyidoho is also saying that; no coherence, no one single voice to address crisis communication. At the end of the day, you realise that they open themselves up to more questions than answers. It creates more doubts, it creates more uncertainty. It creates some necessary tension also among the people who are watching them to the people who are supposed to even sympathise with them and then, vote for them in future. So, for me, when I sit back and look at the situation, I think they really need much more to learn when they come to crisis communication handling[60].

Respondent PRPC-009 posits that events after Prof Mills were handled well constitutionally and credited politicians for the show of maturity. Political party respondents acknowledged how the whole nation rallied together to mourn the late president with the NPP even suspending its political campaign as a show of respect. This corroborates Coombs (2021) observation that crises can sometimes serve as a rallying point for people to unite in response. Other respondents however mentioned

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[59] PRPC-007, Interview, April 2022

[60] PRPC-008, Interview, May 2022

how poorly communication on the death of the then sitting president was handled, leading to speculations. One respondent opined that:

> I do remember asking questions about how communications about Atta Mill's death were given out and the fact that it was poorly managed, … I mean, there were so many stories going round. I'm not sure if it took the government longer to take charge of the communication that was going round and provide the right sort of information, or they didn't at all. But I do remember that I thought that this is something that should have been… they should have taken control of the content that went out about his death sooner than they did[61].

Speculations about Prof Mills' death lingers on till date because of the way it was communicated[62]. McDermott (2008) argues that ill-health affects politicians' mental ability to focus and be effective and may lead to political and financial uncertainty (Lehman-Wilzig, 2003). In democracies that are not deeply established, these uncertainties leave room for speculation and creates a power gap. Crisis communication in Africa especially when it comes to the ill-health and death of Presidents and political leaders is an under-researched area according to Pindinga and Taylor (2018). In Tanzania, Mwainyekule (2022) notes the secrecy that marked the late President Magafuli's ill health and subsequent death. She notes that the silence from the handlers of the president created a news vacuum which traditional media could not fill leaving social media to fill the vacuum and further argues that "had the Tanzanian government decided to be forthcoming and transparent, the rumours could have been controlled and the right information would have prevailed" (p218). This lack of clear communication during a crisis was also evident in months prior to the death of Nigeria's late president Yar' Adua according to Pindinga and Taylor (2018) and created a power vacuum evidenced by the power struggle that went on when the whereabouts of the president was in question.

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[61] PRPC-0011, Interview, May, 2022

[62] https://citinewsroom.com/2022/02/four-majority-mps-file-motion-for-probe-into-atta-mills-death/

Ghanaian political parties' approach to crisis management dithers between "denial" and "reducing offensiveness of event," (Benoit, 1995, as cited in Coombs, 2021). The proclivity of Ghanaian politicians to shift blame on previous governments or evade responsibility all together has meant that crisis situations have not been dealt with decisively. Coombs (2018) attributes this lack of accepting responsibility to the symbolic-focus nature of political crisis as compared to the operational-focused nature of corporate crisis. Respondent PRPC-008 also notes this by emphasising that:

> I don't think they have been strategic with their crisis communication management. The only strategy, the only way that I've observed, and for this one it goes to all of all the political actors in Ghana, that the only strategy they know in crisis management is to defend and attack. It's either you are defending or attacking. So, there is no nobody being strategic and thinking that after crisis, there is still life, after crisis there is still the political party[63].

Respondent PRPC-011 also observed that politicians in Ghana use deflections during crisis. The respondent notes that:

> The other strategy that I have seen, and that's what you were talking about, is deflection, isn't it? That's what you are saying. So, when they see that they are receiving negative flak from citizens, then they deflect the attention from them by bringing in something that will draw away the attention of citizens to something else and away from whatever it is that they were criticising before[64].

The lack of structure and strategy by political parties in crisis communication also manifests in the lack of coherence of thoughts when spokespersons address issues during crisis. A respondent believes that:

> So, you see that there a lot of voices, then there is no coherence in their crisis communication…. At the end of the day, you realise that they open themselves up to

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[63] PRPC-008, Interview, May 2022

[64] PRPC-01, Interview, May 2022

more questions than answers. It creates more doubts, it creates more uncertainty. It creates some necessary tension also among the people who are watching them and the people who are supposed to even sympathise with them and then in future, vote for them. So, for me, when I sit back and look at the situation, I think they really need much more to learn when they come to crisis communication handling[65].

The Political party respondents however revealed that they have a team that handles crisis. Respondent PP-001 disclosed that:

We have what we call a rapid response team, so this is a team that is on standby and anytime there is crisis, they are called together. What we do is that we start with a plan of a D-day minus one plan, so we plan to election day and then we plan in reverse[66].

Respondent PP-002 agreed and added that:

The General Secretary for me was our main spokesperson, even the President was our spokesperson in times of crisis. Those who had the technical know-how, knowledgeable in terms of issues that are being discussed, would come, and brief us, so we speak to those crises[67].

The political party respondents also revealed that their primary mode of responding during a crisis is by issuing press statements through press conferences. Drawing from Entmann's (1993) frames, Coombs (2020) posits that political leaders can derive the salience of an issue to determine the best course of action. One however wonders how political parties in Ghana determine the frames when much of their crisis communication strategy is deflecting. A politician's ability to perceive and manage crisis is tied to their political fortunes (Strömbäck and Nord, 2006). The covid-19 pandemic, for example, raised Ghana's current President's reputation. Osei-Appiah (2021) argues that by framing the pandemic as a shared enemy that needed to be fought

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[65] PRPC-008, Interview, May 2022

[66] PP-001, Interview, February 2022

[67] PP-002, Interview, March 2022

with a united front, Akuffo-Addo gained public support and positioned himself as a strong leader, which earned him both local and international acclaim.

The need for proactivity requires that, like corporate institutions, political parties need a communication plan (Diers-Lawson and Meißner, 2021; Husain and Rawjee, 2014). Respondent PRPC-001 agrees and recommends that political parties:

> …need to put together a proper crisis communication strategy because in political communication, crisis is very common[68].

So, you put these things together and then come up with a team, a proper team to be exact, that is able to lead the campaign.

The Akan proverb that translates as "when you see a brother's beard on fire, fetch water in readiness to protect yours," explains the need for proactivity and issues management in times of crisis. Dei (2018) explains using proverbs that issues in management are extremely critical, and that political leaders have to enable in order to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors.

6.2.3 Reputation Management (Because he lost his reputation, he lost his kingdom - Ethiopian Proverb)

Closely tied to crisis and issues management is the reputation of political leaders. Indeed, Strömbäck and Kiousis (2020) deem it so critical that it features in their definition of political PR and emphasise that relationships must be distinguished from reputations in political PR in order to determine communicative actions and strategies to employ. All through history, political leaders have recognised the importance of their public persona on their effectiveness and power (Leary, 1995), and the Ghanaian

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[68] PRPC-01, Interview, December 2021

situation is no different. Elections have been won and lost based on the reputations of political leaders.

Dei et al. (2018), in explaining the Akan proverb *suban tesɛ nyinsɛn, wontumi mfa nsie* to wit "character is like pregnancy, you can't hide it", emphasises the importance of building a good reputation and acting with integrity. They note that reputations are built over a period by acting with integrity consistently. The Ethiopian proverb on reputation underscores the consequence of reputational loss. These proverbs must not only teach politicians the value of reputation but also the need to act in ways that protect their reputations.

Interview respondents noted the reputation management efforts of the parties, which are mainly tended towards presidential candidates. Mensah (2017) observes that the 2012 election petition by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) heralded the re-engineering of the party as a brand and positioned it favourably for the 2016 elections.

Respondent PP-001 mentioned that they did some brand "re-engineering" on their candidate in 2016. He said their candidate had acquired some negative reputation, and they therefore had to:

> Change that narrative about him and that is how come we branded him as somebody who was compassionate, somebody who was decisive, somebody who was a hands-on person, and all of that because opposition tried to brand him as a drug dealer, an arrogant person, a litigant, you know somebody who was violent and leading demonstration to the extent that even they even branded his leading demonstrations as something negative meanwhile demonstrations are supposed to be part of the tools we use in a democracy to protest[69].

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[69] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

Political communication and PR experts observed same and mentioned that the candidate's reputation management efforts went a long way to sway neutrals in their choice of president. Respondent PRPC-002 and PRPC-004 noted in agreement that:

> He had to take on the Christian thing, playing Christian songs at rallies, using Christian slogans, the Battle is the Lord's, those were all reputation management tactics by these political figures which really worked for them[70].

> The candidate Akuffo Addo had had a complete makeover, or a complete refresh. So, the whole conversation about him being revengeful, the whole conversation about him being elitist, we saw him eating kenkey, all the PR stunts that were pulled with the candidate[71].

Another respondent mentioned the NPP's efforts to re-brand candidate Akuffo-Addo was done by reinforcing his and his vice-presidential candidate's positive traits. The respondent noted that:

> When it comes to the content strategy, most of the time, they've played to the strengths of the candidate, referring to their candidate's perceived track record; typically looking at how Bawumia was played, delving into his so-called competencies with his core expertise as an economic expert, for example. Now increasingly, you hear that, and you hear attributes about Nana Addo as a human rights activist, as an anti-corruption candidate. So increasingly, they fall on the candidate's strength to drive their policies or give credibility to their policies. So, you somehow see a form of co-branding to say that if you doubt that we can deliver, these are the credentials of the person who is going to do that, and that we can actually guarantee certainly, that this would work. And then again, you'd find that the party's track record is also referred to as well[72].

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[70] PRPC-002, Interview, December 2021

[71] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

[72] (PRPC-005, Interview, December 2021)

Respondents also identified negative reputation efforts by the two parties to discredit their opponents. Respondent PP-001 shared how their party branded then President John Mahama as incompetent. He revealed that:

> We branded John Mahama as incompetent and the economic situation and the daily happenings in Ghana at the time really fed into our branding him incompetent because every single day, you had something to buttress our points that he was incompetent because government was failing in a lot of areas[73].

He proceeded to add that what cemented their strategy was getting the vice-presidential candidate to respond to the then president:

> At that time when the President speaks, it's the candidate who speaks in return and when the candidate speaks, the President spoke. But when we wanted to brand him as incompetent, it was the running mate who spoke, if you remember. And when he spoke, it was a trap because we wanted John Mahama, the President at the time to respond. And indeed, he did respond and if you remember he said that Bawumia had not been President and that if he was President, he would know that you cannot criticise. That is what cemented our strategy in terms of how we wanted to brand him because immediately he responded, he made it headline news, every newspaper carried it, every radio station spoke about it, and the next thing was to swing into action to now explain why we said he was incompetent.

The political communication and PR experts agreed with his assertion and mentioned that the effort to tarnish the reputation of the then president was done in a very consistent and persistent manner. Respondent PRPC-001 posited that:

> You would notice that in the communications of all the people who spoke on NPP platforms about the Mahama government, and they did it in a very structured manner, they will say the John Mahama-Amissah-Arthur government, so they did it to even cover the vice so that there wouldn't be any opportunity to for the vice to take over sometime later if the party will ever consider that. So, they will consciously say… They started

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[73] PP-001, Interview, March 2022

> from the Atta Mills-Mahama government and then when Atta Mills passed on, they
> shifted the battle to John Mahama-Amissah-Arthur government, and by the time any
> communication person from the NPP platform speaks for five minute they would have
> repeated the word incompetent like ten times[74].

Respondents added that the dent to the then President's image was so bad that efforts to repair his image even after he left office is not working. They cite the 2020 elections to buttress their point. Asked if the attempt by the opposition NDC to deploy a distinguished retired professor, Prof Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang in the 2020 elections, had helped John Mahama to sanitise his image/reputation, respondents said that reputation management effort did not really work for the NDC.

Lees-Marshment (2017) contends that reputation management efforts do not end with elections but require ongoing communication fashioned by actions and images from the past. She therefore recommends that reputation management efforts need to be backed by research and be strategic rather than reactive.

6.2.4 Sloganeering

The use of slogans by political parties has been a part of Ghana's fourth republican political system. Hosu and Pavelea (2009) define slogans in several ways but narrow down on political slogans as memorable phrases that express a key political idea which a particular candidate intends to accomplish/achieve. Hartig (2018) traces political slogans to be as old as politics itself and uses Julius Ceasar's *veni, vidi, vici* as an example of age-old political slogans. Respondents noted that electorates caught on easily with slogans such as "November-December Champions," "edey be keke," "one

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[74] PRPC-001 Interview, December 2021

district, one factory," etc. Respondent PRPC-003 believes that sloganeering is a "Ghanaian thing". He proceeds to explain that:

> The use of labels and slogans by the political parties, like "eshi" or "Ehe dzor," or you
> know some of these sayings and labels and slogans that the parties have during campaigns
> and then the candidate says it and people respond, I think that really is a Ghanaian thing[75].

Other respondents noted that slogans used by politicians did not really carry a political goal. They may rather be illogical. Respondent PRPC-001 showed the invalidity of some slogans and shared that:

> If you stood on a platform and went on the tangent of "e de bee keke," you are telling
> people well "e de bee for me," it may not "de be" for you. I mean it may not be "de bee"
> for you but me, where I stand "e de be for me." So, people were like, oh really? This
> system you think it is good, "e de bee?" No, it certainly wasn't "be-ing" for everyone as
> it were. So that was one of the things… The approach they used if you like was a PR
> misfire[76].

While slogans must have recall ability for audiences, it is also imperative that they follow the Aristotelian rhetoric forms of being emotive, credible, and logical. While the NPP had slogans, such as *one district, one factory; one village, one dam; one district one million dollars*; the NDC on the other hand had the *edey bee keke* slogan which many respondents noted did not carry any real political message.

Blumler posits that basing whole political campaigns on "pithy slogans… denies the essence of politics itself, ignoring those trade-offs between options that officials must consider in their policy determinations" (2018, p85).

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[75] PRPC-003, Interview, December 2021

[76] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

While acknowledging that political slogans should not be seen as concrete strategy, Zeng notes that slogans are not simply empty rhetoric but have functions which include declaration of intent, power assertion and test for support, and a call for intellectual support (2020, p3). Freidman (2018) on the other hand goes as far as asserting that slogans have an ideological thrust aimed at mustering support and even subjects.

The use of slogans by political parties in Ghana is aimed at producing engagement and have been known to be used even in the composition of songs for the political parties. Respondent PRPC-001 agrees that political slogans are used in generating engagement, especially at rallies. Aryee in doing a post-mortem of the 2016 elections in Ghana highlighted how political slogans were used by the NPP and NDC to counter each other's message (2017, p321). He concludes that the NPP were more strategic with their use of slogans and countered many of the NDC's slogans with better thought-out slogans which decimated the NDC's message and contributed to their electoral loss.

6.3 Media Channels

6.3.1 Traditional Media Channels (Old firewood catches fire quickly- Creole Proverb)

The proverb captured in the theme succinctly picks up the notion that the Ghana media consumption patterns, traditional media channels, such as radio and TV, still enjoy a prominent place in the news consumption patterns of Ghanaians despite the rise of social media (Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). Respondents noted that political parties have done a decent job optimising communication channels by adapting to evolving channels over time. It was evident that the political parties had used traditional media

channels and political rallies in the 1990s when the choice of media was limited. Respondent PRPC-003 noted that:

> There was a face-to-face kind of political communication. We had a lot of rallies where people would attend a political rally and listen to what was being said. We also had posters at that time as the main form of political communication. Then we had T-shirts which communicated all sorts of information. Television was there but it was not as liberalised as we have it today, especially because the private media was not as developed at that time and GTV used to be the only TV station[77].

The liberalisation of the media has led to more channel options for political parties to reach their target audiences. PRPC-001 and PRPC-004 believe the proliferation of radio in Ghana has played a significant role in political communication. When asked which media channel has had the most impact on political communication in the last few years, they both infer thus:

> I still think that radio has played a significant role in our political communication. … It's not just campaigning around the time of the candidate. I think radio has also been there even when they're not in power, literally running through everything. So, it would be the political morning shows, making sure your party is there, your party is available to comment on the issues that come up on the morning show consistently, so that you have opportunity to explain your policies and progress of work. So, radio has always stood out as a tool[78].
>
> So, there are some radio programmes that are basically politics based on which we have had representatives of the NDC and NPP on regular basis and all they do is banter. *Kokrokro* is one of them. The *Kokrokro* programme on Peace FM is one of them. It's one of those programmes that they just meet, and they banter, banter and banter, that's all they do. So, I will say they deploy the media engagement[79].

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[77] PRPC-003, Interview, December 2021

[78] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

[79] PRPC-004, Interview, December 2022

According to the National Communications Authority (NCA), as at the fourth quarter of 2021, it had given frequent authorisation to 648 radio stations out of which 489 of them that were scattered across the country were operational[80]. Many of these stations broadcast political morning shows every day. Political party representatives are usually empanelled to discuss topical issues even during off-peak political seasons. The political party respondents agree to the assertion that radio plays a significant role in their political communication strategies. PP-001 observes that:

> There's a high penetration for radio, so we use, we go very heavy on radio and television, and you know that in Ghana radio stations have a fair amount of time that they allot to political programming. For instance, in the mornings from like 6am till about 10/11am in the morning, there is always heated political debating across the country on various radio stations[81].

Afrobarometer's Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye (2018) report that, radio is the most used source for news in Ghana since 2002 due to its accessibility. Community radio and local language radio stations provide news content for people not just in urban communities but also in rural communities.

Other traditional communication channels that have been used by political parties, include Below-the-line (BTL) channels such as billboards, radio and TV adverts, t-shirts and other party paraphernalia, posters, etc. Respondents commented on how innovative the political parties have become with their channel optimisation. PRPC-003 and PRPC-005 observe by saying that:

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[80] https://nca.org.gh/authorised-radio/

[81] PP-001, Interviewed in March 2022

When we really saw the big billboards being used all over town, the very expensive, imposing billboards in town. I think that was one of the major things, the hanging of flags, the erection of miniature billboards, not just the bigger but even miniature billboards all around town. And these were really expensive. We still had the vans going around. I remember I was in Tema, and we had vans coming into the various communities blaring out music, blaring out campaign songs, and all of that, so those really were still a major staple of political communication[82].

You realise that even within a particular channel like TV, you have quite a lot of other aspects of the channel because where you have the editorial etc., you also have the news items covering the rallies. You also have paid adverts where people advertise their candidates and parties. Of course, when you take the newspapers again, you see adverts scattered all around. You see posters. And posters obviously since the beginning, there were posters, but there are quite a different kind of posters now. You know, you have very big posters, now we have billboards which we didn't have in the early days but going forward we will have massive billboards. Even we have moving vehicles with paintings or adverts of political campaigns etc., (PRPC-005, Interview, January, 2022).

As indicated by respondents, BTL communication strategies have had a tremendous run when it comes to political communication in Ghana. Till date, political party paraphernalia, including t-shirts, scarves, flags, branded vehicles with public address systems, and other branded material still make a strong showing during the political season.

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[82] PRPC-003, Interview, December 2021

Television (TV) is another significant traditional channel in political communication in Ghana. Respondents were of the opinion that TV adverts and documentaries have helped political parties reach citizens with their messages. PRPC-005 notes that:

> In the early days, it was newspapers and of course television. If we look at the television, it was specific to showing rallies. In fact, in 1992, we don't recall advertisements for example. What we would recall was some kind of documentary, especially with Jerry Rawlings, where they would show him in villages and all those things[83].

Other respondents agree with him and note that TV was not just deployed by the political parties in terms of documentaries and adverts but there were also advertorials and news items covering political rallies. Indeed PP-002 mentioned how in the run-up to 2016 elections, for example, the ruling NDC did a take-over of almost all TV stations one evening. Their objective was to communicate the manifesto and *Green Book* of the party to solicit votes. PRPC-001 however believes that despite what many termed the "media blitz" by the NDC to communicate infrastructural development of the party in their green book, that strategy did not work. He notes:

> So, for instance, if you build the nation's premier health centre, the university of Ghana medical centre, and you could not communicate how that in essence impacted the life of the ordinary Ghanaian, would it make any sense? If you built the Accra Regional Hospital, the Ridge Hospital, and you think you have done so well. If you think you have built so much E-Block or schools and you could not communicate how that in essence impacts the life of the everyday Ghanaian you will have, that PR gap will certainly affect you[84].

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[83] PRPC-005, Interview, January 2022

[84] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

Of significant mention is how newspapers have played a key role in Ghana's fourth republican democracy. As stated earlier in this section, the liberalisation of the media saw private newspapers which were hitherto banned making a strong comeback. This served as an invaluable channel for political parties. A section of this analysis will be dedicated to an analysis of newspaper content to examine the political PR activities political parties undertook.

The relationship between politicians and the media is longstanding and so critical that for a long-time political PR research around the world and in Ghana has mainly focused on the relationship between the media and political actors (McNair, 2003; Abugri, 2017; Tomić and Grbavac, 2016; Strombǎck and Kiousis, 2011). As succinctly explained by Baumgartner (2017) in his foreword of van Aelst and Walgrave's book, titled *Political Actors and the Media:*

> There can no democratic government without robust journalism. And yet governments robustly dislike the media. Political and government leaders are immensely advantaged in their relations with the press, and yet they are not fully in control. Journalists rely on their government sources for officially sanctioned information as well as leaks, unofficial information, and the "inside scoop" that makes their work possible; journalists have both a dependency and a power over their government colleagues. (pvi)

The symbiotic relationship between the media and politicians is akin to the Akan proverb which translates to mean the tree that's attached to a rock is difficult to cut. The media serves as a bridge between political actors and the citizenry by passing on information from both sides. Schroeder (2018) refers to the media as a transmission belt between citizens and the political elite. This relationship has been nurtured to the point where the two sides cannot do without the other. The situation is no different in Ghana

but has been exacerbated by the current media ownership regime where politicians are increasingly owning media platforms.

Asante (2020) cites the 2017 Media Ownership Monitor report which showed that a third of all media houses were owned by politicians or people connected to political parties. The consequence of this, she reveals, is the lack of objectivity in media reportage which is hidden under a veneer of "both sides journalism." Hallin and Mancini (2004) in their ground-breaking book, titled *Comparing Media systems* argue that the degree of political parallelism or the affiliation of the media to politicians is one of the four dimensions which affect media practice and systems in a society. Asomah (2022) adds that political parallelism is also shown in whether the media have been co-opted by the political system or are owned by the media. Ghana's current media landscape has seen both cases of political parallelism with media houses being owned by politicians and media personalities being put on the board of state-owned enterprises[85]. The literature argues that in such a media landscape, the media is not able to play its watchdog role effectively (Asomah, 2022; Nyarko and Teer-Tomaseli, 2018; Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

Shardow and Asare (2016), in examining media ownership and its impact on Ghana's democracy, note that despite the constitution guaranteeing media independence, ownership models of both private and state-owned media have affected the watchdog role of the media.

The media ownership models in Ghana have an impact on political PR practice and democracy in general. This is seen in the burying of stories of political opponents while pushing stories of their allies. Dzisah argues that "electoral contest that is waged on the

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[85] https://asaaseradio.com/journalists-must-not-be-on-public-boards-says-pianim/

platform of media attacks and counterattacks leads inexorably to the heightening of political cynicism" (2018, p30).

This compromises the objectivity of the media and ensures that citizens do not get full information. While such acts of subterfuge have been associated with PR practice in the past (L'Etang, 1998), practitioners are currently embracing truth-telling (Davies, 2008) and encountering media practice that thrives on subterfuge which will in the long-term affect political PR practice and Ghana's democracy. As L'Etang puts it: "the themes of democracy, mutuality, reciprocal exchange and the breaking down of barriers remain as core values in public relations discourse, both academic and practitioner" (1998, p425).

As a practice that has been accused of "corrupting democracy" (McNair, 2004), "serving the interests of power structures" and being purveyors of "communicative inversions achieved through cycles of public relations as spin, reformulated under the seemingly neutral and universal labels of civil society, social capital, participation, and democracy" (Dutta, 2016, p251), it is imperative that PR challenges media ownership models that throw the social responsibility of the press out of the window. This should be done as part of the efforts to decolonise and seek to bring the African virtue of looking out for what is right for the whole community rather than the individual. Politics, democracy, and public relations are dependent on a thriving media environment, as noted by respondents in the previous section of this study. It is therefore imperative that political PR practitioners position themselves as agents of change and push for media practice that eschews partisanship and threatens the growth of democracy in young democracies, such as Ghana's.

Like the Akan proverb says, "The priest who has sustained and nurtured a sick person until a more experienced priest arrived should not be forfeited or ignored." Traditional

media channels and BTL communication strategies have proven to work over the years and should not be discarded just because of the advent of digital and social media.

6.3.2 Digital Media Channels

Digital media has become a sine qua non in public relations practice in recent times and has seen massive use by political parties in their bid to win political power. Digital media combines both social media as well as offline channels to reach audiences. Respondents of the political parties acknowledged the centralisation of digital media in their campaigns in recent times. PP-001 mentions that, "Digital channels have become more popular, social media has become more popular in our campaigns." PP-002 agrees and adds that "We are very visible on social media, Facebook, Twitter, etc." The popularity of digital channel use by political parties gained momentum in 2012. PRPC-005 postulates that:

> We have a diverse content. I mean now we have apart from this social media, we have evens mobile telephony, text messages, recorded IVRs that they blast onto people's phones. People can receive or can listen to the voices of candidates. So, there is a myriad of channels that are being used and then of the content has diversified, not this monolith kind of content. These days, people can even respond to automated systems, or they can respond to some messages that are being sent to them to give feedback[86].

Digital channels have been credited for enhancing the relationship between candidates and electorates. It offers political parties a way to reach the electorate directly without going through traditional media channels. Digital media also eliminates gatekeepers and

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[86] PP-002, Interview, January 2022

censorship for citizens. Respondent PRPC-003 observes that digital media has empowered citizens to be a part of political discourse. He mentions that:

> Digital media comes with increased citizen participation because these days citizens are empowered so I could shoot my own video and I could chastise NDC, I could chastise NPP. I could shoot my own video about something that's happening that government is not necessarily paying attention to[87].

Respondent PRPC-006 adds that gate-keeping by the traditional media is "dwindling" because of digitisation. He notes that traditional media's power is diminishing:

> It's dwindling with the emergence of new media and digitisation. Now we don't rely on journalists to report to us. So, the journalist will not report what the politician – or the "adult" – is saying for us to do. Now we have the power in our hands through the mobile phones, through our laptop and everything. There's internet expansion, electrification has given rise to more conversational kind of dialogue[88].

Political party respondents mentioned how well they have utilised digital media channels in the campaigns in the last two elections (2016 and 2020). They mentioned the use of Interactive Voice Response (IVR), short messaging services (SMS), social media channels as well as websites. Larsson and Kalsnes, in their research on digital media use by politicians in Sweden, found that it is mostly used by "underdogs and non-incumbents" rather than established politicians (2014, p12). This trend seems to be replicated in Ghana because of "incumbent advantage" where political parties in power

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[87] PRPC-003, Interview, December 2021

[88] PRPC-006, Interview, April 2022

have an upper hand when it comes to media coverage, especially on state-owned media. This "forces" opposition parties to be creative and make use of digital channels.

Digital media has also created a historical data or archives that are at the fingertips of citizens who can refer politicians to what they said in the past. Lomborg observes that web archiving is enabled by the web itself (2012, p220). PRPC-005 calls this "content appropriation" and claims that:

> Now you see more of people using what I call content appropriation. you see parties and candidates using the words of opposition to go after them. So, things that you have said in the past and people using that to actually go after you to say that this is what you said obviously you have changed your position, or you have actually flip-flopped in that sense[89].

This kind of contentment appropriation as a result of digital media demands that politicians must be measured in the political promises they make since citizens can easily hold them to account based on what they said (posted) in the past.

6.3.2.1 Social Media

Omotoso (2017) surmises that there is a mediatisation of politics in Africa aided by social media and advertising. She adds that social media "provides spaces where the masses fiercely and fearlessly respond or react to government policies" (Omotoso, 2017, p559).

Mobile penetration in Ghana has led to the rise in use of social media in political campaigns over the last few years. There is a reported 140 per cent mobile connections as compared to the population in 2022. This indicates an increase of 2.6 million mobile connections between 2001 and 2022[90].

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[89] PRPC-005, Interview, December 2021

[90] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-ghana

Respondent PRPC-004 indicated that:

> Mobile penetration in Ghana is over 100% subscription, and that literally is every Ghanaian owning more than one mobile phone. So penetration of that level and literally that's what you're targeting, it means everybody who doesn't listen to radio, who doesn't necessarily sit behind a TV is still getting the message[91].

Respondent PRPC-003 contributes by saying that, "I think it was 2012 that we really had our social media election in Ghana."

Respondent PRPC-005 concurs and adds that:

> I understand that the 2012 there had been some use of the internet especially with Kwesi Nduom and the use of the internet. But 2016, I think there was a predominant use of social media, especially the competition between NPP and NDC, had a social media dimension, where you could see that Nana Addo was predominantly on Facebook and former president Mahama was predominantly on Twitter[92].

The use of social media by political parties creates both opportunities and threats. As stated earlier, social media increases the reach of political parties. However, social media platforms are an avenue for misinformation and disinformation and may sometimes be used by unauthorised individuals to share information which may affect the reputation of political parties and candidates. This is due to the ease of content creation by users.

PRPC-004 identifies that in the last few election cycles in Ghana, individual content creators have created and shared political content on social media platforms including WhatsApp, outside of the official approved communication material of the political parties.

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[91] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

[92] PRPC-005, Interview, December 2021

The respondent said thus:

> People were developing content specifically for WhatsApp; not even your Facebook, Twitter, and the rest because those are elitist. So, you'll find a lot of local – particularly the Twi videos on the economy, on what the candidate is saying and all that. You had all that going on WhatsApp[93].

WhatsApp, as a political communication tool, fosters a quick and affordable means to reach large groups of people organically and at almost zero cost. The 2023 digital report puts WhatsApp as the leading social media platform in Ghana with 86.3% of social media users being on the platform. This contrasts the worldwide trend of Facebook being the most popular social media platform.[94]

Political party respondent, PP-001, agrees with respondent PRPC-004 and adds that they had to at some point approve content created by individuals for their candidate and political party to ensure there was coherence in the messages they sent across to the electorate:

> I had a whole closet load of CDs, pen drives and stuff that people had generated on their own. The people who went out to rent camera crews, went out there, wrote their own scripts, shot adverts supporting us and after shooting these adverts brought them to us as their contribution to the campaign. There were people who brought them to us and there were people who also put it out on their own to the extent that it got to a point that for TV stations we had to actually write that every advert must be approved by the communications team. That is why if you look at all our advertising materials in 2016, after the advert you would see a mark that approves. So, after the elephant stamps, you'll see a stamp on the advert.

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[93] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

[94] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-ghana?rq=ghana

> We had to do that because there were certain instances where the messages that these people were putting out there were not tailored the way we wanted them and in as much as they were our supporters and supported our course; it is not everybody who understands communication, and it's not everybody who understands how a message should be framed. So, we got a lot of these things. There were ones that we found on social media that we had to trace the source to be able to pull down, and some we even had to report to Facebook. Because it is not that we didn't like what they were doing but we wanted to be in control of our messaging[95].

Social media platforms provide political parties and candidates with an opportunity to create content that can go viral. This brings on added pressure since communication on these social media sites (SMS) have to be well thought through and coordinated to catch the short attention span of users.

Respondent PP-001 mentions that,

> To design messages, we had to design info-graphics, we had to put voice-over on videos, because the social media space demanded a lot, and you needed to be up to date and pushing content[96].

The political party respondent from the opposing side, PP-002, also acknowledged the challenging work needed in Social media (SM) management and the virality it provides. In the 2016 elections, the viral nature of social media for political communication became advantageous for the then opposition NPP when a viral photo of then candidate, Akufo-Addo, was drinking fruit juice from a pack, named Kalypo. This created a trend where ordinary people who supported his campaign were seen taking photos of themselves drinking kalypo and posted these on social media[97]. Respondent PRPC-001

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[95] PP-001, Interview, March 2022

[96] PP-001, Interview, March 2022

[97] https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Akufo-Addo-Kalyppo-challenge-Strange-Kalyppo-selfies-hit-social-media-475994

reminisces, thus, "Everybody started using Kalypo for this, Kalypo for that. People were

even taking photos of themselves transfusing Kalypo into their blood and so on."

Picture 6.1: 2016 flagbearer of New Patriotic Party (NPP) enjoying a pack of

Kalyppo which started a social media trend

Picture 6.2: Supporters of the NPP and ordinary Ghanaians start the #KalyppoSelfieChallenge

The PR and PC respondents however queried the choice of social media sites of the political parties. They opined that, political parties and candidates need to be more strategic in their use of social media by researching their target audience. Respondent PRPC-005, for example, questioned why the NDC's candidate chose to be more active on Twitter in the 2016 elections:

> They didn't really give a thought as to the kind of targets and how these targets actually use the various platforms. Because it doesn't even make sense to see a particular channel, such as Facebook and be predominant on Twitter, especially when your electoral base is very much the masses. So, I'm not sure how what informed their selection of the platforms per se. And the fact that Facebook allows visual content, and you could see the drive, the people who were actually following the NPP[98].

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[98] PRPC-005, Interview, December 2021

The ability to deploy social media correctly is a strategy that both parties will need to master going forward. Respondent PRPC-008 predicts that, "In 2024, the party that is able to capture or is able to develop a strong strategic communication and social media approach will be the party to win."

Frame and Brachotte (2014) note that while social media platforms, like twitter provide politicians an avenue to engage with stakeholders, gauge public opinion and disseminate information, it can also serve as an image management tool.

Mano (2020) argues that digital media is a game changer in African politics due to the avenue it provides for civic participation before, during and after elections. Dzisah (2020) concurs and adds that digital media enables democratic participation and inclusion. Dzisah further advances that:

> The democratisation of communication using the interactive power of social media and unmediated feedback allows for greater participation of the citizenry in the democratic process. One does not need to be physically mobilised to the village square, community centre and the town hall to be engaged and for him/her to participate in a democracy. (2020, p102)

Social media provides at top-down approach to political communication (Windeck, 2010), allowing for participation from citizens who hitherto would not have had a voice in how the nation is governed. In *The Crisis of Public Communication,* Blumler argues that the digital and social media provides a "horizontalist rather than a verticalist" approach to communication (2018, p89). McQuail (2005) prescribes that in a democracy, people, especially minority groups, must be allowed to vent their opinion with the media of their choice. Social media allows for dialogic and deliberative democracy participation with persuasion to be its main goal.

With 32.7% of social media users in Ghana being 18 years and above[99], social media has indeed changed not only how politicians engage with the citizens but also how citizens engage with politicians with activism against misrule being enhanced due to access to digital technology (Mano and Ndlela, 2020; Ndlela, 2020). Social media has created a level of engagement that can only improve young democracies in Africa. 2023 data from Hootsuite indicates that 41.4% of Ghanaians use social media to catch up on the news with 24.8% using it to share and discuss opinions[100]. Social media has thus become the new public sphere in Ghana by being a central point where "private people come together as a public," to use reason to further critical thinking which in turn leads to political change (Habermas, 1991, p27; Norris et al., 2017).

The literature espouses that social media, through the way it is organised has the characteristics needed for a public sphere (Sørensen, 2016; Fuchs, 2012; Loader and Mercea, 2011; Papacharissi, 2010; Jenkins, 2006) by creating speech communities which prioritise communicative action equal to civil discourse and deliberative democracy (Jenkins, 2006). Norris et al. (2017) provides that while some may rue the discourse on social media especially with regards to political discourse as civil on Ghanaian social media spaces, the ability to use it for political change by members of Occupy Ghana in the round up to the 2016 elections, for example, points otherwise. Respondent PRPC-005 agrees and notes that social media has "absolutely become the new public sphere with so many positives (diversity and pluralisation of voices) but sometimes negative (polarisation) ways"[101].

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[99] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-ghana?rq=ghana

[100] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-ghana?rq=ghana

[101] PRPC-005, Interview, February 20, 2023

Occupy Ghana emerged as a pressure group because of the economic and power crisis that hit Ghana in 2014. Noll and Budniok describe them as "consisting of established middle-class women and men and tech-savvy young professionals from urban Accra" (2020, p40). Occupy Ghana was crafted along the lines of the #Occupymovements across the world and mostly organised using social media. Their #RedFriday protests saw people post their red attire on social media in protest of corruption by government officials, worsening economic crisis and power cuts at the time. Social media became the rallying point for organisers who used the hashtag #OccupyFlagstaffhouse to mobilise on Twitter and Facebook for a public protest in Accra on 1st July, 2014[102]. Indeed, Occupy Ghana seem to have succeeded in causing political change, and as Noll and Budniok surmise:

> Occupy Ghana's transformative agenda went beyond a critique of neoliberalism practices and principles and exposed a fundamental crisis of democracy and political culture, a general crisis of disenchantment with the political life, and with its moral and ethical standards (2022, p39).

At the beginning of their social media activism, political party functionaries of the then NDC government ridiculed Occupy Ghana[103], but their activism yielded results leading to the appointment of a Special Prosecutor in 2017, a proposition they fought in court for. Nartey (2022) elucidates that when combined with offline actions, online political activism yields result.

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[102] The date is significant because that is when Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah declared Ghana a Republic on 1st July, 1960

[103] https://citifmonline.com/2014/07/hannah-tetteh-slammed-for-mocking-occupyflagstaffhouse/

Picture 6.3: Occupy Ghana RedFriday Social Media Campaign
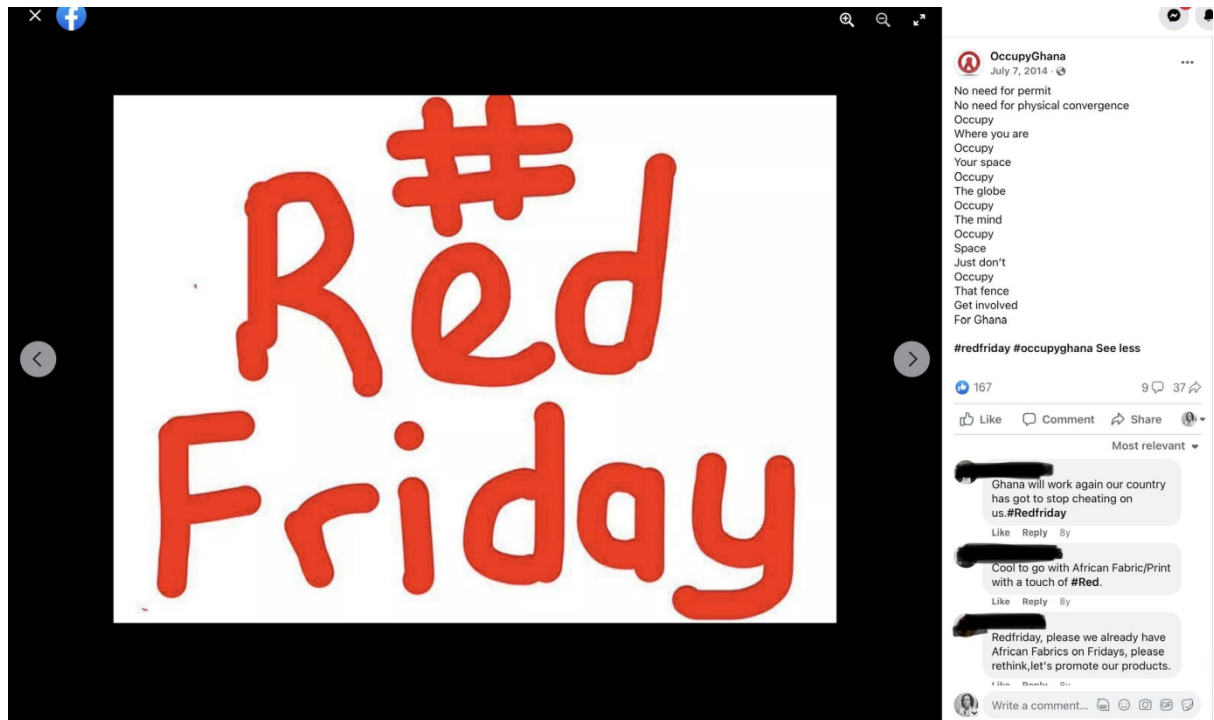
Picture 6. 4: Occupy Ghana RedFriday Social Media Campaign

6.3.2.2 Social media and political communication User Generated Content (One finger can't carry a stone – Mamprusi Proverb)

A key component of Web 2.0 technologies is the ability of "audiences" to co-create. The participatory and panoptic nature of social media platforms deviates from the top-down nature of traditional broadcast media (Spurgeon et al., 2009). Vesnic-Alujevic (2012) posits that the discursive space that the internet affords has led to more inclusion and participation. Jenkins (2006) acknowledges that participatory media does not necessarily translate to equality and that technology alone cannot bridge the participatory gap. He is however quick to add that participatory media facilitates social participation in the political process. Vesnic-Alujevic (2012) agrees with him and posits that the interactive model of social media could translate into active citizenship.

Farkas and Schwartz (2018) wonder how a decentralised content production environment enabled by social media, political parties' communication teams can balance the enthusiasm of their members while encouraging them to participate and engage in the political messaging process. They conclude that political party social media managers believe that some level of content moderation is necessary to ensure that the central message of the party is not distorted. Carpentier (2016) believes that political participation should include co-deciding but should also not circumvent the decision-making process of political parties. Respondent PP-001 mentioned how they had to step in as a political party to "approve" the message content of some of their faithful party followers who wanted to support the party by creating political messages in videos they had produced themselves.

Despite the need to project only the party commissioned messages on social media, a social media platform that politicians may have a challenge monitoring and moderating messages on is WhatsApp. Respondent PRPC-004 remarks that, "People talk about Facebook, Twitter; those ones are not as powerful as the WhatsApp. Literally, everybody is one WhatsApp."

Her point is buttressed by the 2023 Hootsuite Digital report which shows that 83.6% of the 6.6 million of social media users in Ghana are on WhatsApp. Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2021) provide that WhatsApp, as an instant messaging platform, provides immediacy and some level of privacy and an ability to share multimedia content to individuals and groups. Content moderation on WhatsApp is near impossible due to its intensely viral nature and the ability to transmit messages in languages that align with many people. Respondent PRPC-004 again notes that:

> People were developing content specifically for WhatsApp; not even your Facebook, Twitter, and the rest because those are elitist. So, you'll find a lot of local – particularly the Twi videos

on the economy, on what the candidate is saying and all that. You had all that going on WhatsApp[104].

The respondent's point is buttressed by the literature. Instant messaging (IM) apps such as WhatsApp allow for content mobilisation and for opinion leaders, such as "aunties" in collectivist societies like as Ghana to share content, which is sometimes not verified out of concern for others (Bhalla et al., 2022). Gil de Zúñiga et al. surmise that in political communication thus:

> IM apps offer low-effort mechanisms for opinion leaders and social organisations to contact and mobilise their networks (friends, followers, or members). These tools also allow for a better tailoring of the messages to meet specific individual and group needs and preferences. (2021, p204)

With WhatsApp offering such flexibility and simultaneous complexity, Respondent PRPC-0014 recommends that:

> What's been done in some countries by some political parties is to have a structure that allows them to partake in training and equipping their foot soldiers at the grassroots and grant them access to the campaign HQ. This enables them to have access to information and other resources to create relevant content and less fake news. They (foot soldiers) are also able to fact-check and counter any fake and malicious posts being distributed on WhatsApp and address them more promptly. Political parties in Ghana will have to train and equip their supporters and foot soldiers with communication skills to enable them to create social media content that aligns with the party communication strategy and communication objectives to co-create with them[105].

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[104] PRPC-004, Interview, January 2022

[105] PRPC-0014, Interview, February 2023

6.4 Culture and Political PR Practice (the stranger cannot be more knowledgeable about a community more than the indigenes no matter their level of expertise- Akan Proverb)

RQ5: How has the political culture of Ghana informed a decolonised model of practicing PR?

Pfetsch (2004) in questioning the success of political PR efforts and democracy in some contexts, while it fails in other contexts, acknowledges the relevance of culture in political communication and goes as far as saying that culture affects the relationship of political actors and media actors as well as structures. She recognises that political communication has cultural and structure dimensions. Plasser and Plasser also note that "political parties select country and culture-specific traditional campaign styles" and combine them with media campaign practices to create hybrid campaign systems that are peculiar to them (2002, p348).

Paget criticises the "western-centric" electioneering campaign typology as well as the dearth of research on "means and media by which parties convey those messages in the campaign" (2019, pp445-446).

Respondents acknowledged the cultural dimension of Ghana's culture in political PR in Ghana and the unique way it is displayed. Respondent PRPC-005 mentions what he calls "the massive cultural inter-locution", and adds that:

> Our politics are very much meshed in our socio-cultural fibre. I mean we like music; we like songs. There is no way you're going to have a gathering of people without noise. There must be some kind of noise. There is no way you're going to have a gathering of people without food. There is no way you are going to have a gathering of people without prayer[106].

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[106] PRPC-005, Interview, December 2021

He adds that the motivation for people gathering for political events, such as rallies even have socio-cultural undertones:

> Our social and cultural aspect of life is entirely different from the European context. For us, a gathering is not five people, it is a massive set of people. And do not forget people have the expectation that as they are coming there will be food, there will be sharing of something, there be sharing of t-shirts, there will be transportation so they will come in their numbers. So, we have the political system very much steeped into the sociocultural and so makes us completely different from the West or from the other people, where in fact people do not even have the time to spend thirty minutes. And so, there are no expectations of food going to be shared because they themselves are full already. There are no expectations of money going to be given, and these are volunteers who believe in a particular line of ideology and want to come and perhaps help but in our case the motivations are many. They are not coming there because of your political message, they are coming there because some people want you to see them that they were there, some people just want to while away time, some people just want to join the noise and say it was enjoyable, it was nice... So, the motivations are plenty in terms of our rallies, and so these are some of the differences between us and the rest of the other people.

Other respondents agree and mention other aspects of Ghana's culture which influence political communication. They include music, language, proverbs, clothing, festivals, etc. These culturally situated political communication tools have become necessary due to the cultural diversity of Ghana.

Respondent PRPC-001 mentions the wearing of traditional clothing as a political communication tool meant to identify with voters. He observes that:

> I dare say an emerging subculture that started probably with J.J Rawlings went through Kufuor came to John Mahama, Mills and Mahama and co, but it is no longer a big thing now is the wearing of smock.
>
> If you recall wearing a smock, particularly on a white shirt, it was a subculture trying to say we own our identity, we identify with the people of the Northern parts of this country. This was the time there was a scramble over who should win the hearts of the people of the North. So, the NDC started this thing, no wonder they had a lot of goodwill from there and they still have, but

their influence in the Northern part is now being decimated by the NPP because they brought Vice Presidential Candidates from there, you will notice.

Traditionally, the NDC chose Vice Presidential Candidates from the South until John Mahama. But the NPP had tried that from Kufuor to Akuffo-Addo, they have been consistent choosing their vice from the North, NDC again did not choose their Vice from the North because I mean in the last elections in 2016 as well maybe because their leader is from the North. So, the subculture of dressing is to identify with the people[107].

Language plays a critical role in political communication, and this seems to have been mastered by politicians who code switch depending on the audience they engage with. Respondents cited the use of languages apart from English to buttress their point:

I also think that one key issue when it comes to campaigns and culture is language. The more you can speak the language of the community in which you find yourself, the more acceptable you appear to be and so you will see lead campaigners doing everything possible to at least express one sentence or two, in the language of the community in which they find themselves. And it is how come President Rawlings can go off-key and say things like "aboa bɛka wo a, ɔfura ɛntoma." He wanted to appeal to the cultural sensitivity of where he found himself, and so he wanted to say some proverb in their language, and ended up saying "aboa bɛka wo a, ɔfura ɛntoma." And then you would also realise that when Akufo-Addo finds himself anywhere in Accra and is campaigning he will want to exhibit his knowledge of the Ga language and he will speak in Ga, so language becomes extremely critical when it comes to culture[108].

The code switching does not only apply to local Ghanaian languages but includes the use of pidgin English and popular culture. Van Zoonen (2000) explains the critical role

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[107] PRPC-001, Interview, December 2021

[108] PRPC-007, Interview, May 2022

popular culture has in political communication. Respondent PRPC-004 agrees and notes that:

> The political parties will tap into it, like an existing terminology that young people are using just to make them feel cool or popular or appeal to a lot younger people who they know ordinarily would not participate in politics[109].

Another aspect of language use includes the use of proverbs, idioms, and other such tools to communicate political messages. Respondent PRPC-008 actually links an Akan proverb to a PR theory in crisis communication by observing that "we have a PR theory in Akan that says that "*panyin te ntosuo a, onsan nfa*", translated to mean "When an elder spits, they do not pick it up again."

He further explains by connecting it to the corporate practice where a Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) voice on an issue brings a finality to it.

Even in corporate practice, if the CEO goes back to spin a story, to tell a story about the organisation and it turns out to be false, that is why it becomes very difficult for them to even come back to say that I said it and I got it wrong, because of our culture, because of the PR narrative.

6.4.1 Traditional leaders, Festivals, Funerals

Another culturally situated strategy that the two main political parties in Ghana adopt as part of their campaign strategy is their participation in traditional events, such as festivals, funerals[110] and even baby naming ceremonies[111]. These events provide an

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[109] PRPC-004, Interview, December 2021

[110] https://www.modernghana.com/news/1162318/my-constituents-refused-to-re-elect-me-they-said.html

[111] https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Flashback-Okoe-Boye-lost-his-seat-because-he-refused-to-attend-funerals-Constituents-1332076

avenue for politicians to "call on" traditional leaders and solicit their support as well as that of their subjects during elections. Asked what culturally situated activities political parties carried out in their bid to win elections, PRPC-001 responded thus:

> The heavy participation in cultural norms, like our annual festivals. The annual festivals were literally taken over by political parties, and the funerals. Funerals were a good outlet for political parties to make their presence known and felt. So, they leverage these cultural and traditional events to make their presence felt within the concept of political campaigning[112].

Respondent PRPC-007 alludes to the clout that traditional authorities give to political campaigns and states:

> There is also the heavy involvement of traditional leaders and traditional authorities when it comes to our political campaigning. I mean, to campaign in a community, particularly when you are the presidential candidate, to campaign in a community with zero attendance by the traditional leaders is considered to be a campaign that does not have an endorsement or the support of the traditional leaders, and support doesn't necessarily mean partisan support but support in this case refers to the people welcoming you to the community to come and conduct your campaign and so across both NDC and NPP, and indeed across political divides when they go into any community to campaign, one of the things that is high on their agenda is to get the presence of the traditional authorities. It adds a bit of clout to the campaign[113].

Referring to the institution of chieftaincy and traditional rulers as exercising subnational authority, de Kadt and Larreguy (2018) believe that traditional rulers and chiefs, especially in African countries, may influence the voting behaviours and outcomes of their subjects. Hence, the need for politicians to engage them in a strategic way that inures to their benefit.

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[112] PR-PC-001, Interview, December 2021

[113] PR-PC-007 Interview, May 2022

Article 276 (1) of Ghana's (1992) constitution bans chiefs from active party politics by stating that, "A chief shall not take part in active politics and must abdicate his stool or skin if s/he deicides to take part in active politics."

This does not however deter politicians from engaging with them nor the chiefs from "brandishing" their authority and "threatening" politicians with votes from their communities[114]. Discussing how Ghana's fourth republican constitution deals with ethnicity in his article, titled *Ethnicity in Electoral Politics in Ghana: Colonial Legacies and the Constitution as Determinants*, Sefa-Nyarko (2021) concludes that banning chiefs from active politics is one of the key ways in which political tensions that multi-ethnic countries, such as Ghana are likely to face have been dealt with. The constitutional ban has, however, not deterred chiefs and traditional rulers from sometimes being overtly political and showing favouritism to some political parties they align with. de Kadt and Larreguy (2018) believe that there is a *quid pro quo* relationship between some traditional rulers and politicians contingent on whether their power and resources are dependent on the state.

Mensah credits the NPP for using socio-cultural practices, such as funerals as a campaign tactic in the 2000 elections and posits that by sympathising with bereaved families, politicians presented a persona that people could relate with and show "fellow feeling" while appealing to the native sense of the people (2004, p172).

The use of these culturally situated strategies buttresses Strömbäck and Kiousis' assertion that:

> Neither political communication nor public relations managers and practitioners can disregard the cultural, social, political, institutional, or systemic context in which they are located – or existing power relationships (2020, p6).

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[114] https://www.modernghana.com/news/1159968/atta-mills-came-here-crying-and-you-abronye-dc.html

6.5 Professionalisation (The one deserving of the inheritance gets it, not the hungry person- Akan Proverb)

Respondents were unanimous in their view that political PR practice needs to be professionalised. Respondent PP-001 believes professionalisation will improve ethics in the practice and calm the political "temperature" in the country. He notes:

> Well, I think that we should engage more professionals in managing communication. And apart from the political parties, I think the Ghanaian media space itself, needs to look at engaging more professionals. There are a lot of quacks in the system who don't even know a sentence of what ethics are and they create a lot of problems in the media space. So, I will encourage that, parties engage more professionals. It is the professionals who can draw up the right strategy, execute the right strategy and help us to win elections. If we continue to employ more professionals, the temperature in the political space will tone down because we will answer each other in a more productive manner than the shouting at each other and people thinking that politics is just about who shouts the loudest. If we employ more professionals, we will argue about issues and we will get a lot more out of our democracy than before. So, I think that if we concentrate more and if professionals also don't shy away from politics and also get involved and also contribute their quota, we will sanitise the space and the space will be left for people who are not professionals[115].

Respondent PP-002 who has a Ph.D. in Media Studies agreed with his colleague on the other side and added that:

> Political parties should use our skills, our positions, our knowledge to explain issues to Ghanaians for them to understand better what is happening. It takes you and I as professionals

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[115] PP-001 Interview, March 2022

to be able to do that, otherwise, the quacks will always pollute the minds of Ghanaians and we'll not see what is right[116].

The PR and political communication professionals noted that the political parties tended to equate oral dexterity with the ability to communicate, and hence did not employ competent professionals. Respondents had this to say:

> I think for a lot of political parties – and I think in Ghana itself it cuts across – we have sort of equated competence to being oral, right? And I find that those are one-offs and sometimes do not necessarily fit into a strategy or do not have a long-term view. So, for a lot of the political parties, if you're oral and vocal, ours is just to go out and communicate. [117](PRPC-004)

> Both parties still tend to think that anybody who can talk, anybody with the gift of the gab is a PR person. And for me, that is one of the biggest mistakes, not just of political parties, but also government. I think they still do not consider having professional people properly trained communicators running their communication outfit. And I look across both political parties and there is no trained communication person managing their communication department.[118]

Respondent PRPC-005 believes a clear division of labour in campaigns will address this. He stated that:

> I think that firstly, they must insist on the division of labour and let people play their role. Usually because of people's motivation, immediately the campaign whistle is gone, everybody wants to push their way forward to be seen that they are doing something because you want to catch the eye of the presidential candidate, so they will be given jobs. So, if somebody had been given the monitoring role before you realise, he is on the campaign front, he is in Akatsi addressing some rally, he is in his hometown he says he is going to mobilise some people. But you have been told to monitor the process, maybe be a media monitor, etc. People do not play

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[116] PP-002 Interview, February 2022

[117] PR-PC-004 Interview, December 2021

[118] PRPC-007 Interview, May 2022

their roles. So, I think that to improve political communication, there must be clear functional areas and people must be specifically told to play that role[119].

Respondent PRPC-007 cautioned against the thought that political communication was different from corporate communications noting that the principles were the same and there had to be a more strategic approach to political communication than what has been done in the past by political parties.

Respondents' thoughts align with the literature (Medvic, 2006; Medvic, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Napolitan, 1972). Medvic (2006) asserts that political communication consultants bring talent to a campaign by framing debates to give their candidates a competitive advantage. Medvic (2000) adds that consultants are a campaign resource with a unique contribution to a campaign because of their "instincts" and "intuition" (Johnson, 2000, p42) as a result of their prior experience. The strategic approach to political communication that professionals bring to a campaign cannot be quantified.

6.6 Conclusion

The chapter examined the media channels and strategies political parties employed in the 2012 and 2016 general elections. The chapter established that while public relations may have impacted some countries especially in the west negatively, it has enhanced democracy in Ghana. The chapter buttresses my argument that public relations can be a force for good when deployed in a humane way outside the capitalist and imperialist systems. The next chapter analyses newspaper reportage in the 2012 and 2016 elections and compares it with political party respondents' recollection of the strategies they employed.

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[119] PRPC-005, Interview, December 2021

Chapter Seven

Analysis of Newspapers

7.0 Introduction

The media plays a critical role in any democracy, and Ghana is no exception. This section analyses media material in the form of newspapers in order to examine the PR activities of the two political parties as reported in the media. This analysis answers the research question on how political parties have deployed decolonial PR practices in their bid to win elections in Ghana. I reflect on what the two main state-owned newspapers reported and juxtapose it with respondents' recollections of events leading to the 2012 and 2016 general elections. The chapter establishes how my study of decolonial political PR contributes to the body of knowledge of studies concerned with how the media reports political events that are staged by political parties and in so doing shows a dimension of the lived experiences of politicians and political communication practitioners. The chapter also examines PR's mediated role in news making in Ghana.

7.1 Newspapers, Democracy and Decolonisation

The health of a democracy is measured in how free the media is and this situation is no different in Ghana. As already shared in this research, the years of military rule took a toll on the media and by extension on PR practice.

Newspapers have held a significant place in Ghana's democracy, but especially in the fourth republic after the repeal of the criminal libel law. Amadu et al. (2022) argue that new media forms have negatively impacted on the fortunes of newspapers leading to a reduction in the number of newspapers and magazines from over 300 copies to about 40 copies (Gadzekpo, 2008; Amadu et al., 2018). Newspapers, however, have a

significant position in Ghana's media with a significant percentage of morning political talk shows being newspaper reviews. In Ghana, the majority of the television and independent radio firms in Ghana run "newspaper review programmes" where they discuss issues raised in newspaper articles and online news sources; and in some cases, announce studio phone-in line(s) for the listening public to participate in debates on society (Amadu, 2003). Some of these programmes include *Kokrokoo* [Peace FM], *Super Morning Show* [Joy FM], *Badwam* [Adom FM/TV], *Citi Breakfast Show* (Citi FM), *Breakfast Show* [Ghana Television (GTV)], *Good Morning Ghana* [Metro TV], *Adekye Nsroma* [United Television (UTV)], and *New Day* [TV3] among others. In *Newspaper Review Show in the Broadcast Media Space in Ghana: An Exploratory Qualitative Study, Nyarko* (2016, p2) describes Newspaper Review as 'broadcast programme during which major headlines published in specific dailies and weeklies are fully discussed as topical issues of the day with or without studio panellists.' He notes the negative impact of newspaper reviews on readership and revenue for the newspaper outlets but credits it as a promotional tool for newspapers.

It is worth mentioning that newspaper review programmes are often political news programmes. Osei-Appiah (2019, p69) argues that:

> the news media logic that guides the production of political news among private radio stations seriously hinders Ghana's democratic efforts since they confine political discourse to a limited set of views which is not representative of the political reality, project a narrow view of politics, and curtail plurality in media content.

Osei-Appiah's view becomes even more potent when one examines the gender representation on these newspaper review shows. The panel is most often very masculine and phone-ins that are done to seek 'expert opinions' even more so. PR-PC-013 argues that Ghana's media landscape is very gendered and cites an example of the

gendered nature of news reports and recounts an incident about a former Minister of Gender and Social Protection:

> And when I was doing my research, Otiko went to parliament to give some state of affairs report or something like that and in one of the newspapers, the front-page headline was on her, and it was like half a page report on the fact that she had gone to parliament and almost all of her breasts were showing in the kaba that she was wearing. And so, there had been a lot of murmuring among the men in parliament at the time to the extent that those behind had patted each other until it got to Adwoa Safo who was sitting in front. And one of the male parliamentarians told Adwoa to do something about it because the breasts were distracting the men from listening to what she was saying. And then, Adwoa Sarfo too, for whatever reason, got up, and went over to Otiko Djaba and put a kente sash around her neck. I mean! And it was after that had happened that the men could listen and concentrate on what Otiko was saying. A whole half a page, front page on this. And they didn't even say anything of what she said on the report or statement or whatever. So female politicians, or at least, those that I interviewed feel that the media are very sexist. And also, because a lot of the political journalists, a lot of the news producers are men.[120]

In *Between Hogging and Passing the Mic,* Nikoi and Avle (2022) note that the Ghanaian media landscape is elitist and characterise Ghanaian networked radio as "caught between 'hogging the mic' for an elite group of listeners and 'passing the mic' between them, the state, and the broader citizenry that constitute the listening public." Ghana currently has no indigenous language newspapers making it elitist (Fosu and Ufuoma, 2013). Arguing that language imperialism goes with media imperialism, Agyekum (2018) reports that there were a few local language newspapers including *Nkwantabisa* which was published in Asante Twi and Ewe in post independence Ghana. Unfortunately, there is currently no local language newspaper after the Daily Graphic, Ghana's most widely circulated newspaper tried a pull up in its Tuesday edition called

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[120] PRPC-013, Interview, May 2022

the Graphic *Nsempa*. Therefore, much of the newspaper review that runs on TV and radio is done either in English or has the English translated into local languages. While this translation provides an avenue for rural folks many of whom listen to these broadcasts through local language affiliates of the broadcasting stations in the capital Accra, Fosu and Ufuoma (2013, p4) note that: 'there is also the tendency for humouring; the translators especially embellish the rendition from English to the indigenous language with entertaining techniques such as proverbs, witty coinages, anecdotes, allusions etc.' This, I argue also increases the risk of misinformation.

Mitchell et al. (2016) acknowledge the significance of traditional media as an important source of political news and current affairs for most people. A sample of newspaper reports on the two political parties and a few political PR activities they undertook in 2012 and 2016 is represented in Table 7.1.

Stromback and Esser (2017), in discussing the mediatisation of politics, mention that media influence the agendas of political parties. Media was seen as the most powerful stakeholder group in an Irish study of political parties by O'Higgins and Morgan (2006). A total of 562 political news items from the politics pages of the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times were analysed. Excerpts of a selection of the news items is presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: A selection of news reports on political PR activities by the NDC and NPP

Text No	Date	Media Channel	Headline	Key Phrase(s)
NP1	23/01/12	Daily Graphic	NDC Constituency Primaries - 15 MPs Kicked Out	Results of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) parliamentary primaries in constituencies, where the party has sitting Members of Parliament (MPs)…indicate that 15 MPs lost their tickets to contest this year's parliamentary election to new entrants.
NP 2	07/02/12	Daily Graphic	O.B. Amoah donates computers to schools.	The Member of Parliament for Aburi-Nsawam…has presented 30 computers to be distributed to 28 schools in the Akwapim South Municipality.
NP 3	23/06/12	Daily Graphic	Akufo-Addo to introduce Zongo Dev.-Fund	The next New Patriotic Party administration will introduce a development fund for the Zongos and other deprived communities… The party's

				manifesto for the December elections will be launched in August. …Nationwide 'tour to restore hope'…
NP4	19/04/2012	Ghanaian Times	NDC, NPP pledge to maintain peace in Odododiodio.	The leadership of the NDC and NPP in Odododiodio constituency have pledged their support to ensure peace in the ongoing biometric voters' registration.
NP5	11/10/12	Ghanaian Times	United Cadre Front backs Mahama.	The United Cadre Front, a group aligned to the NDC, on Tuesday said it is backing President John Mahama to the hilt, as the Presidential candidate of the party for election 2012. A statement signed by…
NP6	22/12/12	Ghanaian Times	NPP will surely go to court - Prof Mike Ocquaye.	Leading member of the NPP, Prof Mike Ocquaye, has said his party will be going to court…

NP7	11/01/16	Ghanaian Times	I will vote for Akufo-Addo - Paul Afoko	The suspended National Chairman of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Paul Afoko, has said he will still vote for the presidential candidate of the party…
NP8	06/05/16	Ghanaian Times	Mahama fulfilling NDC manifesto with accounting tour – Govt	Minister of Communications, Dr. Edward Kofi Omane Boamah, has revealed that President Mahama is fulfilling the manifesto of the NDC through his Accounting to the People's Tour.
NP9	04/01/16	Ghanaian Times	NPP suspends Nyaho Tamakloe.	A leading member of the NPP has been suspended by the Greater Accra Regional Executives of the party.
NP 10	16/03/16	Daily Graphic	Nkwanta South NPP primary for Saturday.	The parliamentary primary of New Patriotic Party in the Nkwanta South Constituency of the Volta Region is slated for …

NP11	07/04/16	Daily Graphic	Nothing can stop change - Bawumia	The NPP Vice-Presidential Candidate, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, has said there is nothing anyone can do to stop the wind of change… Dr Bawumia was speaking to students…
NP12	25/06/16	Daily Graphic	NPP candidate embarks on listening tour.	The NPP Parliamentary Candidate for the Ledzokuku Constituency, Dr Okoe Boye, has embarked on a listening tour to ascertain problems facing his constituents.

7.2 Politicians and the Media

van Aelst and Walgrave (2017) note that politicians use the media to advance their goals by using it as a resource to gauge public opinion, know what their opponents are up to and to promote themselves and their causes. Again, the media have been known to be influenced by political party agendas, especially during electioneering campaigns (Hopmann et al., 2012; Walgrave and van Aelst, 2006; Bradenburg, 2005; Semetko et al., 1991; Asp, 1983), that raises questions about the autonomy of the media. Hopmann et al. argue that the more press releases a party publishes on a particular subject, the more news coverage it will attain (2012, p186).

A content analysis of both the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* in 2012 and 2016 centred on events and pronouncements from key political figures from both parties. The events included stakeholder engagement sessions, mini rallies, constituency tours and media engagements, such as press conferences. Blumler argues that campaign strategies of political parties need to be interrogated beyond these activities but should be "conceived instead in terms of the presuppositions and principles that determine why and how those are adopted and applied" (2019. p192).

Berelson (1949), however, hypothesised that events are more powerful than propaganda in political communication. Shulz (1982) questioned citizens' awareness of political events, as reported by the media and its correlation to political decision making. There is however no doubt that by providing the citizenry with news on political events, the media keeps the democratic process going through education.

We argue that by reporting on the events organised by political parties, the media keeps the citizenry informed and help in the political decision-making process; whether in entrenching people's decision on who to vote for or why they will not vote for another candidate. Politicians and political parties' understanding of the key role the media play in the political process have found avenues to stay in the news cycle through media interviews, press conferences and press releases. The political party respondents echoed their heavy reliance on the media by noting that they actively engaged the media on behalf of their parties. Respondent PP-002 for example mentioned that he engaged in:

> media relations, event management by organising media engagement for my party, making sure we are organising press conferences, in fact, actively involved in engaging the media, to rally the media for my general secretary to speak[121].

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[121] PP-002, Interview, February 2022

Froelich and Rüdiger (2005), in examining framing in political PR posit that Press releases as a PR tool is used to communicate positions and perspectives, which constitute frames to the media. The two political parties used press releases to communicate their positions on various issues in the run up to the 2012 and 2016 elections. The press releases addressed a variety of issues ranging from defence of political party members who had been arrested by the police to their position on the economy.

Excerpts of news reports of political party press releases are shared below as an example of how the political parties used press releases as a tactic.

> Mr Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey, National Chairman of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) on Tuesday called on its teeming supporters to remain calm in the aftermath of the arrest of Mr Kennedy Ohene Agyapong, Member of Parliament for Assin North.
>
> …This was contained in a statement issued by the party on Tuesday...
>
>
> The leadership of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the Odododiodio Constituency have pledged their support to ensure peace in the ongoing biometric voters' registration exercise.
>
> …They made the pledge in a joint press statement…
>
> (Ghanaian Times, NPP Supporters urged to remain calm; Thursday, April 19, 2012)

While Haselmayer et al. (2017) acknowledge that the public receive filtered or distorted press releases in the media based on editorial policy, Federssen and Adams in examining public opinion on press releases from political parties in Switzerland concluded that "parties can communicate their policy positions and move public opinion via their press releases, as covered in the media" (2022, p2).

7.3 Stakeholder Relations and Relationship Management

Stakeholder relations remains one of the key functions of political PR and this is evident in two key definitions of political PR by Jackson (2012) and Strömbäck and Kiousis (2020). Jackson believes:

> Political public relations present the views of political actors to other political publics in a positive light through the communicative processes of raising awareness, engaging in dialogue, and *building relationships.* (2012, p272)

Strömbäck and Kiousis take it a notch further and emphasise the building and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships between political actors and key publics and stakeholders (2020, p11). These definitions position political PR as being crucial for relationship management between political actors and their internal stakeholders as well as "collateral groups" (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2020, p12).

The zero-sum game nature of politics, the multifaceted and number of stakeholders political parties deal with are more than what it is in corporate settings. Therefore, stakeholder management is critical in political PR (Strömbäck and Kiousis, 2013; Seltzer, 2020). Again, due to it being a contestation of ideas and power, conflict is higher in political settings, and hence, the need for a strategic approach to relationship management.

Just like Ledingham's (2003) relationship management theory, which posits that when managed effectively, relationships tend to be mutually beneficial and ensure that organisations and their public rally around a common goal, the Akan proverb, which translates as *it is because of reciprocity that two antelopes walk together,* also promotes the importance of relationship building and management. Lilleker (2020) recommends that beyond raising awareness and persuading stakeholders to vote for them,

relationship management requires political parties to build relationships, which are long-term in perspective with stakeholders.

News reportage from both the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* in the two years under review, which are 2012 and 2016, focused mainly on events, including stakeholder engagement sessions, rallies and mini-rallies, constituency tours and media engagements, such as press conferences. There was also reportage bordering on internal cohesion of the political parties.

7.3.1 Internal Cohesion (If two elephants fight, it is the grass that is trampled – Kikuyi Proverb)

Stromback and Esser (2017) argue that political parties operate in three (3) key arenas, being the internal, electoral, and parliamentary arenas. They explain the three (3) arenas by noting that in the internal arena, the strategic goal of political parties is to ensure internal party cohesion while the goal in the electoral and parliamentary arenas is to extend the share of votes and parliamentary influence, respectively.

There were more stories on internal cohesion from the NDC than the NPP. One could argue that because the NDC was in power at the time, there was more at stake in ensuring they retained power, and hence the internal party wranglings. The NPP, on the other hand, needed to work together to get back into power, and hence there was less intra-party wrangling. Okoye (2015) and Obi (2018) list malicious use of incumbency and lack of internal democracy as part of the causes of breakdown in internal party cohesion. Stromback and Esser (2017) add that while internal party struggles are part of efforts to maintain the internal arena of political parties, they recommend that with such complexity in managing the arenas that political parties engage in, the leadership of political parties must be strategic in managing the diverse publics whose interests

have to be met. Okigbo and Onoja (2017) recommend the nurturing of relationships to ensure that this strategic goal is met through micro-targeting of communication.

Stories on internal party wranglings included legal action instituted against the party for wrongful dismissal of party functionaries, disagreements on eligibility to stand for parliament, as well as general party direction disagreements and perceived disloyalty. An excerpt from the 23rd of March, 2016, edition of the *Ghanaian Times* bordering on internal party cohesion is reproduced below:

> An Accra High Court yesterday dismissed an application by Dr. Zanetor Agyemang-Rawlings to throw out the case challenging her eligibility to contest the Klottey Korle parliamentary seat. The court further awarded a cost of GH C 2,500 to her.
>
> When the case was called, Gary Nimako, counselled for the plaintiff. Nii Armah Ashietey withdrew an application for an injunction he filed to restrain Dr. Rawlings from holding herself as the parliamentary candidate-elect of the ruling National Democratic Congress until the final determination of the matter. (Ghanaian Times, March 23, 2016)

The January 4, 2016, edition of The Daily Graphic reports a similar internal cohesion issue in the NPP, headlined *NPP suspends Dr. Nyaho-Tamakloe*:

> The Greater Accra Regional Executive of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) has indefinitely suspended a founder (sic) member of the party, Dr. Nyaho Nyaho-Tamakloe, for undermining the peace and unity of the party.

These reports of internal cohesion issues point to why Stromback and Esser (2017) recommend the need to build strong internal stakeholder relations. O'Higgins and Morgan (2006) also emphasise the importance of internal stakeholders and recommend a normative approach to dealing with internal stakeholders. In using the Kikuyi proverb referred to above to explain hate speech in faith communities, Kruger (2018) argues that while there might be reconciliation by the conflicting parties later on, bystanders,

in this case other faithful parties, may never recover from the internal party struggles that political parties experience occasionally. In Ghana, evidence abounds on how lack of cohesion on the part of intra-parties has led to splinter groups. Before the 2012 elections for example, the founder of the NDC had fallen out with the late president John Attah-Mills and subsequently his successor, John Mahama. This led to many questioning if the party will stand after the partial exit of its founder[122].

Hughes and Dann (2006) classify internal stakeholders as an active stakeholder group with power and legitimacy. Using Grunig's (1997) situational theory of publics, disgruntled internal stakeholders may have to be differently targeted with messages using narrow casting and micro-targeting strategies (Lilleker, 2020; Rohrschneider, 2002). As a powerful stakeholder group, issues involving party members must be resolved with immediacy to promote internal cohesion. The need to resolve internal conflicts with urgency must however not circumvent laid down party procedures and democratic principles.

7.3.2 External Stakeholder Engagement Strategies

Stakeholder engagement is at the fore of what political parties do to get voted into power. Stakeholder engagement tools employed by politicians include listening tours, rallies, house to house campaigns, among others. Paget (2019) refers to these campaign formats as ground campaigns and adds that the face-to-face nature of such activities allows for parties to engage with their stakeholders. The content analysis of newspapers in 2012 and 2016 indicates that apart from meeting with voters in the various

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[122] https://www.economist.com/baobab/2012/10/31/the-rawlings-factor

constituencies to sell their political ideals, political parties also engage traditional and religious leaders to gain legitimacy.

7.3.2.1 Rallies

Political rallies present opportunities for political parties and the political candidates to present their messages to both internal and external stakeholders. In Ghana as with most African countries, political rallies are distinct and culturally significant to the whole political process. "Mammoth rallies" are seen by political parties in Ghana as a visual gauge of who will win elections. Respondent PP-001 notes that:

> Our rallies are unique and it's not just Ghana; it cuts across the continent. Our political activities in Africa are very unique. In Ghana, the rally has to be big. The crowd has to be thick, and the speakers have to be radical. And remember when we have these rallies, the analysis after the rally is whether the crowd was big or small and whether the speeches were, you know…radical or not.

> So yes, political activities across the world, in the west and other places, usually do these things through conferences, where they share ideas and have political activity or have rallies here and there. But you can see that their rallies are quite different from what we do, our rallies are unique. And sometimes very close to the election the rallies are able to tell which parties will or which of the parties will win the polls. Because of the public support and the responses that you get at these rallies[123].

Paget (2019) agrees with Respondent PP-001 and notes that campaign rallies are notable features of Global South political campaigns. The Afrobarometer[124] round of 8 results also corroborates this. An analysis of newspapers in 2012 and 2016 shows this stakeholder engagement tactic is at play. Political parties held rallies at the constituency, regional and national levels. A total of twenty-five (25) rallies were

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[123]PP-001, Interview, February 2022

[124] https://www.afrobarometer.org

reported by the two newspapers. Paget (2019) notes that as a ground campaign feature, rallies enable politicians to meet directly with the electorate while at the same time garnering media coverage. Even in the age of what has been described variously as 'internet politics,' 'digital politics,' electronic democracy, and hybrid media systems (Chadwick 2013; Gibson et al., 2004; Paget, 2019; Vaccari. 2013), political rallies are still a key feature in African countries such as Ghana. Paget defines rallies as "a public event at which speakers address an audience face-to-face for the ostensible purpose of political mobilisation" (2019, p451).

He further offers that the public nature of it distinguishes rallies from internal party meetings. Epstein (2018) posits that targeted political communication activities, such as rallies help political parties to achieve their goals, which include raising funds and mobilising for political action.

Political parties in Ghana hold both constituency and national rallies which are addressed by party leaders, just like in the case of Tanzania (Paget, 2019). These serve as a way to reach voters, but also to get media coverage. Baek (2009) emphasises that behaviourists believe voters turn out to vote once parties reach out to them. The 2008 elections in Ghana introduced the house-to-house campaign where in addition to rallies, the NDC presidential candidate did house to house campaigns[125]. Such campaign formats, including "listening tours," "town hall meetings," "peace walks" and many such mass gatherings all culminate in rallies that are addressed by constituency and national leaders of the political parties. Another form of political campaign format that is used by incumbent parties in Ghana is the "regional tour," which incumbent

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[125] https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Atta-Mills-Grabs-Central-Region-With-House-To-House-Campaign-133692

presidents use to 'cut sod' for projects or commission new projects[126] as part of the strategy to canvass for votes. Cheeseman (2015) notes the strong incumbency advantage of Presidents in Africa due to the resources they usually have at their disposal. A November 4, 2016, edition of the Ghanaian Times for example has the headline *Show Ghanaians your projects… Pres Mahama tells NPP* reads in part:

During the two days, President Mahama inaugurated a new market project at New Abirem in the Birim North, addressed rallies at Ayirebi in the Ofoase Ayirebi Constituency, Akroso and Suhum.

Respondent PP-002 notes that as a political party, the NDC did not use that strategy to their advantage because they couldn't communicate clearly. He notes:

NDC couldn't do that even though they did a lot of infrastructural work, they could not communicate how that made other people's life better.

So, for instance, if you build the nation's premier health centre, the university of Ghana medical centre, and you could not communicate how that in essence impacted the life of the ordinary Ghanaian, would it make any sense? If you built the Accra Regional Hospital, the Ridge Hospital, and you think you have done so well. If you think you have built so much E-Block or schools and you could not communicate how that in essence impacts the life of the everyday Ghanaian, you will have… that PR gap will certainly affect you[127].

The incumbency advantage that did not work for the NDC due to poor communication raises several questions due to the general notion that Ghana's political system is one of clientelism, which favours the incumbent (Paller, 2014). Bob-Milliar and Paller (2018) therefore conclude that Ghana's 2016 elections was a referendum, and even the

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[126] https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Sod-cutting-ceremonies-in-an-election-year-Can-President-Akufo-Addo-be-trusted-1106461

[127] PP-002, Interview, February 2022

blitz of projects commissioned just days before the elections by the NDC's John Mahama could still not save it from the imminent electoral loss.

Political rallies are known to be an avenue for political leaders to show their oratory, and with it their mastery of the culture and nuance of the communities in which they find themselves in. One of the ways politicians show their oratory is through proverbs. Ghanaian politicians have been known to use proverbs to send their message across on political rally stages. Orwenjo (2009) argues that "proverbs have the capacity to provide a politician with what is dearly needed in any political talk, adding power, authority, clarity and expressiveness to political discourse" (pp124-125).

In Ghana, the late President Rawlings' misquotation of the proverb '*anoma entu a, obua da'* to wit 'if a bird does not fly, it goes to sleep hungry'[128] is prime example of politicians using proverbs on a political stage to sell their party ideology and viewpoint. Shipley (2010) notes the ability of proverbs to provoke political discourse.

7.3.2.2 Campaign Launch

Political PR events are known to provide free media coverage for political parties (Esser and Walgrave, 2017). The news media are important sources of news on political events and central sources of political news (Vogler et al., 2023; Beckers et al., 2021). Political parties have therefore found avenues to garner free media coverage by organising different events all aimed at informing voters of their plans and securing votes in an election. Campaign launches are usually used to make available the manifestos of the political parties. Manifestos are documents outlining the programmes and policies of political parties usually regarding issues that are critical to the electorate when elected

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[128] http://www.maameous.com/2009/09/anoma-entu-sa-mesop.html

to power (Ayee, 2011). He refers to the political manifesto as a "key political product" and further posits that the manifesto and some other items are prerequisite for political parties "to operate in the political market, one needs to present political products which include personalities, manifestos, ideology, past performance, and evidence of dependability and reliability" (p368).

The death of then President Mills in 2012 overshadowed the campaign season leading to political parties suspending their campaign launches and the entire campaign for a few weeks. Respondent PP-001 notes:

> The change in candidate in terms of the vice president assuming the presidency and becoming the candidate also changed the dynamics of the election. So, for a communications team in that situation, you need to sit down, you need to plan, you need to withdraw all your advertising because all your advertising was for Mills and not for Mahama, you needed to look at your strategy and change the strategy.
>
> … the strategy to approach the election as to how to brand the two personalities was different. So, we had to change our brand strategy and all of that came up with new material. And all this had to happen within a certain space[129].

In 2016 however, the two political parties went all out in terms of launching their campaigns. The NDC did a media launch of the campaign in August a few days before the main event at Cape Coast, and this was reported by the Ghanaian Times edition of August 9, 2016, with the headline: *We have the best presidential Candidate-NDC*. The story reads in part:

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[129] PP-001, Interview, March 2022

> The National Democratic Congress (NDC) says it has the "best candidate" among those seeking the mandate of Ghanaians in the December polls to become the president of the country.
>
> …spokesperson for the John Mahama campaign, Mrs Joyce Mogtar Bawa said at a media launch of the NDC's campaign in Accra yesterday.

The main NDC party campaign launch event was held at the then newly built Cape Coast Sports Stadium a few days later in an event that Bob-Milliar and Paller (2018) note foreshadowed the campaigns focus on touting the infrastructural development of the party. The campaign launch was also used to "outdoor" the vice-presidential candidate, Paa Kwesi Amissah-Arthur. This strategy and the launch being done on a Sunday are believed to be aimed at getting the media to report about the party from different angles and targeted the news cycle for the whole week.

The then opposition NPP on the other hand launched their campaign and manifesto in October 2016 proposing a radical change in the management of the national economy when given the mandate. Bob-Milliar and Paller contends the opposition had financial difficulties having been in opposition for 8 years (2018, p20).

As a tactic, special events are the most commonly used PR tactic, followed by news releases and media kits (Hardy and Waters, 2012, p898). Allagui and Bresslow, however, believe that social media is now disrupting this age-old PR tactic making it unnecessary (2016, p28). This study argues that, like the Akan proverb on old firewood mentions, in environments such as Ghana, special events such as political campaign launches will continue to be relevant.

7.4 Philanthropy

Philanthropy remains one of the ways by which political parties and politicians use to get into the good books of their electorates. For Waymer and Heath (2020), Corporate

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Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, such as philanthropy have a reputation management as well as an issues management dimension. Twum et al. (2022) propose that political parties should be considered as corporate organisations who need to attract customers (voters) and must therefore adopt corporate social responsibilities, which include philanthropy. Philanthropy by political parties can be conflated with clientelism and is seen as an area that requires tact. Harding (2015) recounts instances of vote buying where political parties and their candidates have used vote buying as an avenue to win elections under the guise of generosity.

Twum et al. distinguish corporate social responsibility and by extension political party philanthropy by hypothesising political social responsibility exchanges "as those that are not supported with government resources and are voluntary actions taken by political parties and candidates to fulfil their responsibility of promoting societal well-being" (2022, p79).

They add that:

> In political party management, philanthropic responsibilities may take the forms of political party executives, candidates, and operatives assisting their local communities through volunteerism, charity, and any other ways that enhance the quality of life of the people. (Twum et al., 2022., p80)

In her unpublished master's thesis, Kuranchie (2013) argues that for CSR to be strategic, it must be more than a charitable deed. Lock et al. (2016) agree and suggest that CSR outcomes must shift from benefiting individual corporations (in this case political parties and candidates) to adding value to societies to give them legitimacy. Caroll (1991) indicates that charity and philanthropy help organisations meet societal expectations and gives them legitimacy. Garriga and Mele´ (2004) note politics (social relationships) as one of the key theoretical domains of CSR. The resource-based view

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of CSR (McWilliams and Seigel, 2011; Potter and Kramer, 2006) posits the practice as giving competitive advantage to organisations, such as political parties.

This study uses CSR and philanthropy interchangeably because as indicated by the literature, much of the CSR practiced in Ghana is centred on philanthropy (Amo-Mensah, 2018; Neequaye et al., 2019). Twum et al. (2022) note that 61% of CSR activities undertaken by political parties and their assignments are philanthropic in nature.

Political philanthropic gestures that were reported by the two newspapers had political party aspirants donating to constituents and groups. The altruistic intentions of these politicians are questionable since such philanthropic gestures ended up giving them media visibility. One can therefore argue that philanthropy not only ingratiates politicians to voters but also helps in getting media coverage.

The Daily Graphic of Monday August 14, 2012, for example, has the following headline: *"BA NDC gets Motor-bicycles for campaign"* on the political page. The story reads in part:

> The Brong Ahafo regional secretariat of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has taken delivery of three motor-bicycles worth GHS 4,500 to support the party's electioneering campaign for the 2012 elections. The motorbikes were a donation from a sympathiser of the party in the region, Mr Smart Aziblame.

Another story in the Tuesday February 7, 2012, edition of the Daily Graphic mentions the Member of Parliament for Aburi-Nsawam, Mr O.B. Amoah, donating computers, dual desks, and jerseys to twenty-eight (28) schools in his constituency as "his personal effort to enhance education in the municipality" (Daily Graphic, p17).

As already stated, while the motives of the politicians may or may not be altruistic, Twum et al. call for the need to...

> …develop strategic social responsibility for political parties to guide the formulation and implementation of social responsibility" due to its ability to "enhance the satisfaction of voters and society while also aiming to improve the brand image of a political party or candidate. (2022, p93)

In *CSR and Crisis risk: expanding. How we conceptualise the relationship*, Coombs and Halladay (2015) argue that rather than being a crisis management asset, CSR could create a crisis risk for organisations. They therefore recommend that deploying philanthropy should be done strategically and must be more proactive than reactive.

7.5 Online News portals as sources of news for Newspapers (Inter-media Political Agenda Setting)

Online news consumption has overtaken newspapers as a source for news (Pew Research, 2010) due to people's need for news to be participatory and portable. One interesting observation the study made was the increasing number of news items sourced from online news portals in Ghana by the two state-owned newspapers. Research on online news portals has focused on the speed and immediacy of publishing online (Buhl et al., 2016; Bocezkowski, 2010; Karlson and Stromback, 2010).

In examining the influence of international news sources in the Ghanaian press, Serwonoo argues that the post-colonial influence of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was detected with journalists not reflecting the "self-reflexive appropriation of the African perspective" (2018, p1357). His study revealed that the Ghanaian press and journalists, by sourcing news from the international online news sources, perpetuated the negative stereotypes about Africa in the international press. By

refusing to deconstruct these negative images, Serwonoo (2018) argues that journalists, contrary to the Akan proverb, 'have pointed to their father's house with their left hand' by reinforcing negative news stereotypes about Africa.

The two newspapers sourced some of their political news stories from Ghanaian online news portals, such as *myjoyonline* and *classfmonline* in 2016. News selection does not only have intrinsic value but also reflects external factors such as "occupational routines, constraints and ideology" (O'Niell and Harcup, 2009, p168). Like Leal posits, "news is political" (2019, p3). The internet has not only changed the way news is consumed, but also how news is reported. Inter-media agenda setting has been heightened as a result of the increase in online news portals.

Sikanku (2011) researched the inter-media agenda setting influence of two newspaper websites and two non-newspaper websites in Ghana and concluded that the Ghana News Agency (GNA), a state-owned non-newspaper website, had a large amount of its stories used by other publications due to its 'powerful agenda-setting effect' (p1330). He adds that most media in Ghana look to the GNA more than any other media for news stories due to their 'first mover advantage' (p1330) as a result of their expansive network. It is therefore interesting to see the two state newspapers source news from other online news portals apart from the GNA on political reporting. This attests to the role of online news portals in the political news agenda setting for newspapers, especially when the Daily Graphic has its own online portal.

There is a sense of reciprocity in the inter-media agenda setting by the newspapers and the online news portals because as already stated elsewhere in this research, radio in Ghana, especially in the mornings centre around newspaper reviews. The fact that the two analysed newspapers also sourced news from *myjoyonline* and *classfmonline,*

which are both online news outlets of two radio stations, attests to a strong inter-media agenda setting culture in Ghana.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I reflected on what the two main state-owned newspapers reported in comparison with respondents' recollections of events leading to the 2012 and 2016 general elections. The chapter established how my study of decolonial political PR contributes to the body of knowledge of studies concerned with how the media reports political events that are staged by political parties and in so doing shows a dimension of the lived experiences of politicians and political communication practitioners. The chapter also briefly examined newspapers in a postcolonial/post-military rule context and looked at PR's mediated role in news making in Ghana.

Chapter 8

Implications and Conclusions

8.0 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the significance of the research findings and attempts to show the wider implications of the research. The study concludes that it is possible to integrate knowledge production systems of indigenous people in the study and practice of political public relations. The research questions that the research sought to answer were the following:

- What is the ontological and epistemic basis of decolonising public relations and democratisation in global South/non-western contexts?

- To what extent has PR been decolonised in Ghana and what has been its impact on African politics? How have political parties in Ghana deployed such decolonised PR since the country's return to democratic rule?

- What are the decolonial political PR strategies the political parties deploy to mobilise for political power?

- How and with what implications has decolonised public relations informed PR and political communication in Ghana?

- How has the political culture of Ghana informed a decolonised model of practicing PR?

The themes which emerged were paired with African proverbs whose contexts were used to explain the public relations strategy and tactic at play.

The chapter reflects on some of the critical issues raised in the literature and the conceptual framework and attempts to show that the conceptual framework of the study has been achieved.

8.1 Overview of Key Findings

This section sets out the key findings that the research identified. Key findings of the research are based on the themes generated from the processes that facilitated the collection of the data. The themes, discussed below, reflect the key objectives and research questions that underpin the study.

8.1.1 Lived Experiences of PR Professionals

A key concept of Afrokology as outlined by Mano and Milton (2021) is that the lived experiences of a people are an important factor in the knowledge production process. They eloquently argue that 'African media and communication scholarship has not been adequately informed by the cultural contexts and circumstances within Africa.' (p21). Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the study showed that the lived experience of public relations and political communications practitioners, while characterised by local realities are theorised from global north perspectives and same taught in universities. This sometimes creates a dissonance between what is taught and how political PR is practiced. While the lived experience of the practitioners includes aspects of their traditional life such as the use of proverbs and the place of traditional and religious authorities in political campaigning for example, PR teaching curriculum centres the global north and hence respondents have come to think of the practice more in global terms rather than in local terms. The implication of this is that PR practice is seen more through a global lens than a decolonial lens. Our frame of reference is always the global north therefore aspects of our lives as Africans that promote community, reciprocity,

inclusion, and diversity are often discussed in the classroom without reference to African indigenous knowledge systems like proverbs. The Akan proverb that says all fingers are not the same speaks to diversity but will likely not be accepted as a 'legitimate' knowledge source to explain the concept of diversity in the public relations literature.

The study also identified as has been identified by previous researchers (Mohammed, 2021; Langmia, 2021) that public relations curricula will need to reflect the lived experience of practitioners rather than perspectives that are alien to their lived experiences. The study recommends a redesign of curricula that centres African knowledge systems such as proverbs. This we believe will speed up the acceptance of African knowledge systems into the academy and be more reflective of students and practitioners lived experience when they have to interact with local communities in the execution of their campaigns.

8.1.2 PR and Democratic Growth in Ghana

In *Public Relations in Deliberative Systems*, Lee (2016) argues that due to its information management role, PR does not truly engender deliberation in a democracy. His argument is supported by (McNair, 2004; Maloney, 2006; Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995) who have critiqued the role of PR in advanced democracies and posit that due to aspects of PR that are performative, the practice has more negative impact on democracy.

This study however contradicts the critics of the role of PR in democracies. Respondents were unanimous in their belief that PR has been beneficial to Ghana's democratic processes. By creating a perception against military takeovers, encouraging stakeholder deliberations and consultations as well as "sanitising" the campaign

communication process, public relations inured to the benefit of Ghana's democracy. PR has broadened the scope of political communication by moving away from just political marketing and allowing candidates to go beyond the need to simply "sell" themselves and their ideologies to engaging beyond the election season. PR has moved political communication from a transactional perspective to a relational perspective in Ghana in accordance with Seltzer's (2020) perspective. The research agrees with Stromback and Kiousis (2011) who argue that with the increasing polarization on the political front, the relationship management perspective that political PR brings is needed now more than ever.

Political PR's positives in Ghana's democracy, this research believes is the opportunity for inclusion of marginalised groups in conversations of national importance. The case of the two main political parties in Ghana engaging head porters or *kayaye* for example is the biggest positive in the opinion of this researcher. Citizenship engagement has increased greatly over the years. There have been meet-the-press sessions, town hall meetings as well as listening tours which are all geared towards broadening stakeholder engagement. In 2020 for example, the NDC presented the "*The People's Manifesto*[130]" after what the party said was extensive stakeholder consultations. While this study agrees that due to Americanisation of politics (Mensah, 2011) political actors are learning from capitalist societies and may be being more performative in the engagement with constituents, there is a place for dialogue which did not exist previously. Again, with social media allowing for citizens to archive political promises

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[130] https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/FULL-DOCUMENT-NDC-s-2020-manifesto-dubbed-The-People-s-Manifesto-1054015

made during electioneering campaigns, political parties may be more careful in performative stakeholder relations since they will be reminded in future.

Another area of improvement which public relations seems to have brought to political communication and by extension Ghana's democratic process is the expansive communications channels that PR brings to political communication. While emphasis on media channels have been on traditional news sources in the past, with the expansion of the political PR political parties have access to digital channels but also a more strategic use of even the traditional news channels.

The findings of the research agree with Holtzhausen (2005) and Thompson (2018) who assert that there has been reciprocal benefit of PR on democracy and democracy on PR.

8.1.3 A Semblance of Strategy

The need for strategic planning in political PR practice was not in doubt by respondents in the research. Practitioners shared the view that the strategy part of communication is critical for any organisation but especially for political parties due to how conflict and scandal prone politics is (Coombs, 2020). There was however a point of departure where many practitioners doubted whether the two political parties had a strategic document guiding their communication efforts. While the political party respondents insisted, they had communication strategies, they could not share it with the researcher. One respondent who is a political communication consultant however revealed he was contracted by one of the political parties in the 2020 elections to develop a strategic communications document. He however noted that the party did not work according to the strategy document. His point is corroborated by another respondent who noted that the politicians thought once they had won an election previously without a communication strategy, they did not need one.

Overall, there was unequivocal agreement that political parties had improved their communications since Ghana's return to democratic rule in 1992. The research established that there has been incremental progress in the use of political PR since 2012 and the last election in 2020 showed a marked improvement in political communication across the board for the political parties. Respondent PRPC-008 notes that:

> 2012 was the beginning of that revolution and 2016, it became much more intense because they realized that for 2012, those that didn't do their homework well, when it came back to campaigning, timing, strategy, messaging. They improved in 2016, because they realized that it worked for the party that won in 2012. So, 2016, you could see a lot of investment, a lot of time, a lot of energy. They even brought people from outside. NPP for example, they had to fly some people from South Africa to join their political campaigning strategy to tell them how to do sensitivity analysis, emotional appeal analysis for them. That should inform what they have to say or what they shouldn't even say at a particular point in time. So, the whole campaigning architecture improved. There were a lot of investment, a lot of direction, a lot of focus in how they went about their campaigning[131].

The research also showed that with regards to communication strategy and the use of political PR, the NPP seems to come across as more coordinated in their efforts at deploying political PR. Respondents noted the ways in which as a party, the NPP seems to have done its homework well with regards to communication. The party had a clear message and communicated it clearly to each group they engaged with depending on the needs of the group. The party also communicated these key messages in slogans such as 1 District 1 factory (1D1F), 1 village 1 dam, free Senior High School (SHS)

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[131] PRPC-008, Interview, May 2022

education among others by using slogans which people could easily relate with. The NDC on the other hand while having carried out massive infrastructural development across the country could not articulate it properly to garner votes. There were even respondents who thought the NDC's 2016 slogan (*e dey be keke*) for example was a slap in the face of the suffering masses due to the economic hardship the country was going through.

The strategic communication activities the two main political parties undertook as critical aspects of their political PR efforts include media monitoring, media relations, reputation management and crisis communication.

8.1.4 Media-Relationships and Channels

Political PR is often discussed with a focus on media relations and information management (Abugre, 2017; Moloney, 2006; Moloney and McGrath, 2021; McNair 2004). As already stated earlier in this research, the media in Ghana has recently become vibrant after military dictatorship stifled its growth from the 1980's until the early 2000s. Isbell and Appiah-Nyamekye (2018) note that the media has been instrumental in Ghana's democratisation.

The study revealed that while the two political parties have some level of good relationship with the media, the NDC seems to have a somewhat frosty relationship with the media that may have roots in its association with the military Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government. Respondents however added that as a party the NDC had not also been proactive in their relationship with the media and that although the party have an unofficial press corps (database of journalists on WhatsApp) according to PRPC-002, the party may not be making the most of their relationship with

the media. The NPP on the other hand is seen as a party that loves media freedom due to the party's efforts in repealing the criminal libel law in 2001 (Ampomah, 2011).

Another key finding on media relationships between the political parties and the media is media ownership and its attendant impact on political PR practice. Media ownership in Ghana has raised questions about political parallelism due to the heavy ownership of media outlets by politicians and politically exposed persons (Asomah, 2021; Serworno et al. 2021; Asante 2020). This has resulted in a politically polarised media landscape which is failing at its watchdog role (Asomah, 2021b). The study contends that with such a media landscape, political PR practice if not done ethically will compound the polarisation while perpetuating power relations between the citizenry and those in power. Respondent PRPC-006 believes social media has the power to stem this tide and provide an avenue for dialogue beyond the "adult speaking to a child" mental picture that journalists and the traditional media presents.

The research also found that the two main political parties use both traditional and digital media platforms to reach out to stakeholders thereby optimising their media usage. This is significant because political communication has moved on from the heavy reliance on traditional media in the early 1990s to a blend of traditional and digital media. On the traditional media front, radio seems to be the biggest platform for socio-political discussions in agreement with Fosu and Akpojivi (2015). Radio political talk shows mainly focus on reviewing topical issues reported by newspapers and assemble panels usually from the two main political parties (Serwonoo et al., ibid). Respondents from the political parties found this arrangement beneficial to them because it allows them to reach a large voter base all through the year, especially those in rural communities since many of the morning radio shows are in indigenous language. The emergence of indigenous language radio political talk shows has

increased citizen participation in Ghana's democracy with media convergence (Erdal, 2007) ensuring high audience interactivity via phone-ins and social media handles of the media houses.

8.1.5 Social media have gained roots but hasn't completely taken out traditional media due to the dominance of radio in Ghana

The research established that while social media may have gained roots in the political communication space, traditional media especially radio was still a dominant channel in the dissemination of political information in Ghana. This is evident in the number of radio stations that broadcast political morning shows as already discussed in the previous section.

The two main political parties seem to have plugged into social media as a political campaign tool. Political parties are using social media to reach voters in ways that is targeted. Tactical Tech (2019) sums it up and avers that 'political parties are using the same techniques to sell political candidates to voters that companies use to sell shoes to consumers" (Tactical Tech, 2019; cited in Bennet and Lyon, 2019).

Social media has also become the new public sphere and was used to discuss political party manifestos as well as their planned projects and programmes especially in the run up to the 2016 elections. Social media was also used as the rallying point for voters to protest what was considered infringement on citizens' rights by the government at the time.

The research also established that political parties must take another look at WhatsApp as a communication tool due to its reach and capacity to allow for co-creation of political messages. Evangelista and Bruno (2019, p16) posit that WhatsApp can be

'used as an effective tool to direct messages to micro-segmented voters.' The research recommends that political parties take advantage of this for sharing campaign messages.

8.2 Original Contribution to Knowledge

Public relations, while having reputation management as one of its key functions has a reputational problem (Moloney and McGrath, 2019; Dutta, 2016; Callson, 2004, 2001). This stems from decades of unaddressed misunderstanding of what PR is and how it can be used as a force for good. In examining the source credibility of PR practitioners, Callson notes that:

> Although most Public Relations practitioners work toward maintaining a favourable image of a client, the profession seldom works on its own behalf to campaign for the image of public relations itself. As a result, an industry that focuses on the creation of positive relationships between various publics *faces a real challenge of maintaining its own reputation…* (2001, p219; emphasis added).

PR has been seen as a tool for corporate manipulation (Dutta, 2016), as a threat to democracy (Moloney and McGrath, 2019; McNair, 2004). These descriptions of the profession have not enhanced the reputation of the profession in any way.

This research argues that to reset and repair the image and reputation of the profession, it is imperative that its links to corporate subterfuge is annulled, and the wellbeing of people placed at the centre of the practice. The *public* in public relations needs to count. The study further argues that African epistemologies which have as its emphasis *community* and *people* can help with the reputational repair efforts for PR as a profession. Asante (2018) proposes African thought such as *Maat,* which is grounded

in ethical communication and humanism should take centre stage in communication practice.

African communication and media studies scholars have in recent times heeded the call to action for African epistemes to be moved from the margins. Nyamnjoh et al. (2021) propose the use of proverbs as an epistemological lens through which the life, including politics of the African can be viewed. Dei et al (2018) note that proverbs are a pedagogical tool for decolonisation. Mohammed (2021) applied *Bilchinsi* as a methodological approach for the study of media and communication while Anani-Bossman and Tandoh (2023), Ngondo and Kylueva (2023) and Chasi (2021) have all explored the use of *ubuntu* as a conceptual frame through which PR and strategic communications can be interpreted.

The current study also took on the challenge of 'centring the margins' (Willems, 2023; Mano and Milton, 2021; Mutsvairo, 2018) by applying African proverbs as a conceptual frame through which PR and strategic communication can be interpreted. This follows in the steps of Osseo-Asare (2019, p195) who used proverbs "as a medium of instruction" for materials science and engineering and in the footsteps of Agyemang et al. (2015) who applied proverbs to explain contemporary human resource principles and corporate value.

By applying proverbs to PR generally and to political PR in particular, this research has contributed conceptually and empirically to knowledge by:

1) Bringing clarity and understanding to the misconception that PR is a global north concept and practice. Indeed, the literature shows that through their hieroglyphics, the ancient Egyptians were master storytellers (Langmia, 2021). The African culture is replete with aspects of what is now being adopted in

contemporary PR practice. In his unpublished master's thesis, Fuseini (2021) examines Grunig (1992) excellence theory in practice at an Akan Traditional Palace in Ghana and concludes that principles of the excellence theory are evident in palace communication practices and have been done for centuries. This research in taking on the challenge to decolonise public relations has discussed proverbs *alongside* global north concepts of PR practice rather than in *comparison with* those concepts. This ensures that no knowledge system is subverted and that the pecking order for knowledge(s) is abolished but rather like Nyamnjoh (2017) proposes, the different knowledge systems complement each other with the foreknowledge of the incompleteness of knowledge. This way, knowledge is advanced because there are "multiple ontologies" (Conway and Singh, 2011, p701).

2) The research also adds to the literature and theory development of political PR by taking a wholistic approach to political PR beyond media relations (Abugre, 2017) in Ghana. Political parties' use of PR to address relationship building/stakeholder management, crisis management and communication, media relations as well as use of social media have been examined in the light of developing democracy. The study provides a glimpse into the total offerings of political PR from a developing democracy point of view and shows that while PR may have impacted negatively on democracies in the UK and US, it is beneficial to emerging democracies such as Ghana's.

In 2020, Ghanaians went to the polls for the eighth time since the introduction of the fourth republican constitution. However, the covid-19 pandemic ensured that there were several changes to political organising and campaigning. Lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings in different nations resulted in an increase in the use of information systems and networks such as social media (Kuranchie and Kwarteng, forthcoming). There were also significant changes in

technology usage habits and behaviour (Kaya, 2020). Kuranchie and Kwarteng (ibid) note that there was an uptick in the use of social media by the two main political parties, however traditional PR campaign practices seen in 2012 and 2016 also featured prominently in the run up to the elections which got the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo re-elected.

8.3 Areas of Future Research

This research took a wholistic look at public relations practice in the two leading parties in Ghana, the NPP and NDC in 2012 and 2016 elections. While the study took a wholistic look at PR practice by the political parties, it will be interesting to see further research carried out on the most recent elections which were held in 2020.

Further research into government communication practices is another area of research that can interrogate political PR practices of political parties after they have won power. An examination of ways in which parties who form government transition from the political campaigning phase to the governing phase will be research that communicates the entire political PR process.

Finally, research into how political parties cultivate, build, and maintain relationships with their stakeholders long term (Seltzer, 2020) will ensure that the political parties will cultivate and keep mutually beneficial relationships (Stromback and Kiousis, 2020) and to ensure that voters' trust in democratic institutions which are eroding over the years will be restored.

The challenges and limitations of the study notwithstanding, the research provides fresh perspectives into political public relations practice and produces a fresh perspective of how indeginous knowledge systems can be applied to public relations and political communication practice in the global south.

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Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

This research is for a PhD in Communications in CAMRI at the University of Westminster

Research Project Title: Decolonising Public Relations in Africa: Centring Local Epistemes in Ghanaian Political Communication

Background, aims of project

Ghana has held eight successive democratic elections since 1992 and is seen as a poster child for democracy in Africa. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate how political parties have utilised Public Relations (PR) and PR strategies, tactics and activities used in Ghana's political electioneering campaigns. Since its return to multiparty democracy in 1992, Ghana has been hailed as the poster child of democracy in Africa and whereas research has been carried out on political marketing and political communication using the Ghanaian case study little research exists in Political PR using the Ghanaian context. This PhD thesis proposes to examine how presidential candidates of the two leading parties in Ghana, The New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic (NDC) have used culturally situated PR strategies, tactics, and activities to influence electorates in a bid to occupy the highest seat of the land. The study proposes the last two elections in 2012 and 2016 as the point of reference.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited because your expertise in Public Relations and/or Political Communication would provide valuable insights to enrich the findings of this research.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you can withdraw your participation at any time by informing the researcher. If you withdraw, no further data will be collected from you. Any data collected up until that point will be deleted.

You will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to confirm your consent orally or complete an electronic consent form, whichever one is more suitable for you.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be expected to participate in an interview which would involve talking about your experience and career journey for approximately 45 -90minutes. This will be a semi-structured interview, meaning that it will be customised to your expertise in trying to understand how you think PR is used in Ghana's democracy and how our culture impacts PR practice.

This would be conducted online through Zoom, Skype, Teams, WhatsApp, or another online platform that is convenient for you.

Are there any potential risks in taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks in taking part. If you perceive any risks as a participant, kindly discuss this with the researcher.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

Your participation in this research does not attract any benefits or compensation. However, your experience and knowledge will be greatly appreciated as it will have a valuable impact on this research.

What happens to the data I provide?

- The data will be anonymised and coded for confidentiality reasons and in protection of your privacy unless you give permission to use your name. The researcher will pseudo anonymise the participants details and keep a copy of the identifier key secure to ensure that your privacy is protected.

- Sentences from the interview may be used as quotes in the final presentation of the research but devoid of your personal information which others can easily identify you by.
- The data (interview transcripts and audio recordings) will be stored anonymously in an encrypted file. My research team, supervisor

or transcribers may have access to the interview data but these parties will abide to confidentiality agreement.

- Your data will be kept on University of Westminster's secure encrypted drive, OneDrive in a password protected file until the completion of the degree program which is predicted to be September 2023.

Recorded media

With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded for later transcription and analysis. The recording itself will not be part of the finished research material however, quotes may be extracted from the conversion in written form. These quotes **will not** have your personal information which others can easily identify you by.

Will the research be published?

This research is a dissertation in fulfilment of academic obligations at the University of Westminster and the final version will be available in the database of the University's library.

Who has reviewed this research project?

The ethical approaches of this project have been approved via The University of Westminster DCDI Research Ethics Committee.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

Head of School, CAMRI
Michaela O'Brien: M.Obrien@westminster.ac.uk

Director of Studies/Supervisor:
Dr. Winston Mano: W.Mano@westminster.ac.uk

Researcher
Paulina Kuranchie: w1699609@my.westminster.ac.uk

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

Research Title: Decolonising Public Relations in Africa: Centring Local Epistemes in Ghanaian Political Communication

Participant Consent Form

Please initial box	
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [insert date explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study and withdraw my data within 3 weeks without giving a reason, and without any penalty. I understand that beyond provided timeframe, when data analysis is finalised and results are published, it may not be possible to remove my data from the study.	
I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous and I give permission for the researcher, supervisor, and examiners to have access to my responses upon request.	
I consent to being audio recorded.	
I understand how audio will be used in research outputs. I am aware that I will not be named in any research outputs but there is a possibility that I could be identified by people I know through the stories I tell.	
I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publication against my job title without the mention of the organisation or my name.	
I agree to take part in this study.	

Appendix 3: Political Party Respondents Interview Guide

Sample questions for the interview will be based on the objectives of the research and may include but not limited to the following:

1.   What communications strategy did you have in the run up to the 2012 and 2016 elections?

2.   2a. Who was mandated to serve as the spokesperson for the party?

2b. Who was mandated to serve as the spokesperson for the candidate?

3.   What activities/events did you undertake to shape opinions?

4.   What activities/events did you undertake to engage with voters?

5.   Which specific events stood out for you and called for your attention as a party?

6.   How did you deal with crisis situations (e.g., the death of late President Prof Mills)?

7.   What role did communication play in your win or loss during the electioneering campaigns?

8.   How do you measure your communication efforts?

9.   Did you have the necessary logistics to communicate?

10.   Were there trained comms people to work with or did you have to make do with the people you have? (loud mouths on radio and TV)

11.   How has community information centres helped with party communications?

12.   How do you think you can improve your communication to better the chances of your political party in subsequent elections?

Appendix 4: Interview guide -Political Communication and Public Relations Experts

A.   **Public Relations and Political Communication Experts**

1. How has communication and Public Relations impacted on Ghana's democracy since 1992?

2. What transitions have been evident when it comes to political communication from 1992-date?

3. What stood out for you in terms of communication during the 2012 and 2016 elections?

4. How have the political parties used communication tools and strategies over the years?

5. How do you think the political parties handled crisis? For example, Prof. Mills' death in 2012, the Brazil scandal, etc.?

6. Do you see any reputation management efforts by the political parties?

7. What culturally situated activities did you see in the communication activities of the political parties.

   a.   Should our knowledge of PR be informed by global knowledge or local knowledge (idioms and proverbs) or there be a balance?

   b.   How should our knowledge of political communication and public relations be informed by local or global knowledge? Can you please give examples?

8. What role did communication play in the win or loss during the electioneering campaigns?

9. How do you think political parties can improve their communication to better their chances in subsequent elections?

Politics

NDC ready for 2016 polls —*Hanna Tetteh*

THE National Democratic Congress (NDC) is ready and prepared for this year's presidential and parliamentary polls, Hanna Tetteh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, has said.

According to her, the party had started campaigning ahead of the elections and it would get vigorous as the day of the polls drew close.

President John Dramani Mahama is embarking on a nationwide tour dubbed: 'Accounting to the People' to interact with the citizenry and is also expected to inspect on-going projects in the country.

He has already toured the Western, Volta, Greater Accra, Brong Ahafo, Central, and Ashanti regions. He is expected to tour the entire country.

Madam Tetteh, who doubles as the Member of Parliament for Awutu-Senya West constituency and seeking re-election said "every election has its challenges based on the circumstances in which our country finds itself, both in terms of domestic challenges and also looking at the externals that affect us, whether we like it or not".

"For any party, at any time when legally, conditionally, the election is due, the issue is not whether you are ready or not, the issue is that it is time to go to the country for the election and you have to prepare to go to the country for an election," she said.

Madam Tetteh noted that "the National Democratic Congress has already started preparing, has already started campaigning, and you will see we will do much more vigorously as we get closer to our election date."

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Ms. Hanna Tetteh

Police Command to meet EC officials—*IGP*

THE Police Command would this month meet with officials of the Electoral Commission as part of its stakeholder engagement to work for a peaceful and successful general election in November.

Addressing a durbar of Police personnel at Cape Coast, as part of his working visit to the Central Region, Mr John Kudalor, the Inspector General of Police, said maintaining the peace of the nation ahead of the election and thereafter, is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

He said his outfit had already met with the organisers of the youth wings of the various political parties, party executives, the Presidential candidates and their running mates, as well as representatives of the media.

The IGP said "the Police has a long arm but it cannot reach out to everyone", therefore, it needs the support of everyone to be effective in its duties."

Consequently, he said, the Police Command was leaving no stone unturned, and urged the Police personnel to eschew partisanship and be fair and firm.

Mr. Kudalor said the Police Service was ready to deploy bodyguards to protect the various Presidential candidates.

"The selected officers had been given the needed skills training and logistics to enable them to perform their duties effectively," he said.

The 2016 elections, the IGP said, had been described by some as "the Mother of all Elections" and the "Gadhafi of Elections" because it would be keenly contested.

Nevertheless, he said, the Police would be up to the task of ensuring order, peace and security.

The IGP urged the Regional Commander to replicate the dialogue series across the region by engaging the youth, opinion leaders, chiefs and political party leaders.

The Central Regional Police Commander, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ASP) Kwame Tachie Poku, said the region was relatively calm in terms of criminal activities.

ASP Poku said the current staff population of the Regional Command was 1,995, which he noted was inadequate to effectively manage the 2,006 polling stations and 465 flash points.

He announced that 1,016 police personnel had so far been trained in the Public-Order Management Programme.

-*GNA*

CPP youth to petition party over suspensions

THE Youth League of the Convention People's Party (CPP), has said it will petition the party's leadership over the suspension of its National Youth Organiser, Ernesto Yeboah, and General Secretary, Nii Armah Akomfrah

The two were suspended after they publicly contradicted the party's flag-bearer, Ivor Greenstreet, over President John Mahama's Ford Expedition saga as well as petitioning the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), to investigate the President.

The two have also been accused of publicly chastising and humiliating the party's flag-bearer in the media after missed claims that the Ford Expedition gift to the President amounted to bribery.

The party insists that, the said petition was a unilateral one that did not reflect its stance on the issue.

Secretary to the CPP's Youth League, Hardi Yakubu, said the youth will not relent until the decision to suspend the two is reversed.

"We will in the coming days, following an official communication on the reasons for the suspension, we seek to petition the leadership of the party to take a second look at the decision because we think that, it is a very crucial moment at this point and we cannot have national officers being suspended at this crucial he said.

The Youth League in a separate statement said it "stands shoulder to shoulder with Ernesto Yeboah and Nii Armah Akomfrah" since "we believe that they spoke and acted in the best interest of the party and of Ghanaians in general."

Ernesto Yeboah had also said he is not ashamed to be suspended from his position for waging war against corruption.

"We would rather seek to petition state organisations that have the required constitutional powers to ensure that the truth of the matter is ascertained and we are not reneging on that. So if we are being honest simply because of this, then we are not ashamed," he

Politics

We have the best presidential candidate – *NDC*

Mrs. Moctar Bawa

By Julius Yao Petetsi

THE National Democratic Congress (NDC) says it has the "best candidate" among those seeking the mandate of Ghanaians in the December polls to become the president of the country.

According to the party, its flag bearer and President, Mr. John Dramani Mahama, has demonstrated his commitment to the development of the country, a reason why he should be given a second term in office.

"As a party, we believe that we have the best candidate and has put forth our best foot. We also believe that Ghanaians will agree with us that John Dramani Mahama indeed deserves a second four year term", spokesperson for the John Mahama Campaign, Mrs. Joyce Moctar Bawa, said at a media launch of the NDC's campaign in Accra yesterday.

The presidential electioneering campaign of the governing party is expected to be launched in the Central Regional capital, Cape Coast, on August 14.

With all modalities put in place for the launch on Sunday at the newly constructed Cape Coast Sports Stadium, the NDC's campaign would be on the theme "Changing Lives, Transforming Ghana."

The occasion would also be used to outdoor the party's presidential ticket for the December elections.

In the view of Mrs. Bawa, the theme is a reflection of President Mahama's commitment to delivering better living conditions of the citizenry and a transformed society where businesses would thrive.

She said the theme of the campaign was not a fiction but a testimony of President Mahama's performance as president and could be related to by the voter.

The party, Mrs. Moctar Bawa, noted, was ready with parliamentary candidates across all 275 constituencies and would

shift into the election gear on Sunday for the polls.

Responding to questions of a long held perception of inactivity on the part of the Vice President, Paa Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur, Mrs. Bawa, who is also a Deputy Transport Minister, said the second-in-command has been deeply involved in the governance process and would continue to do so as expected of him by the constitution.

The NDC ticket, she said, is better placed to bring the necessary development to every nook and cranny of the country as compared to their competitors and reiterated the party's resolve to a peaceful and issue based campaign.

"The NDC is prepared and ready to have John Dramani Mahama re-elected for a second term. We hope the campaign will kick start our activities to the elections which would lead us to a resounding victory for 2016 come December 7", she assured.

NCCE revives regional inter-party dialogue

THE Greater Accra Regional National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has revived its regional inter-party dialogue committee in a move to deepen friendly political party discourse and encourage issue-based campaigns.

The new committee, seeking to quell any election related violence, has Reverend Canon Patrick Okaijah Bortier as chairman, Mrs. Evelyn Amasa from the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Vice Chairperson and Mrs. Lucille Hewlett Annan, Greater Accra Regional Director of NCCE, Secretary.

Though more political parties were billed to attend, only the National Democratic Congress and Convention People's Party attended the meeting convened to restart the dialogue committee reformation process.

Traditional rulers, religious bodies, media, NCCE staff and security agencies also showed up and expressed their profound desire for the country to have a transparent electoral process.

Mrs. Annan said formation of the committee formed part of the NCCE's project initiated to focus on mediation and resolution of petty conflicts during the election period.

She said the committee would

monitor enforcement of political parties' code of conduct, promote peaceful security conditions, tolerance and identify issues likely to trigger electoral conflicts.

Mrs. Josephine Nkrumah, NCCE Deputy Regional Chairperson responsible for Finance and Administration, said Ghanaians ought to appreciate the uninterrupted democracy governance which began when the country returned to constitutional rule in 1992.

"Ghana is among few states in Africa that is enjoying peaceful democracy but we should strive more than ever to keep the wheels of democracy turning.

"What we do as one people during elections, no one can do for us and, therefore, we must rise up responsibly and adhere to a conduct that assures us of free, fair, non-violent and peaceful elections," Mrs Nkrumah said.

"It is this democracy that we all seek to nurture and grow as it is intrinsically woven into the development of our country in all spheres," she said.

Mrs. Nkrumah said the joint monitoring committee would report cases of breach of rules and regulations that govern the conduct of elections and maintenance of public order.

Some violations the committee seeks to monitor

include: distribution of money and gifts to the electorate, declaration of election results by political parties and their members, defacing of posters, biased media reportage, campaign violence, use of intemperate, provocative and abusive language by political parties, rigging of elections and abuse of incumbency.

Mrs. Nkrumah indicated that "essential to the success of our elections is the clarity and flow of communication since lack of adequate information could lead to misinformation and festering of unnecessary resentment, an ingredient that can spark acts of non-adherence to electoral rules and lead to violence." -GNA

Ho Central NDC canvasses for votes

From Kafui Gati, Klefe

THE Ho Central branch of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has launched operation 80,000 votes for President John Mahama and the Parliamentary candidate, Benjamin Kpodo at Klefe in the Ho Municipality.

The launching which was organised by Klefe Ward coordinator of the NDC, Delali Kavu, is part of efforts to promote a high turnout of NDC supporters in the constituency during the

December 7 elections.

Mr. John Gyapong, the regional chairman, addressing the enthusiastic crowd, admonished supporters of Ho Central to tap into the wealth of experience and support from the regional executives to ensure that Ho Central increases from 62,000 in 2012 to 80,000 in December, 7.

He said the target set would be achieved by unity and hard work in the run-up to the elections but expressed worry of apathy that seem to be creeping

into the fold of party supporters in the region and there was the need to curb it.

Mr. Gyapong said the only solution is for all supporters to come out that day in their numbers to vote massively for the party for total victory.

Mr. Kpodo, who is seeking re-election, touted his achievements in the areas of education, health, roads, agriculture and support to women and girls among other interventions.

He said it was no wonder that

he has been named in the constituency as "All the votes" by his constituents and deserves a second term.

Mr. Egypt Kudoto, Regional Youth Organiser, reminded the gathering that the Progressive People's Party selected a running mate from the Volta Region to partner Dr. Papa Kwesi Nduom to get votes so as not to meet our target to give some advantage to the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

He however said a vote for PPP in the region is a vote for NPP and reminded supporters

about this development.

Mrs. Fafa Adinyrah, Ho Municipal Chief Executive, urged the people to realise the numerous developments ongoing in the municipality and give a second term to the party to continue with the good work.

Togbui Sape, a divisional chief of Klefe, pledged their unflinching support for the party and called on those seeking leadership positions to continue to relate to the people.
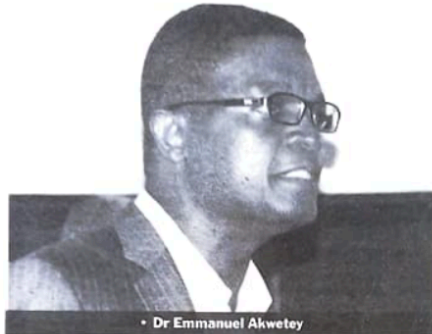
Politics

Ghana's electoral system becoming turbulent — IDEG

THE Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Dr Emmanuel Akwetey, has said that Ghana's electoral system is increasingly becoming turbulent because many invisible hands are funding activities of political parties.

According to him, a lot of money was being channelled into politics and that winning election, especially presidential election, was crucial to those who invested in it.

"Meanwhile, regulatory institutions charged to find out where the parties get money to fund their campaigning and other activities have failed to enforce the law," he added.

Dr Akwetey, who was speaking at the second edition of the Advancement Lecture Series organised by the Institutional Advancement Office of the University of Cape Coast (UCC), said the practice was a serious characteristic of the country's

· Dr Emmanuel Akwetey

political system which needed to be addressed.

The lecture was on the theme, "Towards credible 2016 election: the role of stakeholders in ensuring free,

fair, transparent and violence-free election."

Abuse of incumbency

He said people accuse

governments of abuse of incumbency and blatant spending of the taxpayer's money, as well as heavily borrowing in election periods, but the opposition also spend a lot of money and no one knows where their money comes from.

His comment comes at the back of the Economic and Organised Crime Office's (EOCO's) recent invitation of the presidential aspirants of the All People's Congress (APC) and the Progressive People's Party (PPP).

It would be recalled that EOCO issued a letter to PPP's Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom requesting him to explain the source of the over GH¢1.7 million he used to pay filing fees at the Electoral Commission (EC) for himself and his party's parliamentary candidates.

The Presidential Candidate of the APC, Mr Hassan Ayariga, was also invited to answer questions on the

sources of funding for his party in securing vehicles for his campaign.

Election overloads

Dr Akwetey said the political system was also characterised by "election overloads," whereby unregulated political activities tended to make it difficult to define an election season or period.

He said the country's political system operated on a four-year cycle, which did not allow political parties to implement policies that transformed lives systematically.

According to Dr Akwetey, there was what he described as "Paradox" in the electoral process because the peace and stability the country enjoyed did not translate into its elections, but was often characterised by fear of violence and stabilisation of democracy at every next election. — **GNA**

Women's Manifesto Coalition to monitor polls

Quick Read

By Dennis Agyei Boateng,
DODOWA

THE Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC) will create a special situation room during the election as part of efforts to ensure peace during and after the election.

The Special Situation Room will be created throughout the country to monitor the election.

There will be a toll-free line and television sets in the room to monitor the election from voting to counting and declaration of results.

This special concept has been duplicated in some African countries including Nigeria, Kenya, and Liberia to reduce electoral violence, and this year, some eminent women in Ghana want to adopt it to monitor the elections and dialogue among political parties to ensure peace during this year's election.

The Volta Regional Coordinator for the Women Situation Room, Nana Kugbeadzor-Bakateyi revealed at a workshop organised by the Fredrich Ebert -Stiftung and Abantu for

· Some of the participants in the workshop. PICTURE: MAXWELL OCLOO

Development last Monday at Dodowa.

Speaking on the topic "Women's Inclusiveness and Peace in Elections 2016", Nana Kugbeadzor-Bakateyi stated that some eminent women including Dr Joyce Aryee, Prof. Henrietta Mensah Bonsu, Mrs Joy Abena Nyarko among others and organisations such as the

WMC, Abantu for Development and others have signed to it.

To ensure peace

Mrs Kugbeadzor-Bakateyi mentioned that on the day of election, the special situation rooms would be created across the regions which would

Fredrich Ebert–Stifung in and Abantu for Development have organised the workshop at Dodowa.

comprise one eminent woman, representatives of all the political parties, a representative from the Electoral Commission, security personnel, as well as representatives from the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), to respond to issues that would be crop up on the day of election.

"The room would be created for 10 days during the election period which would provide 24-hour within a week services," she said.

She noted that there would be toll free lines which would soon be advertised on various media platforms so that individuals could call in case electoral violence occurs somewhere. "The eminent women can respond to the call and if it is from a political party, they would call the leaders of the parties to address it," she added.

#GHANAV⊙tes2016   'Tolerance strengthens our democracy'

Market women call for more interest in markets

By Mary Mensah, ACCRA

THE Market Women's Association (MWA) has called on local authorities to show more interest in market-related issues across the country.

They also called on the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), the Local Government Service Secretariat (LGSS) and the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) to encourage local authorities to involve women in decision making at the local level, especially on issues which affect them.

"Assemblies should endeavour to engage women fully in all decisions, plans and budgets, particularly those that involve the market, and provide timely feedback to our concerns," a communiqué said.

Communiqué

The communiqué was issued at the end of a two-day conference held in Accra on the theme: "Empowering Market Women for Economic Prosperity."

The forum, which brought together market women from across the 10 regions, offered the participants a unique opportunity to share their concerns.

The first-ever National Market Women's conference also provided participants with an opportunity to find ways to deepen collaboration with the assemblies.

The communiqué stressed the women's preparedness to work closely with the local assemblies "but that can only happen if we are well represented."

"We have gained a better appreciation of the role of markets in the national economy and an understanding of decentralisation as an imperative for promoting more independent and sustainable local economies. We are committed to

working with the assemblies, central government agencies and all other relevant parties to make the markets viable places of economic activity," it said.

Market conditions

The communique also lamented some of the conditions currently in some markets in the country.

It cited lack of places of convenience and poor electrical wiring as some of the major challenges a lot of the markets in the country were facing.

"Several markets have reached their capacity limits and are in danger of becoming congested. Traders in some instances have to compete with vehicles, trolleys and animals in the alleys and spaces in the markets.

The assemblies must also consider how to rehabilitate and extend existing

· The First Lady, Mrs Lordina Mahama, Nana Oye Lithur, Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, and the President of the Greater Accra Market Women Association, Madam Mercy Needjan, at the function

markets in their spatial development plans in line with the standards of modern markets and with adequate spaces assigned for the demands of different product lines," it said.

Pension scheme

The communiqué further called on the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to assist the market women to work with the appropriate authorities to help design workable pension schemes for them.

It also urged the government to check foreigners who were deeply engaged in the retail business as that posed unfair competition to the market women.

The Market Women's Association (MWA) has applauded the efforts of the government towards working to improve the state of markets in the country.

Retirees march for peace in Wa

By Michael Quaye, WA

A GROUP of retirees in the Upper West Region last Saturday embarked on a march through some major streets of Wa as they campaigned for society to uphold the peace of the country before, during and after the December 7, general election.

Known as the Legends Club, the group features eminent citizens, some of who have served in government as ministers of state, ambassadors and as members of the Council of State.

The peace of the country has taken centre stage once again in the build-up to the election, with various individuals, groups and institutions leading the campaign to drum home the essence of tolerance on all fronts in order to preserve the stability of the nation.

Mr Chris Alabilla, a retired journalist and the acting President of the Legends Club, said

· **Members of the Legends Club marching through the streets of Wa**

the campaign by the senior citizens was to impress on the youth especially to resist any overtures to disturb the peace the country was enjoying, since the youth would eventually inherit the leadership of the country.

Averting violence

He said the senior citizens felt obliged to provide counselling and guidance to help avert violence in society in the heat of the political season and the election.

The Chief Director of the Upper West Regional Coordinating Council, Mr J.B. Atogibah, lauded the exemplary campaign by the group and called it a novelty in the country.

He expressed the wish for similar groups to be formed across the country, saying the quality and experience of personalities in the Legends Club made their campaign very effective and relevant.

More than 60 elder statesmen,

some of them aided by walking sticks, participated in the nearly two-hour walk.

The membership of the group comprises persons who have served in both public and private sectors for the best part of their lives and have now retired from active service.

They include retired teachers, nurses, medical doctors and elderly traditional rulers.

* Mr Greenstreet on a campaign tour of Adenta in the Greater Accra Region

NDC, NPP messages lack direction — Greenstreet

By Seth J. Bokpe, ADENTA

THE Flag bearer of the Convention People's Party (CPP), Mr Ivor Kobina Greenstreet, has charged Ghanaians to close their ears to campaign messages of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) because they are just recycled messages that lack direction.

"The change we want is not arise for change kind, it is not the Eye zuza change, it is the Sankofa change," he told cheering party supporters at Madina in Accra.

According to him, Ghanaians from north to south had endured enough hardship from the two parties, hence giving any of the two parties another opportunity to govern the country would only bring untold hardship.

"Ghanaians are tired. They are tired of the daily hardships. They are tired of

> The tour took the team to three constituencies — Adenta, Madina and Dome Kwabenya

the lack of opportunity, they are tired. They are tired of the corruption," he told the supporters during the Greater Accra campaign float of the party.

The tour took the team to three constituencies— Adenta, Madina and Dome Kwabenya - where the party's parliamentary aspirants joined the flag bearer to drum home the party's

message of change.

At the Adenta shopping mall/market, screaming women mobbed the convoy shouting the Mr Greenstreet's slogan, "Ibi Green ooooooh, total support."

Mr Greenstreet said President John Dramani Mahama and the NDC had to be kicked out of office because of failed leadership, corruption and an economy that is inflicting pain.

He lamented the high cost of living, especially rent, electricity, water and food, saying the CPP would prioritise those basic life necessities and make them affordable.

He said the NDC was in politics because of greed and selfish interest and was a government that did not care about the people.

Turning his attention to the NPP, he said it was important to block the largest opposition from returning to power.

Delving into the crisis that rocked the NPP some months back, he said the NPP was a party with divided leadership, a weak and unattractive alternative.

He said the NPP was a power-drunk party, confused and intolerant.

"The NPP is an opposition that does not care for the people but rather in politics for greed and selfish reasons," he said.

Making a case for himself, he said he was bold, courageous and an honest leader.

He said a CPP government would create jobs for all through local industries and unite a country highly polarised.

Mr Greenstreet said the party would ensure fairness in the sharing of the country's wealth.

Scores of young people in the party took to the streets to hand out the party's paraphernalia and leaflets.

Members of the public who lined up the streets of the constituency were more interested in party t-shirts than the leaflets.

"I want the t-shirt; as for the paper I would read later," someone said, giving back the leaflets when the t-shirt did not materialise.

Others who did not get the t-shirt or scarf asked officials of the party how they expected them to support them without the paraphernalia.

The demands bring to mind public condemnation of gifts shared by political parties, but from observations on the campaign ground it is the public that makes such demands.

NPP reviews targets for Volta Region

THE New Patriotic Party (NPP) has reviewed its target of winning three parliamentary seats and 30 per cent of the total votes in the Volta Region to five parliamentary seats and 50 per cent of the presidential votes, respectively.

The review follows the recent campaign tour of the region by its Flag bearer, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, which the party described as a "monumental success" and a "striking historical political democratic revolution within the region."

At a media conference last Tuesday to announce a review of the target, Mr Peter

Amewu, the Regional Chairman of the NPP, said, "For a region that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) thinks is its world bank, the expression of support for Nana Akufo-Addo was intense and overpowering, an indication that the NPP would win more seats and votes."

He said the reception demonstrated Nana Addo's "unmatched popularity in this year's presidential race," with people in the Volta Region hailing him as a "Messiah, Defender, Saviour, Peace Maker and incorruptible Leader."

Mr Amewu said the Volta Region was no

longer the stronghold of the NDC and expressed optimism that the electorate in the region would "send a clear message and shock to the NDC by saying 'enough is enough' and voting for the NPP.

He expressed gratitude to the chiefs and people of the region for the reception given to Nana Addo and stated the party's commitment to developing the region and creating jobs for young people when given the nod to govern the country in the December polls.

Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, the NPP Director of Fundraising, later launched the party's

"Adopt-A Polling Station" project which is aimed at encouraging members to contribute money and resources to support polling station activities on the election day.

He said apart from money, members and sympathisers could support specific polling stations with food, water and other logistics and added that all contributors would be acknowledged duly.

The NPP has no parliamentary seat in the Volta Region but won 12.93 per cent of presidential votes in the region in 2012. — GNA

#GHANAVOTES2016

'Tolerance strengthens our democracy'

• Nana Addo (arrowed) speaking to residents of Dunkwa-On-Offin in the Central Region. Picture: SAMUEL TEI ADANO

Akufo-Addo cautions against complacency

By Victor Kwawukume,
DUNKWA-ON-OFFIN

THE Presidential Candidate of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, has cautioned Ghanaians against complacency regarding the agenda for change but to turn out in their numbers on December 7 to vote the NPP into power.

He said it was not enough to say the elections were decided if Ghanaians failed to turn out in their numbers on election day.

"When you come out to vote, no evil force, no demonic entity or machination can prevent the victory of the NPP," he said.

Nana Akufo-Addo said this when he addressed a mini-rally at Denkyira Obuase in the Upper Denkyira West Constituency on the second day of his tour of the Central Region. He added that the agenda for change had been ordained and sanctioned by God who had heard the cries and suffering of his people.

He said cocoa production was the mainstay of the economy of the area for which reason former President Kufuor instituted a number of initiatives to provide incentives to cocoa farmers to motivate them to produce more.

Restoration of bonus to cocoa farmers

He assured the people not to be worried and that under his presidency, bonuses that were paid cocoa farmers which had been cancelled by the NDC administration would be restored and the pride and prestige that came with cocoa farming would be restored.

His administration, he said, would not be discriminatory against any cocoa farmer regardless of their political affiliation. He added that the NPP was poised to provide a national leadership with the ordinary Ghanaian in focus and not to prosecute a parochial political agenda that would favour only a few, as has been the case of the NDC.

The power belongs to the people and I will never stop begging them to entrust that power into my hands to restore hope to the people of Ghana.

He said it was clear that President Mahama lacked a proper understanding of democracy and that was evident in his comment on campaign platforms that he (Nana Akufo-Addo) should stop begging the people of Ghana to vote for him.

Nana Akufo-Addo said democracy, said to be the rule of the people, for the people and by the people, placed ultimate power in the hands of the electorate.

"The power belongs to the people and I will never stop begging them to entrust that power into my hands to restore hope to the people of Ghana," he said.

He expressed appreciation to the people for their continued support for the party in past years and urged them to carry the support a step higher by turning out in their numbers and voting the NPP into power.

Michael Nsowah-Djan

The parliamentary candidate for the area, Mr Michael Nsowah-Djan, said he was worried about the worsening plight of the people of the area as a result of the mismanagement of the national economy by the NDC.

He also stated that the economic vibrancy of the area had given way to dwindling prosperity and a daily worsening of the lot of the people.

Change, he said, could only come if the people stayed committed to that agenda and demonstrated it by voting massively for the NPP.

He indicated that Ghanaians had become despondent but that was not

Work towards Mahama's victory

• Chief of Staff tells Peki people

By Mary Anane, PEKI

THE Chief of Staff, Mr Julius Debrah, has asked chiefs and the people of the Peki Traditional Area to work with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to ensure President Mahama's victory in this year's election.

In line with this goal, he has charged them to bury all differences and work together to give President John

Dramani Mahama a one-touch victory at the December polls.

Using the analogy of misunderstanding between a wife and a husband as an example, Mr Julius Debrah said "when there is a misunderstanding, a husband who loves the wife approaches his in-laws to plead on his behalf and when the issue is settled amicably, he gives his wife

Quick Read

The Chief of Staff, Mr Julius Debrah, has asked the chiefs and the people of Peki Traditional Area to bury all differences between them and the party and work together to give President John Dramani Mahama a one-touch victory at the December polls.

• Mr Julius Debrah in a handshake with Togbe Ayim Modey VI, the acting President of Peki Traditional Council

#GHANAVOTES2016 'Tolerance strengthens our democracy'

Government acquires land to relocate Fulani herdsmen — Prez

By Kwame Asare Boadu,
SEMPOA

THE government has acquired 10,000 hectares in the northern part of the country to relocate Fulani herdsmen and their cattle from troubled areas of the country, President John Dramani Mahama has said.

A unique feature of the Cattle Village, the President said, would be the stationing of veterinary and allied staff to provide the needed services.

President Mahama made this known when he interacted with the people of Sempoa in the Abetifi Constituency in the Eastern Region last Tuesday, the last day of his campaign tour of the region.

Conflicts between Fulani herdsman and some local communities have been a major security issue in the country.

At Agogo in the Ashanti Region, for instance, a number of lives have been lost.

Sempoa, located in the Afram Plains section of Kwahu land, is inhabited mainly by farmers and fisherfolk. The area has also suffered from the activities of nomadic Fulani herdsmen.

It was the first time a sitting President had visited the community and it was all excitement for the residents.

Many others came from adjoining villages to welcome the President on the historic visit.

President Mahama told the gathering that the government was determined to put the Fulani issue to rest once and for all.

Fishing activities

Turning to the fishing activities at Sempoa, the President informed the people that the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development would soon start the distribution of outboard motors at subsidised prices to fishermen in the area.

President Mahama emphasised the importance government attached to the fishing industry and gave the assurance that the fisherfolk would be supported to improve on their work.

He said the road from Hweehwee to Sempoa would be rehabilitated while boreholes would be drilled for the community, adding that already, the government had extended electricity to Sempoa.

He called on the people to vote massively for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the election.

The General Secretary of the NDC Mr Johnson Asiedu Nketia, told the people to reject the lies of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) since they did not have anything good for the people.

Quick Read

President Mahama took his campaign to Sempoa where he interacted with the fisherfolk and farmers.

• President Mahama interacting with some supporters at Sempoa

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Work towards Mahama's victory

special care."

NDC is your baby

Addressing the people of Peki in the South Dayi District as the first port of call on his four-day tour of the Volta Region, the Chief of Staff said the "National Democratic Congress (NDC) is your baby" and assured them of golden times ahead.

This was in response to certain issues raised by the acting President of Peki Traditional Council, Togbe Ayim Modey VI, at the mini-durbar which included showing of respect for the chiefs, upgrading of the Peki Government Hospital with additional services and the construction of internal roads.

Loyalty of the people

Mr Debrah acknowledged the loyalty of the people towards the NDC and promised special care for the traditional area under the second term of President Mahama's administration.

The Chief of Staff and his high-powered delegation are in the region to intensify the NDC's campaign.

No endorsement of Akufo-Addo

Togbe Ayim in his welcome address debunked media publication that the chiefs of Peki had endorsed the New Patriotic Party (NPP) flag bearer, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, when he visited the area recently.

According to the chief, the reports were inaccurate because "that never happened."

Togbe Ayim indicated that an individual involved endorsed Nana Akufo-Addo without any consultation with the chiefs and therefore he was to be sanctioned by the traditional council.

commendation

The chief commended the government for subduing *dumsor* and establishing UHAS and further appealed for an improvement in the educational infrastructure at the Peki College of Education, the Peki Senior High School and the Peki Technical School.

The Regional Minister, Madam Helen Ntoso, said the NPP could not throw dust into the eyes of the people because they had seen massive development under President Mahama.

Akufo-Addo cautions against complacency

unexpected because of the glaring loss of focus on the part of the government.

He, therefore, assured the people that the only means to restore hope was to vote for change that would make Nana Akufo-Addo president and him their Member of Parliament.

We need every single vote

At the Upper Denkyira East Constituency, Nana Akufo-Addo told a huge gathering of people that he was not surprised by the extraordinary turnout, since the people of the area had shown their avowed commitment to the party at all times.

He added that in Election 2016, there was no room for mistakes and as such it was important that no single vote was lost in the quest for change.

GHANAVotes 2016   'Tolerance strengthens our democracy'

Politics

Show Ghanaians your projects
... Pres Mahama tells NPP

President John Dramani Mahama

PRESIDENT John Dramani Mahama has challenged the New Patriotic Party (NPP), to prove to Ghanaians and people of the Eastern Region in particular what they did for them in their eight years of governance.

"Although they have all the years boasted that Eastern Region is one of the strongholds in the regions, they have not done anything in terms of infrastructural development to change the living condition of the people."

President Mahama threw the challenge when he concluded his second phase of campaign in the region with two-day rallies at various constituencies.

During the two days President Mahama inaugurated a new market project at New Abirem in the Birim North, addressed rallies at Ayirebi in the Ofoase Ayirebi Constituency, Akroso and Suhum.

On his second day, he addressed rallies at Sempoa in the Abetifi Constituency, Mpraeso, Asokore and Koforidua municipality and inaugurated projects at Osiem Saviour Church.

President Mahama said in his first four-year term his administration had established an ultra-modern hospital at Abetifi-Kwahu, 104 Community Health-based Planning Services (CHPS) compounds throughout the region.

He said his administration had also constructed 13 new Community Day Senior High Schools in the region alone adding. "The NPP during their eight years of administration could not build a single senior high school in this region."

On roads and potable water, President Mahama said the National Democratic Congress (NDC) had distinguished itself in the region and the entire country, where a total of 4,500 kilometres of roads had been constructed throughout the country.

He questioned. "How can you continue saying the Eastern Region is your stronghold when you cannot change the life of a single soul in the region?

President Mahama said since independence, the NPP had only succeeded in criticising other regimes without alternative suggestions for good governance

He said during President Nkrumah's regime, the NPP criticised him for the construction of the Tema motorway, Tema Oil Refinery and the Tema harbour, which later became instrumental in the socio-economic development of the country

"All they do is to discourage Ghanaians for following the right government and yet they are not always able to provide alternatives."

President Mahama appealed to the people of the region to massively vote for the NDC for him to continue with the projects he had embarked on.

At all the programmes, the chiefs made demands such as provision of potable water, senior high schools and health facilities.
—GNA

Your time is over — Akufo-Addo

IN response to President John Dramani Mahama's claim that changing an incumbent government affects development, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) flagbearer for the 2016 polls, Nana Akufo-Addo, has stated that President Mahama will indeed be changed at the polls for his failures.

He also questioned the President's grasp of the concept of democracy. His remark was in response to President Mahama and his National Democratic Congress' (NDC) ridicule of him for begging for votes on the campaign trail.

Nana Akufo-Addo, had previously said he was prepared to beg Ghanaians to make him president if that is what he needs to do to save the country from decline.

Speaking to residents of Denkyira-Obuasi in the Central Region on Wednesday, he said, "My real question to the President is: does he understand the foundational principles of our democracy? Because if he understands democracy, he would not be making certain comments."

"He says I am touring Ghana begging Ghanaians to give me their mandate and that I should desist from this practice.

What is the import of this too?"Nana Addo noted the electorate are the ones with the key to the presidency, thus he would not stop begging for their support.

"Is the power of the state not vested in you the people of Ghana? Is it not by your power that the President is exercising now? If I want a bit of that power, should I not plead with you the people to offer it to me? I will continue to appeal to Ghanaians again and again," Nana Akufo-Addo declared.

He further suggested that President Mahama was being hypocritical for suggesting during his campaign rounds that changing an incumbent government would be bad for development.

"The President recently said a change of government would affect the development and progress of the county. Has he now realised that changing a government is bad for our democracy? Are they not the ones that called for change in 2008; that resulted in the ousting of the NPP government?"

Nana Akufo-Addo said the constitution guaranteed an evaluation mechanism every four years via the electoral process, and thus urged Ghanaians to vote President Mahama out.

"Now that Ghanaians are gearing up to change him, is that the best he can say to us? Should we allow him to continue in government in this manner? No, we are

Nana Akufo-Addo

going to change him." "If we find out that you have performed abysmally in managing the affairs of the people we have no option than to change you."
—citifmonline.com

Electoral system turbulent — IDEG

THE Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Dr Emmanuel Akwetey has said Ghana's electoral system is increasingly becoming turbulent because many invisible hands were funding activities of political parties.

According to Dr Akwetey, a lot of money was being channelled into politics and that winning election, especially presidential elections was crucial to those who invested in it.

"Meanwhile, regulatory institutions charged to find out where the parties get money to fund their campaigning and other activities had failed to enforce the law," he added.

Dr Akwetey who was speaking at the second edition of the Advancement Lecture Series organised by the Institutional Advancement Office of the University of Cape Coast (UCC)

said the practice was a serious characteristics of the country's political system which needed to be addressed.

The lecture was on the theme, "Towards credible 2016 elections: the role of stakeholders in ensuring free, fair, transparent and violent free elections".

Dr Akwetey said people accuse governments of abuse of incumbency and blatant spending of the

tax payer'smoney as well as heavily borrowing in election periods, but the opposition also spent a lot of money and no one knew where their money came from.

His comment comes at the back of the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO)'s recent invitation of the presidential aspirants of the All People's Congress (APC) and Progressive People's Party (PPP).

It would be recalled that the EOCO issued a letter to PPP's Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom requesting him to explain the source of the over GHc1.7 million he used to pay filing fees at the Electoral Commission (EC) for himself and his party's parliamentary candidates.

Presidential candidate of the APC, Hassan Ayariga was also invited to answer questions on the sources of funding for his party in securing vehicles for his campaign.

Politics

3,500 security officers for B/A on election day

John Kudalor, IGP

MORE than 3,500 security officers would be deployed across polling stations in the 29 constituencies in Brong-Ahafo Region on voting day to ensure adequate security protection for everybody.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Richard Boateng, the Regional Police Legal Officer, said there would also be a stand-by team to swiftly respond to any threat to the peaceful conduct of the polls.

They were aware of the critical nature of the December 7, election and would not be overtaken by events — they were more than prepared to deal decisively with any explosive situation, he added.

He indicated that strong measures had been put in place to stop trouble makers from having their way.

There are 525 hotspots in the region but he gave the assurance that all was going to be smooth and calm.

DSP Boateng was speaking at a two-day training workshop held in Abesim, near Sunyani, for reporters and stringers of the Ghana News Agency (GNA) in five regions — Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti, Northern, Upper East and Upper West.

It is part of the effort to build their capacity to effectively cover the presidential and parliamentary elections.

The workshop comes under the "GNA Tracks Election 2016 Project," funded by GOIL, the state oil company and CIMG 2015 Petroleum Company of the year.

The project seeks to sensitise the electorate on the various issues raised by political parties, the elections management body and other governance institutions.

It aims at ensuring gender and social inclusion in national politics and to provide voice for the youth, vulnerable groups, opinion leaders and the broader spectrum of the society, and to contribute to the achievement of peaceful polls.

Another objective of the project is to create a platform to dissect the manifestoes of all political parties and provide in-depth analysis of each thematic area to the electorate to enable them to make an informed judgment.

DSP Boateng said the Election Task Force was deepening its conversation with all key actors to prevent any mishaps.

He urged the media to be circumspect in their reportage and to make sure that they crosschecked any information with the appropriate authorities to keep the nation calm.

— GNA

Jake, unifier in an era of divisions — Arthur Kennedy

• Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey

A MEMBER of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Dr Kobina Arthur Kennedy, has described the late Jake Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey as an extraordinary campaign strategist, with unusual candour and a unifier in an era marked by divisions.

"In a nation whose politics is dominated, too often by meanness, sycophancy and selfishness, Jake, my boss, was an exception", he said.

In a tribute to the late Obetsebi-Lamptey, Dr Kennedy said, "My defining memory of Jake was when there was an outbreak of violence in Tamale during the 2008 campaign. While hotheads were urging escalation, he listened quietly. Then he uttered the sentences that would immortalise him in my mind. He said, "I did not get into politics to cause pain and suffering. I know first-hand the toll of politics! We need to calm things down."

He told me he had sworn never to be involved in politics because of the suffering his family endured under Nkrumah - not just from the government but from others.

"My schoolmates taunted me about my dad," he said.

But when he changed his mind and entered politics, he was an extraordinary force. He led winning campaigns and was a very effective minister, Dr Kennedy said of him.

"May he rest in peace. May his family find strength and be inspired by the example of his politics," he concluded.

MMDCEs charged to live up to expectation

By Samuel Duodu, TAMALE

THE Northern Regional Minister, Mr Abdallah Abubakari has urged Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) in the region to work hard to improve the living conditions of the people in their respective areas.

He noted that local governance was all about the delivery of social services to the people and, therefore, reminded the MMDCEs to live up to that expectation.

Mr Abubakari said this during the signing of a performance contract recently by the MMDCEs, and their Coordinating Directors with the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) in Tamale.

Effective delivery of services

The aim is to ensure effective delivery of services and set benchmarks for the various assemblies to ensure value for money.

It is also to assess the performance of the MMDCEs, as well

> **Although you have signed this performance contract with the RCC it is a social contract between you and your people**

as monitor their activities in the assemblies and check the behaviour of staff.

Mr Abubakari also urged the MMDCEs to involve the people in decision making and use the resources they were holding in trust for the people to their benefit.

He noted that at the end of the day, the focus should be on improving the living conditions of the people and that was their mandate, and said "at the end of the day it is the people in your district who would judge your performance."

Performance contract

"Although you have signed this performance contract with the RCC it is a social contract between you and your people," he stated.

The Chief Director of the RCC, Alhaji Alhassan Issahaku, urged the MMDCEs and the Coordinating Directors to identify priority areas and work towards them.

Politics

CPP eyes five seats in Ashanti

By Donald Ato Dapatem, KUMASI

THE Ashanti Regional branch of the Convention People's Party (CPP) has vowed to take at least five parliamentary seats from the region during the 2016 general election.

Quick Read

CPP has no seat in the 275 Parliament of Ghana

2: They intend to win five in the Ashanti Region

3: The recent party posters with telephone numbers on them for contacts which had been pasted around town had received marvellous attention.

As part of the measures, the regional members, led by its Chairman, Mr Emmanuel Gado, has started polling station sensitisation programmes and membership drive.

Speaking to the *Daily Graphic* at the party's Kumasi office, the Regional Secretary, Mr Abdul Salam noted that the election of Mr Ivor Kobina Greenstreet as the flag bearer had brought some enthusiasm among a lot of the youth and the elders, thus spurring them on to offer their support to the party.

When asked to mention five of the constituencies the party hoped to annex, he said they had kept those constituencies to themselves and that Ghanaians would be surprised when the votes were counted.

House to house

Explaining the polling station visits, he said the regional executive moved from one house to another selling the message of the CPP, which centred on providing opportunities for all through quality and affordable education and accessible healthcare.

He said the recent party posters with telephone numbers on them for contacts which had been pasted around town had received marvellous attention and responses from numerous Ghanaians who wanted to be active members of the CPP.

Mr Salam said such interested people were always directed to their constituency executive members where they were given forms to fill and assisted to spread the message of hope for the party and also mobilise others.

Nominations

CPP opened parliamentary nominations early this month and the exercise is expected to be closed at the end of the month. So far, 70 party members have picked forms to contest for the 47 parliamentary slots in the region.

Each nomination form is sold at GH¢500 and the filing fee costs GH¢2,000. But according to Mr Salim, although the previous nomination forms had been free, the interest was

• Mr Emmanuel Gado

not like this year's which had attracted costs, explaining that it was an indication of the willingness of more members to win seats for the party.

Greenstreet attraction

He expressed great delight at the increasing number of voluntary youth groups that are springing up all in the name of the party's flag bearer and added that, "These are some of the indications that if we really work hard, our fortunes will change for the better."

He said in recent times, the youth from other areas in the region had been calling on the regional executive to inaugurate such groups mostly called "Green Revolution" to mobilise support for the party and educate Ghanaians.

NPP won't be complacent at Abuakwa North — Twum-Ampofo

• Madam Gifty Twum-Ampofo speaking to Eastern Regional Daily Graphic Editor, Mr George Folley (left).

By George Folley, AKYEM TAFO

ALTHOUGH there seems to be no serious competition, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) is not taking chances in the March 29, 2016 Abuakwa North by-elections.

Consequently, it has intensified its campaign to ensure that the seat still remains that of the party.

Supporters of the party, led by the parliamentary candidate, Mrs Gifty Twum-Ampofo last Saturday went on a route march through the principal streets of Akyem Tafo to rekindle the spirit of members who are mourning the brutal murder of the incumbent Member of Parliament, Joseph Boakye Danquah-Adu, in February this year.

Clad in red and black T-shirts, they sang and marched to brass band music.

Sustaining momentum

Speaking to the *Daily Graphic,* Mrs Twum-Ampofo said the party was not only going to win but would strive to increase

the margin in the by-elections.

"After this we will then sustain the momentum towards the main general election which comes off in November 7," she added.

She expressed the hope that the constituents would vote massively for her to become the next Member of Parliament, and added that "the only tribute and legacy for our late MP is to maintain the seat for the NPP".

She assured the supporters of the party that when elected, her priority would be to continue the good works of J.B. Danquah-Adu.

Other candidates

Candidates challenging Mrs Twum Ampofo are Samuel Frimpong of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP) and Isaac Kwarteng of the United People's Party (UPP).

The two, whose posters have been posted all over the constituency, have not engaged in open campaigns, perhaps for fear of open hostilities or lack of confidence, knowing very well the area is an NPP stronghold.

GNAT launches youth policy

• *For sustainable growth*

• Dr Nduom — PPP flagbearer

• Ex Prez Kufuor — delivers Liberty Lecture

Story **George Ernest Asare, Kumasi.**

THE Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) has launched a youth policy designed to nurture the potentials of the youth and propel them to assume leadership positions.

The project which was launched in Kumasi is also intended to whip up the interest of young teachers in GNAT and offer them opportunities for professional and academic advancement towards career development and participation in sustainable national growth.

About 500 teachers across the country participated in the launching ceremony, during which the GNAT Executives pledged to support the youth with an annual budget to enable them to initiate programmes and policies that would impact positively on society.

The Youth Policy, among others, seeks to provide orientation courses for the youth, particularly young teachers, encourage those with the flair for writing textbooks to do so, support others to improve themselves professionally and motivate them to have an interest in investment ventures to secure their future.

Ten regional coordinators have been appointed to initiate youth programmes that would be attractive at the regional level.

Launching the policy, a former President of GNAT, Mr Kwaku Adjei, said notwithstanding the fact that about 70 per cent of their members were very young, they were rarely involved in operations that promoted their interest.

The situation, he noted, had not only created an information gap between the leadership of GNAT and many of their members, but had also made them gullible to accept any bait thrown by sister associations.

Mr Adjei noted that with the youth policy, GNAT was more determined than ever to offer opportunities to the youth to fully participate in their activities, support them to develop their career, create opportunities for them to be more involved in national and international programmes, and also organise periodic in-service training for them.

He said, "As we launch the youth policy, we are also kick-starting the programme to make our youth vibrant and nurture their potentials."

Mr Adjei said by this gesture, the leadership of GNAT was gradually passing on the mantle of leadership to the youth, and, therefore, urged them to fully accept the challenge.

He said by accepting the challenge, "the youth has a responsibility to make the association more attractive, thereby reducing the attrition of our members."

Mr Paul Osei Mensah, a former President of GNAT, gave an assurance that the GNAT Executives would support the youth with the requisite logistics and equipment of resources that would enhance their operations.

He advised the regional coordinators to collaborate with the district coordinators and come out with an action plan that would be attractive and sustainable enough to win as many members as possible.

The General Secretary of GNAT, Mrs Irene Duncan-Adanusa, was present at the function.

• Mrs Irene Duncan-Adanusa, the General Secretary of GNAT
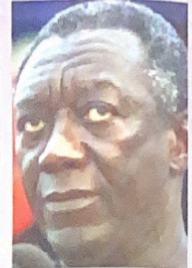
Political parties pledge decency as campaign activities resume

THE various political parties have pledged to conduct themselves in a decorous manner as they resume their campaigns for the December elections.

The parties suspended their activities following the demise of President John Evans Atta Mills who was finally interred last Friday.

The presidential candidate of the Progressive People's Party (PPP), Dr Paa Kwesi Nduom, said the late president had been given the due respect.

He stated that his party was going to begin campaigning vigorously.

However, he stressed that would be done with "great discipline, with respect, and tolerance for other people's positions and views…"

"…We will continue to offer solutions to the problems that continue to confront us as a nation," he assured.

The Director of Communications of the Convention People's Party (CPP), Nii Armah Akomfrah, who made the pledge on behalf of his party, said the CPP began campaigning yesterday.

"We are anxious that the other parties should be put to the test and we hope that it will be about issues and not to return to insults, " he said.

Meanwhile, a special aide to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) flag bearer, Nana Akufo-Addo, had also told *Joy News* that the party would begin its campaign today.

Mustapha Hamid said "once the presidential candidate of the (ruling National Democratic Congress) NDC had changed, the communication would have to be about him.

"Essentially, this is a contest for leadership, so if we were talking about the leadership of Mills and Nana Addo, now we would be talking about the leadership of President John Mahama and Nana Akufo-Addo, but not whether someone has a big head or a fat stomach," he maintained.

The NDC, however, said it had suspended campaigning for now and rather concentrate on other equally important matters, even as they prepared to endorse President John Mahama as flag bearer.

Meanwhile, former President John Agyekum Kufuor will address the Second Danquah Institute's Liberty Lecture.

According to a statement released on Sunday, the lecture would be on the theme: "Development in Freedom: Empowering the People to Develop the Nation".

Controversy rocks CI

constituency, let's not disenfranchise it."

Mr Nitiwul said if those constituencies were not captured in the CI then "by law they do not exist and, therefore, cannot vote".

Mr Nitiwul wondered why the Majority was in a haste to push the CI through, stating that "if they had listened to the Minority a long time ago…all these problems will not ensue".

Responding, Mr Dominic Azumah, a Minister of State at the Presidency and Member of Parliament for Garu Tempane, said although some mistakes had been detected in the CI, those omissions could be rectified.

Mr Azumah, who is also a member of a Local Government Committee in Parliament, said the CI on the new constituencies would be accepted.

He conceded that there were errors and inconsistencies in the document but indicated that there were remedies for them.

Mr Azumah explained that some of the areas which were omitted, as well as typographical errors, had been brought to the attention of the Electoral Commission.

He said due to the crucial nature of the document, "we are going to let the CI 73 to go through. CI 73 will go through".

Mr Azumah gave an assurance that the errors in the current CI would be amended immediately it matured on Thursday.

The committee in its report said "the passage of this instrument in its current state will result in a myriad of legal challenges, conflicts and disenfranchisement of registered voters and potentially disturb the peace of the electoral process and of the nation".

In the report signed by its Chairman, Mr Kwame Osei-Prempeh, MP for Nsuta Kwamang the committee said there were problems associated with the instrument and concluded that candidates whose electoral areas had been omitted from the CI 73 might not been able to contest the December 2012 general election.

The committee, therefore, recommended to the House to adopt its report and annul the Representation of the People (Parliamentary Constituencies) Instrument, 2012 (C.I 73) in accordance with Article 11 (7) of the Constitution.

During its discussions, the committee observed that there were swapping of electoral areas in some constituencies.

For example, in the Asutifi South and Asutifi North constituencies, all the electoral areas in the south had now been assigned to the north and vice versa while in the Abuakwa South and Abuakwa North constituencies in the Eastern Region, the headquarters of the two constituencies had been swapped.

The new constituency headquarters of Abuakwa South is Kukurantumi, while Kibi in Abuakwa South is now the headquarters of the Abuakwa North Constituency.

In addition, the committee further observed that in the Mion Constituency in the Northern Region, nine existing electoral areas where the EC conducted the biometric registration and also supervised primaries of political parties had been ceded to the Yendi Constituency, thereby rendering candidates who either resided or hailed from Mion unqualified to contest elections in the constituency.

In addition, in Tema, the two existing constituencies of Tema East and Tema West had been fused to create an additional constituency bringing the number of constituencies to three but the creation of the new constituencies had placed almost all electoral areas where the candidates hail from under one of the constituencies.

Again, the committee observed that the creation of new constituencies had resulted in traditional challenges in some areas such as the Ejisu/Juaben Constituency which had been split into Ejisu and Juaben constituencies.

In that case, four main towns which are electoral areas under the Ejisu Paramountcy in the Ejisu Constituency have been placed under the Juaben Constituency, thereby creating tension between the two traditional areas.

The committee after due consideration of the CI alongside petitions received by some Members of Parliament, has itemised all corrections that need to be made to the CI to satisfy the purpose for which the constituencies are being created.

The report stated, however, that the committee was unable to incorporate the numerous errors, omissions and misplacements of the electoral areas in the instrument in the light of the provisions of Article 11 (7) of the Constitution and the recent decisions of the Supreme Court.

In the Nii Tetteh Oprempeh Vrs Attorney-General and Electoral Commission, the Supreme Court stated among others that in such situation "the Regulation will have to go back to the source from where it was prepared for such comments, suggestions or memoranda, as Parliament or the Committee on Subsidiary Legislation will deem necessary to be considered in the making of the Regulations. In fact it is that source which has the power to amend the Legislation".

According to the report, the committee received a petition from the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), in which the governance institution raised three issues.

The first was the method adopted by the EC in the creation of the constituencies which in its opinion was inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Constitution and ran contrary to the principle of equal representation enshrined in Article 47 (3) of the Constitution.

The second issue was the adherence by the EC to the practice of one constituency per administrative district, explaining that that practice exposed the review process to the arguably partisan discretion of the President.

Lastly, the CDD talked about the logistical and financial challenges to be imposed on the economy with the creation of additional 45 constituencies.

The debate of the report in the House before it goes on recess on Thursday, August 16, 2012 is, therefore, expected to be heated.

If Article 11(7) on which the committee relied upon to recommend to the House for the annulment of the CI is anything to go by, then it might be difficult for the House to get the two-thirds majority for such annulment.

Prez Mahama visits Maulvi Wahab Adam at hospital

- Vice-President Kwesi Amissah-Arthur

Veep to ensure NDC wins in Central Region

VICE-PRESIDENT Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur has said he would do all he can to ensure the Central Region votes massively for the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the December elections.

He has reiterated the importance of the region in the NDC's bid to retain power and stressed that he would concentrate on how to gain the favour of the people in that region.

Speaking to the BBC in an interview, he said "I come from the Central Region; my wife is from the Western Region. I think that I am better known in the Western Region...than I am known in other parts of Ghana so I am going to concentrate my efforts in the Central Region."

"The Central Region always comes off on the side of the party which wins in Ghana so it's a very important region and I intend to spend some time there and talk to my people and show them the things that we can do."

The vice-president added that the "development credentials of the NDC are unparalleled and we'll seek to deepen that. And I am going to be working with the team that is designing the new agenda for the NDC for the next four years…"

PRESIDENT John Dramani Mahama has visited Maulvi Wahab Adam, the Ameer and Missionary in charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, at the 37 military hospital to wish him a speedy recovery.

The spiritual leader was admitted to the 37 Military Hospital shortly after he took ill during the funeral and burial service of Prof. John Evans Atta-Mills at the Independence Square in Accra last Friday.

President Mahama, on receiving the information, quickly rushed to the hospital to wish Maulvi Wahab well.

The President assured Maulvi Wahab that government would do everything in its capacity to provide the needed support for him and further assured him that the nation would support him with prayers.

Maulvi Wahab thanked President Mahama and Ghanaians for their support and praised the hospital staff for their commitment to duty.

He also thanked leaders of other religious groups who assisted and accompanied him to the hospital when he took ill, adding that Ghana was indeed blessed to have such level of tolerance and unity.

The president was accompanied by Mr Baffoe Bonnie, a presidential staffer and advisor.

- Maulvi Wahab Adam

Tarkwa-Nsueam Assembly renovates birthplace of late President

THE Tarkwa-Nsueam Assembly has almost completed renovation works at the birth place of the late President John Evans Atta Mills at Nzemaline in the Western Region.

The Municipal Chief Executive for Tarkwa-Nsueam Mrs Christina Cobbinah, said although the late President's parents rented a room in that house, which was constructed in the late 1920s by one Paa Kojo Tweneboah, the assembly decided to honour the former President by painting and renovating it.

She said the assembly decided to take up the initiative of beautifying the house, which could serve as a historic area for all who would want to know where the late president was born.

Mr Kwasi Joseph Yankson, an 80-year old man who lived with the late President's parents when he was born at Nzemaline, told the GNA that President Mills' father came to live in the house which belonged to his uncle when he was first posted to Tarkwa to be the headmaster for Tarkwa Methodist school.

He said the parent lived with them for years until the late President was born in 1944

and that when President Mills was about 3 years old, his father was transferred to Huni/Valley in the Western Region to head the Methodist school there.

He said when the late President's family left Tarkwa, they never heard from them till his 65th birthday when he sent a delegation to visit them.

Mr Yankson described the late President as a man who led a selfless and humble life and called on Ghanaians, especially the youth to let his life serve as a model for them to follow. — GNA

BA NDC gets motor-bicycles for campaign

Story: Samuel Duodu, Sunyani

THE Brong Ahafo Regional Secretariat of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has taken delivery of three motor-bicycles worth GHe4, 500 to support the party's electioneering campaign for the 2012 Elections.

The motor-bikes were a donation from a sympathiser of the party in the region, Mr Smart Aziblame.

Presenting the motorbikes at a brief ceremony at the forecourt of the party's regional secretariat in Sunyani, Mr Aziblame said the donation was to assist the party in its electioneering campaign in the region.

He said the donation was also in memory of the dedication and selflessness of the late President John Evan Atta Mills who was also the leader and flag-bearer of the NDC for the 2012 general election until his demise.

Mr Aziblame expressed the hope that his gesture would encourage the leadership as well as the rank and file of the party in the region to work hard to retain power in the 2012 general election in honour of the departed President.

The Brong Ahafo Regional Chairman of the NDC, Mr Opoku Atuahene, who received the keys to the motor-bikes, thanked the donor for the support and gave the assurance that the motor-bikes would be used to augment the scarce

- Mr Smart Aziblame (left), the donor handing over the keys of the motor bike to Mr Opoku Atuahene (right), the Regional Chairman of the NDC. Those in the picture are Alhaji Baba Gausu, the Regional Organiser of the NDC, Mr Mohammed Seidu aka Maha, the Regional Youth Organiser, Nana Adwoa Takyiwaa 11, Regional Women's Organiser and Madam Deborah Narh, Sunyani East Constituency Deputy Women's Organiser. Picture: JAMES K. BAAH

logistics of the party in the region for the electioneering.

He noted that for now all political activities in the country had been halted to honour the memory of the late President, Prof John Evans Atta Mills, who was laid to rest on Saturday, August 10, 2012.

Mr Atuahene expressed the hope that the demise of President Mills would serve as a rallying point for the rank and file of the party to unite

and patch up all their differences for an effective and successful electioneering campaign when all political activities resumed.

He also used the opportunity to congratulate President John Dramani

Mahama and his vice, Mr Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur, and pledged the support of the regional leadership as they continued to prosecute the Better Ghana Agenda for the good of all Ghanaians.

Zanetor's application dismissed again

By Emmanuel Ebo Hawkson,
ACCRA

THE Accra High Court, yesterday dismissed an application filed by Dr Zanetor Agyeman Rawlings that sought to throw out a suit that is challenging her eligibility as the 2016 National Democratic Congress (NDC) parliamentary candidate for the Klottey Korle Constituency.

In dismissing the motion, the court described it as unmeritorious and a clear abuse of the court process.

The court, presided over by Mr Justice Kweku Ackaah Boafo, also slapped the applicant with a GH¢2500 cost.

This is the second time the court has dismissed an application by Dr Rawlings for the case to be thrown out.

Jurisdiction

The legal team of Dr Rawlings had argued that the High Court had no jurisdiction to hear the case because electoral matters were under the mandate of the Supreme Court.
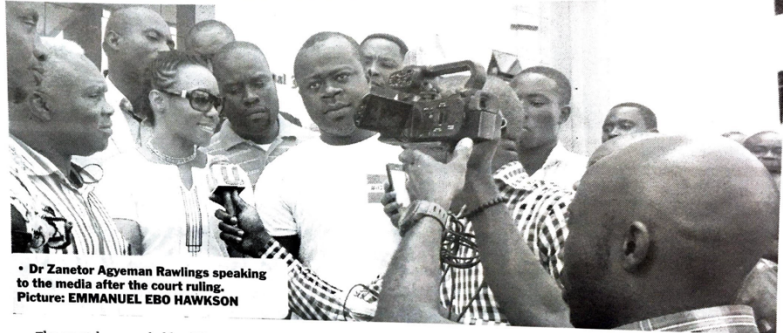
• **Dr Zanetor Agyeman Rawlings speaking to the media after the court ruling.**
Picture: EMMANUEL EBO HAWKSON

The court, however, held a different opinion, pointing out that the suit was not in the realm of an election petition and, therefore, it was within its jurisdiction to hear it.

"This is not an election petition because it is not about irregularities in the elections but rather the defendant's eligibility in contesting the elections," the court asserted.

Premature

Dr Rawlings also stated in her application that the suit against her was premature because she had only expressed her intentions to contest the forthcoming elections and she was therefore, not yet a candidate until the Electoral Commission opened nominations for the registration of candidates.

But the court disagreed, stating that Dr Rawlings was indeed the parliamentary candidate of the NDC per the election that selected her.

"Indeed was the election that was conducted by the first defendant (NDC) and which the 2nd defendant (Zanetor) confirmed in her statement of defence that she won meaningless and of no effect? The answer is no because until any court of law set that election aside, she remains the validly elected candidate of Klottey Korle on the ticket of the first defendant (NDC)," the judge declared.

Withdrawal

The plaintiff in the case, Nii Armah Ashitey, the incumbent Member of Parliament for the constituency, later withdrew an application for an injunction to be placed on Dr Rawlings to stop her from holding herself as the NDC parliamentary candidate for the constituency.

The case was adjourned to April 4, 2016.

After court

The case attracted many supporters of the NDC, who were clad in the party colours.

Speaking after the ruling, Nii Ashitey described it as a victory for the truth, pointing out that he was optimistic that the court would finally come to a conclusion that Dr Zanetor was not eligible to contest the primaries.

Dr Rawlings on the other hand said she would continue to advocate the development of the constituency even as the case was still being determined by the court.

Politics

Let's revisit discussion on funding political parties — Ashigbey

By Yakubu Abdul-Jalil, ACCRA

THE Managing Director of the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL), Mr Kenneth Ashigbey, has urged stakeholders to revisit the discussion on funding political parties in the country.

"Issues like this need dispassionate debate. Stakeholders need a critical and objective analysis of the issue to see if the merits outweigh the demerits and if it would ultimately reflect in the development of our democracy," he stated.

Recounting his experience from Japan, he said electoral laws in Japan mandated the state to fund political parties' activities, including campaigns.

The situation, according to him, had brought a level playing field among the parties.

Also, he said it had succeeded in minimising the influence of money in Japanese political activities, including vote buying, making the parties accountable to the state.

Debate on funding parties

The issue of funding of political parties in Ghana is not new. Unfortunately, stakeholders seem not to be enforcing the discussion.

Moreover, governments of the day seem to reject the concept as a heresy and the debate dies a natural death.

Do we consider funding political parties as luxury to our democracy and conclude that such luxuries are not imminent needs to the establishment and progress of our democracy?

Courtesy call

During a courtesy call on the Chief Representative (CR) of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Mr Koji Makino, in Accra last Thursday, Mr Ashigbey said in Japan, before a party was qualified to be funded by the state, that party had to pay a deposit to the state.

In addition, he said, the party must also have the capacity to garner a number of valid votes in an election to attract the funds.

"They want to make sure that only credible parties participate in their electoral process. They have laws to back the system," Mr Ashigbey explained.

He also spoke about restructuring of the voting system, consolidating decentralisation and parliamentary system.

Also present at the meeting was the Assistant Clerk of Parliament, Mr Samuel Aduamoah-Adu.

The visit was to allow Mr Ashigbey and Mr Aduamoah-Adu to brief him (Mr Makino) on a three-week seminar they attended in Japan last month.

The seminar was organised by JICA and had participants from Ghana, Egypt, Fiji, Guinea, Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, Cote d'Ivoire and Kyrgyz Republic.

It was on: "Legislative and Electoral Administration," and intended to offer opportunity for learning the way to establish democracy, especially focusing on the stage of election and after election.

Media engagement

For his part, Mr Aduamoah-Adu commended JICA for the seminar.

He lauded Japan for engaging the media to promote good governance.

According to him, in the Hiroshima Assembly (HA) all sittings were held in public, streaming live on the Internet.

"I have, therefore, agreed with Mr Ashigbey on a road map to expose the media to committee sittings in the Ghanaian Parliament."

"I am seeking for the media to meet the Clerks after the day's session to discuss what has transpired at their meeting for publication," Mr Aduamoah-Adu said.

Mr Makino was pleased with his guests and said the success of Japanese democracy was based on non-political interference in their institutions.

Quick Read

Issues like these need dispassionate debate. Stakeholders need a critical and objective analysis of the issue to see if the merits outweigh the demerits and if it would ultimately reflect in the development of our democracy.

Fact Sheet

About 3,500 Ghanaians have so far benefited from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) training courses.
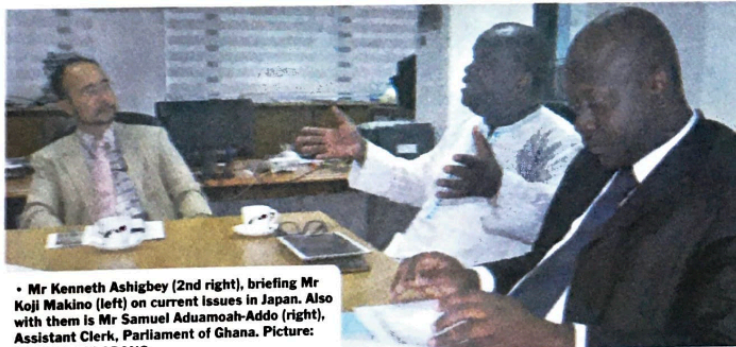
• Mr Kenneth Ashigbey (2nd right), briefing Mr Koji Makino (left) on current issues in Japan. Also with them is Mr Samuel Aduamoah-Addo (right), Assistant Clerk, Parliament of Ghana. Picture: SAMUEL TEI ADANO

Ensure incident-free election — NMC

By Kwadwo Baffoe Donkor, KUMASI

THE Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC), Mr Kwasi Gyan Apenteng, has called on professional bodies connected to the conduct of election in the country to exhibit professionalism in the discharge of their duties to ensure an incident-free election.

He said more often than not, people called on the media to live above reproach while they left out other bodies whose work also impacted on the election.

According to him, while calling on the media to be circumspect, professional and not to inflame passion, the same call must be made to other bodies whose actions or inaction could also have adverse effect on the peace being enjoyed by the country.

Election project

Mr Gyan-Apenteng, who was speaking at the launch of the NMC Election Project 2016 in Kumasi last Thursday, also urged the media not to be the cause of any bad thing that would happen to the country before, during or after the election.

He cited the example of Ukraine where

Elections are about issues affecting the lives of the ordinary Ghanaian and not about ethnicity or religions, therefore, discussions should be issues-based and not on personalities.

the media coverage of the election led to the conflict in that country.

As such, he advised the media not to offer voice or space for people whose utterances might destabilise the country.

He said the elections were about issues affecting the lives of the ordinary Ghanaian and not about ethnicity or religions therefore, discussions should be based on issues and not on personalities.

Project

The project, which he said would be replicated in all regions throughout the country, would be managed by the regional media advisory committee and would include the monitoring of the media scene in

Mr Kwasi Gyan Apenteng

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APC set for congress Monday

By Donald Ato Dapatem,
KUMASI

THE newest political party, the All People's Congress (APC), will organise its first national delegates congress on June 13, 2016.

Over 3,000 delegates from across the country would converge on the Accra International Conference Centre at 8 a.m. to elect its maiden national executive and flag bearer to lead the party in the 2016 presidential polls.

In March this year, the APC received its final certificate from the Electoral Commission (EC) to become the 26th political party in Ghana.

Congress theme

The congress is on the theme: "Come on Board; Let's build Ghana Together."

Speaking to the *Daily Graphic*, the acting General Secretary of the APC, Mr Razak Kojo Opoku, explained that the congress was in accordance with the Political Parties Law 2000 (Act 574) to elect nine national officers.

They are 2016 presidential candidate, the leader/national chairman, the 1st national vice chairman, the 2nd national vice-chairman, the general secretary, the national treasurer, the national organiser, the national youth organiser and the national women's organiser.

It is expected that Dr Hassan Ayariga, who led the People's National Convention (PNC) as its presidential candidate for the 2012 election

Quick Read

In all, over 3,000 delegates from across the country would converge on the Accra International Conference Centre at 8 a.m. to elect its maiden national executive and flag bearer to lead the party in the 2016 presidential polls.

and broke away to form the APC, would be elected unopposed to lead the APC.

Mr Razak explained that the party had completed 187 constituency executive elections and seven regional executive elections and expressed the hope that the party would complete the remaining regions, namely Western and Ashanti, in readiness for the all-important congress.

Rate of poverty

He added that Ghanaians had tried various leaders under the two political parties since independence but due to their lack of proper concept of the all-inclusive governance, they had failed to change the economic fortunes of Ghana.

"The rate of poverty is on the ascendency; people are struggling to survive, especially under the current two dominant political parties. APC is on the political landscape of Ghana to offer solutions to

change the face of governance," he added.

Mr Razak urged all members and supporters of the APC to be present in their numbers at the congress.

• Dr Hassan Ayariga

Fact Sheet

Dr Hassan Ayariga, who was the flag bearer of the People's National Convention in 2012, left that party to form the All Peoples's Congress

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GDF drags Franklin Jantuah to court

By Emmanuel Ebo Hawkson, ACCRA

A DISABILITY advocacy group, Ghana Disability Forum (GDF), has dragged Franklin A. Jantuah, the last surviving member of Dr Kwame Nkrumah's cabinet, to court over certain comments he made against the Presidential Candidate of the Convention People's Party (CPP), Mr Ivor Greenstreet.

Mr Jantuah, the group said, had described Mr Greenstreet as not having the ability and competence to lead the CPP

• Mr Ivor Greenstreet

because he is a cripple.

Background

In its writ filed at the Human Rights Division of the Accra High Court, GDF said Mr Jantuah made the comments in an interview he granted to a private television station, *GhOne*, on February 24, 2016, during the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the overthrow of the government of Dr Nkrumah.

The group quoted Mr Jantuah as saying: "I don't think a cripple can lead a political party. If you have a CPP with a leader who is a cripple... I wonder how he is going to rule."

It also claimed that the defendant said: "A flag bearer has to walk... have the capacity to walk and go to places.

Disrespect

The group stated that the comments by the former cabinet minister were a clear sign of disrespect for the disabled community in the country.

It also described the statement as discriminatory, abusive and degrading to persons with disability in the country.

"The comments are also contrary to Article 29 (4) of the 1992 Constitution and section 37 of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) on non-discrimination on grounds

of social status," it said.

No remorse

GDF is of the view that unless compelled by the court to retract the comments, Mr Jantuah had no intention to retract and apologise, adding: It had made several attempts to make the defendant retract the comments but that had not yielded any fruits.

Claims

The plaintiff is, therefore, seeking a declaration from the court that the comments were a violation of the non-discrimination provision in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

> "I don't think a cripple can lead a political party. If you have a CPP with a leader who is a cripple... I wonder how he is going to rule."

It is also seeking a declaration that the comments by Mr Jantuah was discriminatory, abusive and degrading of persons with disability in Ghana as stated in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

The group is further seeking an order from the court for Mr Jantuah to retract his comments and render an unqualified apology to Mr Greenstreet, as well as the disabled community in Ghana.
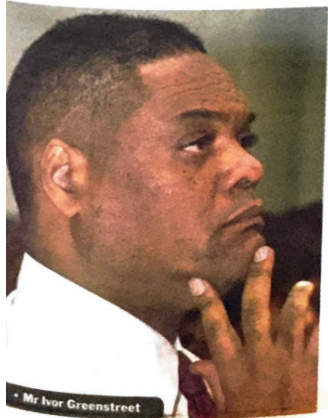
Incident-free election

the region and also serve as an avenue for people to seek redress for some of the excesses of the media.

He said the Ashanti Region was the nerve centre of the country and played a major role in the nation's politics and as such efforts must be made to maintain and protect the current peaceful atmosphere.

He said the project was to improve media regulation in the regions for a peaceful election.

Social media

The Executive Secretary of the NMC, Mr George Sarpong, disagreed with those calling for a restriction on the social media due to its abuse, adding, "It is still better than for people to go to war."

He said in spite of the complaints, social media provided a means for those who might feel maligned to respond and set the record straight, adding that, "They have a better opportunity to confront the lies with the truth."

According to him, the concern should not be about the conversation that goes on the social media platform "but those who convert social media into megaphone for war."

He said the mainstream media should refrain from trumpeting issues seen on on social media without cross-checking them.

According to him, the onus lies on the mainstream media to substantiate their claims when the need arises.

Membership

The Ashanti Regional Media Advisory Committee has its chairman, the former NMC chairman, Mr Paul Adu-Gyamfi and Mr I. K. Gyasi, Mrs Adwoa Amankwah and Mrs Felicia Shraha as some of its members.

Woyome's appeal case adjourned
Page 4

GNFS gets Back-Up for fire fighting

By Yaw Kyei

THE Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS) is repositioning itself to respond swiftly to fire outbreaks.

As such, the service has taken delivery of new equipment known as Back-Up Consoles valued at GH¢1.5 million, which will enable it to detect the locations of fire outbreaks from its control rooms and respond swiftly to avert destructions.

Donated by Socio Computers, manufacturers of the equipment, they will be distributed to all fire offices at the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies throughout the country, to enable them to respond to fire outbreaks.

Speaking at a function to hand over

COURT REFUSES JURISDICTION

Mr Kennedy Agyapong leaving the court after the proceedings   Photo: Seth Adu Agyei

... in the Agyapong case

By Stephen Kwabena Effah

AN Accra Magistrate's Court yesterday declined jurisdiction over the treason case brought against the Member of Parliament for Assin North, Kennedy Agyapong, who is accused of inciting and making inflammatory comments.

It premised its decision on a memo from the Judicial Secretary dated June 17, 2008, directing that some criminal cases such as treason should be referred to the Chief Justice's Secretariat for a court to be assigned to hear the case.

Further, the court, presided over by Ms.

Hunters send Jomoro Assembly staff fleeing
Page 4

The Ghanaian Times

Ghana's most authoritative newspaper

PRESIDENT PLEDGES

... I'll ensure Ghana stays peaceful

By Samuel Nuamah

PRESIDENT John Evans Atta Mills has cautioned Ghanaians against sacrificing the sweat and toil of the nation's Founding Fathers on the altar of political expediency, especially in the impending general elections.

"Our fallen heroes and founding fathers toiled to give us this dear nation and we dare not destroy what they have toiled to build," he stressed, and pledged to ensure that Ghana remains peaceful before, during and after the election.

Addressing the 55th Independence anniversary parade at the Independence Square in Accra,

Ashietey, Amenowode removed

President John Evans Atta Mills has made further ministerial changes, with two regional ministers losing their jobs.

According to an official statement released in Accra yesterday, the Greater Accra Regional Minister, Nii Armah Ashietey and the Volta Regional Minister, Joseph Amenowode, had been replaced.

The statement, signed by J. K. Bebaako-Mensah, Secretary to the President, said a Minister at the Presidency, Nii Afotey Agbo, takes over from Mr Ashietey as the Greater

Nii Armah Ashietey

Joseph Amenowode

Daily Graphic

GHANA'S BIGGEST SELLING NEWSPAPER SINCE 1950

NO. 18814. THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2012. PRICE: GH¢1.50

Man, 22, jailed for double registration

Story: **Gilbert Mawuli Agbey, Agona Swedru**

A 22-YEAR-OLD resident of Agona Nkum in the Central Region has been sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment for attempting to register twice in the ongoing biometric voters registration exercise.

The convict, John Quaye, was also slapped with a fine of GH¢2,400 by the Agona Swedru Circuit Court or in default 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Quaye was convicted on his own plea of guilt to a charge of attempting to commit crime.

The prosecutor, Inspector S. Opoku Mensah, told the court, presided over by Mr N.K.E. Osam, that on Wednesday, March 28, 2012, Quaye registered at the Agona Nkum Zongo Registration Centre and was issued with voters ID card bearing the name Adu Amankwaa Mireku.

However, on Saturday, April 7, 2012, Quaye went to the Agona Nkum Cluster 2 Cocoa Shed Registration Centre to register the second time with the name John Quaye.

The prosecutor said after the convict had filled the voters registration form, he was directed to have his fingerprints captured, in the process of which the scanning machine detected that he had already registered.

A further scan displayed the convict's photograph on the computer, with his fingerprints, and immediately the police were called in to effect his arrest.

Prisoners to be registered in fourth phase

Story: **Donald Ato Dapatem**

THE Electoral Commission (EC), in collaboration with the Ghana Prisons Service, has set up a working committee to thrash out the problems of identifying qualified prisoners for the biometric voters registration.

Consequently, all prisoners eligible to exercise their franchise in the December 2012 general election will be registered

· Continued on Page 3

GOVT BACKS OUT OF STX

· Steps underway to recover assets

Story: **Della Russel Ocloo**

THE government has initiated moves to pursue STX Korea for the recovery of all government's investment in the company, as well as assets it provided for the execution of the abandoned STX housing project.

It has also decided to repossess, with immediate effect, all lands allocated to the company for the housing project.

In this regard, the Attorney-General has been directed to carefully study details of the STX contract and give advice on claims that the government could make out of the deal.

The Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing, Mr Enoch Teye Mensah, announced this at a press conference in Accra yesterday.

The STX housing project, which had been expected to provide some 30,000 housing units for the security services, encountered setbacks as a result of disagreements between the Koreans and their Ghanaian partners after the government entered into an off-taker agreement with STX Engineering and Construction for the commencement of the project.

The project was to be implemented in three components and financed by a concessional facility of $1,525,468,000 secured with a sovereign guarantee by the Ministry of Finance.

The contract, signed in 2009 and reviewed in 2010, was at the time expected to be the biggest investment made by the government in the housing sector.

On January 27, 2011, President John Evans Atta Mills, at an impressive ceremony, cut the sod for the commencement of the project at the Tesano Police Training School, which was designated to be the first beneficiary institution with 1,980 housing units.

Ten months after that ceremony, the project was still

· Continued on Page 3

· Mr Enoch Teye Mensah
— Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing

Daily Graphic

GHANA'S BIGGEST
SELLING NEWSPAPER
SINCE 1950

NO. 18919.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2012.

PRICE: GH¢2.00

No plan to reshuffle cabinet — Prez Mahama

Story: Musah Yahaya Jafaru

PRESIDENT John Dramani Mahama has said that he has not taken any decision to sack any minister or make a ministerial reshuffle.

He, therefore, urged ministers of state not to be distracted by the rumours and speculation of a ministerial reshuffle but rather focus on the implementation of government policies, projects and programmes.

The Spokesperson of President Mahama, Mr John Jinapor, conveyed the message of the President through the *Daily Graphic* in Accra yesterday in reaction to rumours that President Mahama had taken a decision to make a cabinet reshuffle.

Mr Jinapor said with the completion of the funeral rites of President John Evans Atta Mills, the focus of President Mahama now was how to keep the government working to grow the economy and improve the living standards of the people.

"We have just finished the funeral of President Mills. The President is only committed to working to serve Ghanaians and bring about development," he said.

On rumours that the Chief of Staff had resigned, Mr Jinapor said President Mahama had not received any resignation letter from Mr John Henry Martey Newman, as is being speculated in a section of the media.

He said it was the advice of the President that all Ghanaians should go about their work and not allow themselves to be disrupted by the rumours.

EC exhibits register September 1

Story: Donald Ato Dapatem

THE Electoral Commission (EC) will begin the display of the biometric voters register from September 1 to 10, this year.

All the 23,000 centres where prospective voters were registered during the registration period would be opened for all to cross-check their data, make corrections and also ensure that their names are on the voter roll.

Originally the Commission had indicated in official communications that the exhibition would be done in August, this year, but this has been changed to September.

The 10-day exhibition would afford Ghanaian

· Continued on Page 3

· Dr Kwadwo Afari-Gyan

CONTROVERSY ROCKS CI

· Over creation of 45 constituencies

Story: **Emmanuel Adu-Gyamerah**

MOVES to increase the country's constituencies from 230 to 275 appear to have been bedevilled by controversy.

While the Subsidiary Legislation Committee of Parliament has recommended to the House to reject the Constitutional Instrument (C.I 73) which has been placed before it for the creation of the new constituencies, Members of Parliament on the Majority side think the attempt is being headed by the Minority to scuttle the plan.

However, Mr Dominic Nitiwul, the Member of Parliament for Bimbilla and member of the Minority, debunked the claim in an interview with *JOY FM* in Accra yesterday and indicated that the Minority meant no mischief.

He said concerns about the CI had been raised just to make sure that whatever legislation was put in place did not disenfranchise the people.

He said, Parliament, by the 1992 Constitution had no authority to alter any part of Legislative and Constitutional Instruments presented to the House.

"Either Parliament will annul it or the sponsors of the CI or LI will withdraw it," he said, adding that "nobody in this world is against creating constituencies…but the law of Ghana has to be respected and so let's all respect the law. If the law is that we should not disenfranchise any

· Continued on Page 16

· Mr Cletus Avoka — Majority Leader

· Mr Osei-Kyei Mensah-Bonsu — Minority Leader

Appendix 6- Profiles of Data Sources

PROFILE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS- POLITICAL PARTY RESPONDENTS

INTERVIEWEE CODE	PROFILE
PP-01	Respondent is a former Director of Communications for the New Patriotic Party
PP-02	Respondent is a political communications researcher and a Journalism Lecturer. He served as former Director of Communications for the National Democratic Congress

PROFILE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS- POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS EXPERTS

INTERVIEWEE CODE	PROFILE
PRPC-001	Respondent is a communications consultant and University lecturer with over a decade expertise in the development and execution of communications strategy, policy and training, media handling, reputation management, crisis communication, social and digital media management, and stakeholder engagement
PRPC-002	Respondent has experience in the areas of Journalism and Public Relations with a proven track record in employee communications, broadcast and online journalism, media relations, brand positioning, crisis communications, issues management and digital communications. He was a former presidential correspondent
PRPC-003	Respondent is a Political and International communication expert, researcher, and lecturer
PRPC-004	Respondent worked as a journalist for years and is currently a senior communications lead at the African Union after decades of practice in Ghana's Telecommunications space
PRPC-005	Respondent is a political marketing consultant, researcher, and lecturer.

PRPC-006	Respondent is the General Manager of one of Ghana's leading Marketing Communications consulting firms
PRPC-007	Respondent is a former news editor and presidential/parliamentary correspondent. He has over two decades expertise in corporate communications practice.
PRPC-008	Respondent is a Strategic Communications Researcher, Lecturer, Consultant and Practitioner with over 20 years' experience
PRPC-009	Respondent is a Strategic Marketing communications practitioner with over a decade experience across sectors
PRPC-010	Respondent is the managing partner of one of Ghana's leading Public Relations firms as well as a lecturer
PRPC-011	Respondent is a Political Communications consultant, researcher, lecturer and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Advocate
PRPC-012	Respondent is a digital technology and Marketing communications Consultant
PRPC-015	Respondent is an Assistant Professor of Public Relations
PRPC-016	Respondent is a PR practicner with an International Development Agency
PRPC-017	Respondent is a PR practicner with an International NGO
PRPC-018	Respondent is a PR practicner in Ghana's Banking Industry.

PROFILE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS- PROVERBS AND DECOLONIAL STUDIES

INTERVIEWEE CODE	PROFILE
PRPC-013	Respondent is a Professor of Social Justice Education

PRPC-014   Respondent is a Distinguished Professor of
                                                 Materials Science and Engineering with
                                                 interest in the preservation and creation of
                                                 proverbs