

The Role of the Media and Political Tolerance in Ghana: Perceptions of University of Cape Coast Students

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Abstract

The study investigated the perceptions of University of Cape Coast students about the media as a platform to generate political intolerance in Ghana. It specifically sought to know the nature of political intolerance in Ghana, the causes of political intolerance and appropriate ways of mitigating the problem. The use of questionnaires and interviews were employed as major data collection instruments using purposive and convenient sampling techniques to reach respondents. The analysis revealed that political intolerance in Ghana mainly takes the form of threats of violence and character assassination as a result of ethnocentrism exhibited through the media. It was therefore concluded that, the media should play an effective role by recruiting qualified persons to hold political discussions in the media and by applying high journalistic standards in handling issues in the media.

Keywords: Media, Political, Intolerance, Democracy, Development

1.0 Introduction

The nineteenth century brought about major ideological changes in media studies. McLuhan (1975) introduced into the language our present usage of the term media as well as a number of other concepts including “the global village” “the medium is the message”, and “the age of information” that since have become common concepts. The media, with specific reference to the collective entity of newspapers, radio, television and the International Network (Internet), play a very important role in ensuring political tolerance. Electronic media are therefore media that use electronics or electro mechanical energy for end – uses (audience) to access the content (Ghandhi, 2005). Electronic media connects the traditional world of broadcasting with contemporary universe of digital-electronic media. Broadcast media (also known as electronic media) transmit their information

electronically and comprise television, radio, film, movies, CD's, DVD's and other devices such as cameras and used consoles.

Politics here can be defined as the processes by which people and groups acquire and exercise power, or the maneuverings and discussions of people especially politicians on a particular issue or a problem (Khorler, 2008). When these discussions are done properly, we say there is tolerance in our political system. But on the other hand, when these discussions are swayed away by insults, threats, curses, slapping and other misconducts, we say there is political intolerance.

Political tolerance is critical to democracy and fundamental to the proceedings of parliament and other bodies like the legislature. It means accepting the basic rights and civil liberties of persons and groups whose viewpoints differ from one's own. These rights include freedom for one to express ideas including those that are uncommon. The World public opinion conducted pools using 21,285 respondents in 24 nations that comprise 64 per cent of the world's population. The general finding was that, there is a strong support for political tolerance in the world however; there is a widespread perception of a serious lack of political tolerance in practice.

The immediate past President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama on Friday, 12th August, 2012 on his two-day tour to the Central and Western regions with a call on Ghanaians to exhibit a high level of tolerance in political campaign leading to the December polls. He said elections were not about insults but the advertisement of political ideas and should therefore not be characterized by attacks and character assassination.

Political intolerance in Ghana is nourished by ethnic sentiments, pure personal hatred or mischief arising from frustrations. Such frustrations could stem from many sources; lack of self-fulfillment in politics, inability to win political office; the fact that one's preferred political party or politicians is not in power and pure hatred for those in power. (GNA, August, 2012)

In addition to the above, In February 2009, the director general of state owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), William Ampem-Darko ordered an abrupt end to a live discussion programme on Ghana Television (GTV)'s Breakfast show following a complaint of bias against the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). Richard Quarshigah, a member of NDC's communication team, complained to the director general on telephone that the panel was not balanced thereby giving unfair advantage to the Opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP). (Source; Media Alert, West Africa 2009).

A paper issued by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in Accra in August 23, 2012 showed that some radio stations in Ghana allowed indecent expressions on their air waves which further promoted political intolerances among some parties.

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) said some moderators are doing well by insisting on the use of decent expressions on their networks thereby promoting tolerance among political party affiliates but they stressed that efforts being made are not enough. Given the above picture of some intolerance exhibited by some political party affiliates and the global world and particularly in Ghana as a country, the study is therefore being conducted to find out the role that the media can play to ensure political tolerance in Ghana.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Political intolerance is becoming the order of the day in the Ghanaian society. It is uncommon to hear, read or watch on Television opponents of various political parties in their bit to expose their political ideas become intolerant to each other. These sometimes come in the form of invectives, intemperate language and open insinuations on opponents. Many people do not see political intolerance as a social problem in Ghanaian politics which is negatively affecting individuals, groups and the nation as a whole. This research looks at a social variable; the media and its ability to ensure tolerance in Ghanaian politics.

Many government and non-governmental agencies have expressed their views on political tolerance. The Media Foundation for West Africa on the November 21, 2012 published a paper titled “Media Foundation for West Africa’s (MFWA) highlight of finding for thirty-two weeks of monitoring electoral campaign language on radio”. It was realized that some radio stations allowed indecent language to be used on their air waves and some politicians were identified as politically intolerant in their expression of views.

It noted that the attacks were an indication that there were still people who were highly intolerant of the media and ready to take the law into their own hands in resolving their differences with the media. It is realized in recent times that people especially politicians and phone-in-callers exhibit a lot of political intolerances in the forms of threats of violence, character assassination, vilification and others through the media. The monitoring of campaign language- use on radio by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in its week 20 monitoring revealed that a total of 16 indecent expressions were recorded. The General secretaries of the two main political parties in the country, the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), were part of those who made the 16 indecent expressions, unsubstantiated allegations, insulting and offensive comments and proactive remarks were the categories of indecent expressions used. This study therefore seeks to investigate the role the media is playing to prevent political intolerances.

3.0 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate on the role of the media in ensuring political tolerance

1. To find out the nature of political intolerance

2. To find out the main factors responsible for political intolerance(s) in our Ghanaian society
3. To investigate the role of the media in ensuring political tolerance

4.0 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be relevant to researchers and media practitioners. It will serve as a source of literature to any individual or institution for the purposes of further research on the subject or other related areas and also help media men and women to effectively know their role in ensuring political tolerance. The findings or outcome of this study will also help politicians and other party affiliates to know how to communicate effectively and use decent languages when given the medium.

5.0 Literature Review

5.1 Theoretical definition of the Media

Media has been considered as a fundamental prerequisite for political tolerance. Media is defined as central elements of a healthy public sphere within which ideas, opinions and views freely circulate (Trowler, 2003). According to Marshal McLuhan (1964) a Canadian Sociologist suggested that developments in communication were the main force for change in human society. McLuhan says the real importance of media lies not in their content but in the way they themselves alter the social world.

The word “media” comes from the plural of the Latin word medium and it is used as a collective noun to refer to television, radio, newspapers, magazines, films and the International Network (Internet). The media can be examined either in terms of broadcast media or print media. The media have been variously described as the fourth estate, agenda setter, watch dog, force multiplier and gatekeeper all in an attempt to have influence on society. Conversely, the media have been viewed as arena for sensationalism, propaganda and many others. Authoritarian theorists like Siebert Peterson and Schuman 1956 says the media is an authoritarian system not-allowed printing or broadcasting anything that could undermine the established authority.

Soviet Communists Lenin and Marx (1980) defined the media as extension of the state that foster unity and social cohesiveness. It states that the mass communicators needed to be loyal party members in order to know how to interpret all communications effectively. Many sociologists now suggest that each of us make our own interpretations of media messages. However, they also believe that these interpretations are influenced by our particular social contexts, such things as our ethnicity, our gender and our occupation.

5.2 The Role of the Media

The role of the media is important to this study. The media with reference to newspapers, radio, television and the International News Network (Internet) play a very important role. The media, as vanguard for political, economic and social development represent a working organism. In the case where the media carry out its role with professionalism, truth, fairness, and justice then the society would not suffer but rather benefit. But where the media becomes bias mainly for profits and personal gains the society and the country suffers as a whole (Gandhi, 2005). The media play five main roles and these roles are described as the fourth estate, agenda setter, watch dog, force multiplier and the gatekeeper.

According to Davis (1994) the operation of a modern industrial democracy required that those who provide information, provide that which is not a judgmental distortion of reality and fact, not as accurate humanly as possible – or else a society can quietly with the permissiveness of modern media, be thrown of balance. There are five (5) main roles of the media.

First of all, the media serves as the fourth estate (Knowlton, 1994). Liberal theorists have long argued that the existence of an unfettered and independent press within each nation is essential in the process of democratization, by controlling towards the right of freedom of expression, thought and conscience strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of governments to all citizens, and providing a pluralist platform and channel of political expression for a multiplicity of groups and interests. The term fourth estate is frequently attributed to the nineteenth century historian Carlyle, though he himself seems to have attributed it to Edmund Burke. The notion that the media as a fourth estate rests on the idea that the media's function is to act as a guardian of public interest and as a watch dog on the activities of government. The media is therefore an important component of the checks and balances that form part of modern democracy.

Secondly, the media plays its role as an agenda setter (Wilson, 2001). Agenda setting is one of the important roles of the news media. The power of the news media is to set nation's agenda and to focus public attention on a few key public issues. Agenda setting is defined as the process whereby the media determine what we think and worry about. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience. The opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story etc. These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms. This idea was by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 classic, *Public Opinion*, which began with a chapter titled "The World Outside and the Pictures in our Heads". As he noted, the media is a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, a

world that for most citizens is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind”. The effect of Agenda setting is made clearly in the famous Cohen’s quote that the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. The concept of Agenda-setting is for the press to selectively close what we see or hear in the media. According to Ghoparde (1986), agenda setting is a relational concept that specifies a transfer of salience from agenda primers (media) to agenda adopters (consumers).

Thirdly is the gate keeping function of the media. It refers to restrictions on access or the power to determine whether a particular message should be transmitted or not. In mass communication, sent messages do not reach the audience in raw form. They are usually treated. The implication of this is that there is usually no guarantee that what the message receivers get is exactly the message sent by the source. Gate keeping is the process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the Internet, or some other mode of communication. Gate keeping occurs at all levels of the media structure.

The news media’s gate keeping role is used to dictate the news worthiness of an event. Gate keeping involves a series of checks points that the news has to pass through before it gets to the public. Though this process many people have to decide whether or not the news is to be seen or heard. Gatekeepers of the media are message filters, and they include reporter, writers, editors, producers and even government officials.

The concept of gate keeping involves message selection, handling and control. Gate keepers perform three major functions and they are; limiting the information through editing before dissemination, expanding the amount of information by injecting additional views and reorganizing or re-interpreting the information gathered before disseminating it (Shoemaker, 1991). Gate keeping as a theory of communications began with Lewin’s (1951) work on community dynamics and a notion of gate keeping that was laid out in terms of food consumption- the selection process by which certain foods reach the dinner table, or not. Lewin saw this as a product of “communications channels” and “gates,” metaphors well-suited to a theory of news selection in mass media. Media gate keeping was then more fully developed in White’s (1950) classic case study of a wire editor at a small town daily newspaper (Collegian, 2001)

Fourthly, Media serves as a watchdog. For a complete justification for press freedom is the media to act as a watch dog over the government. The media is traditionally the watch dog of democracy, which is also linked to their status as the fourth estate. Media as a watch dog means they speak for the people, represents the interest of the people and serve as checks on the government. Schuepp (2000) identifies the responsibilities of a watch dog. A watch dog has to protect his owner, give him security and react to possible outside interference with the

rights of his owner. The watch dog has to know his loyalties therefore the media have to be loyal to the society, because they are watch dog of society not of government.

Anybody who threatens democracy, freedom of speech, the basic rights of the people, should be attacked by the watch dog. Media as a watch dog has to investigative reporting. In the case of Latin America, it is widely acknowledged that sustained investigative reporting on corruption, human rights victims and other forms of wrong doing has helped build a culture of accountability in government and strengthened the fledgling democracies of the continent. Media exposure at this place particularly, corruption in high places, has helped bring down governments. The down fall of four presidents namely; Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil in 1992, Carlos Andrews Perez of Venezuela in 1992, Abdala Bucaram of Ecuador in 1997 and Alberto Fujimori in 2000 of Peru, was due in large measure to investigative reporting on their complicity incorrupt deals. The force media is able to play a watch dog role over government behaviour; this does not always result in improved government treatment of citizens (Collegian, 2001).

Last of them all is the Media as a force multiplier. The emergence of the news media as a powerful instrument of war, while the “fourth estate” does transmit news, it is important to national security because of its influence. The media have force multiplying effects especially during war. It means a force that adds to the combat effectiveness of military commanders. Soldiers understand fighting, journalists understand communicating, yet neither knows that the political impact of combat depends on how fighting is communicated. Thus, both ideas need one another. The media provides the military with a global stage to send its message and execute its mission. It also has great potential of force multiplier a source of intelligence and a resource for conducting Psychological operations (Mallick 2009). Media coverage not only develops public awareness and the support of the military in operations, they also have the benefit of enhancing the morale of troops by informing their families and friends of their activities. If the media are used prudently therefore, they build public opinion as a force multiplier (Broeckert, 2001). Assuming the media is an effective coordination mechanism, the populace and reformers must coordinate around good conjectures. If politicians carry out the wishes of the populace but the demands are for policies that is bad for political tolerance, tolerance will therefore not be achieved. Therefore, the media’s crucial role in ensuring political tolerance is not in doubt.

5.3 Determinants of Political Tolerance

In knowing the determinants of Political Tolerance, educational level should be positively related to tolerance (Bobo & Licari, 1989). Others have also age to be positively related to tolerance. (Stouffer 1995;

Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus, 1982). In determining political tolerance of an individual, a group or a country, we use two (2) main approaches.

5.3.1 Individual Level Determinant

Under this level of tolerance, we have four (4) main types and they are authoritarianism, education, contact and threat. Authoritarianism and Education are inherent or part of the individual whilst contact and threat are found externally among individuals. To start with is authoritarianism. Authoritarianism is a feature of the individual-level determinant that is found in the individual and is liable to prejudice and intolerance.

Stouffer (1955) found that individuals who support rigid categorization as well as authoritarian and conformist childbearing values tend to be intolerant toward communist and atheists. An authoritarian predisposition also hampers learning effects on tolerance including the effects of political criticism (Hinckley 2010).

Second form of individual-level determinant is Education. Stouffer (1955) indicated that more educated individuals are more tolerant, although the specific process that connect education and tolerance have not yet been explored. Education, it is argued, reduces ethnic prejudice but disseminating knowledge and information, and empowering cognitive capacities, and introducing universal values and norms. (Coenders & Scheepers 2003, Hagendoorn 1999). Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton (2007) have shown that individual-level predictors of tolerance including education were generally weaker in Eastern than in Western Europe.

Thirdly, we talk of Contact being another form of individual-level determinant of tolerance. Allport (1954) is a major contributor of this. Allport stated that; various forms of contact, ranging from causal to more intense, reduce prejudice against ethnic groups. Mitz (2002) also showed that by way of survey analysis that simple exposure to views different from one's own cannot generate political tolerance unless such exposure helps one to become aware of rationales.

The last of these determinants is threat. Threat is a strong determinant of tolerance. Gibson and Gouws (2003); Huddy et al 2005 stated that perceived threat is a strong exogenous determinant of tolerance. Research shows that, the effect of threat perception on tolerance is conditioned by the predispositions of the individual. Marcus et al (2005) demonstrated by way of experiments that externally-derived anxiety induces people to rely on current information rather than on their predispositions and that extrinsic anxiety is a catalyst for positive or negative change in tolerance.

Paris and Silver (2004) also showed that American citizens were in most times willing to give up their civil rights when they perceived a greater societal threat, whose effect is enhanced by their trust in government.

Lavine et al., (2005) found that perceived threat more strongly inclines authoritarian than non-authoritarian individuals to use information similar with their own attitude.

5.3.2 Contextual Determinants

Scholars of political tolerance have limited their investigations to the most developed democracies in the world, with few examples. Gibson (1992) demonstrates perceptions of freedom or the lack thereof can be just as important in determining action as government sanctions. A statement issued by the freedom House (2006) of the United States explained that; the political rights index measures the opportunities of people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to role and compete for public office and to elect representatives who have a decisive vote on public policies. For the sake of methodology, it has become conventional to use hierarchical linear models for analyzing the effects of resident, distinct, or state-level variables on individual-level tolerance.

Peffley and Rohrschneider (2003) showed analyzing World Values Survey data that political tolerance is enhanced by democratic stability. Weldon (2006) examined the effect of citizenship regimes on ethnic tolerance to show that individualistic civic countries were the most tolerant and collective ethnic countries the least tolerant. Ethnic Heterogeneity is also an element of the contextual-level determinants of tolerance. Ethnic heterogeneity on tolerance involves dual effects.

On the other hand, ethnic heterogeneity is expected to increase both contact and threat perception, the net impact on tolerance is not uniform but depends on which effects becomes more manifest in different contexts. Massey, Hudson, & Sekulic (1999) showed that while majority groups were more tolerant than minority groups, both types of groups exhibited stronger intolerance when they lived in minority enclaves communities. Some time ago in Yugoslavia, the equality of ethnic group distribution in each republic was strongly associated with greater tolerance. (Hudson et al 1994).

Recent studies have shown that the effect of ethnic heterogeneity depends on the unit of measurement. Wagner (2006), 387 stated that; what affects tolerance negatively in ethnically heterogeneous contexts is not an individual but a socio tropic threat that often comes from political discourse at the national level.

Dixon's (2006) multi-level analysis of the U.S. census data systematically revealed that whites prejudice towards black was subject to the contact effect (measured by the "knowing" and "feeling close" at the community level and the threat effect (measured by the out-group population percentage) at higher levels such as those of the municipality and country. Dixons' findings thus imply that contact effects work differently depending on whether target groups are perceived to be more threatening or less threatening.

6.0 Methodology

In this study, the design used was descriptive research design. Descriptive design made room for the concepts and issues to be well assessed by the researcher. The study made use of quantitative method. The quantitative method made use of questionnaires. The target population for this study was media personnel, political party leaders and students of the University of Cape Coast. These people were deemed as having adequate knowledge into the project topic. Out of the total number of students, the sample size selected was one-hundred and twenty (120). This was because of the limited time for the study and resource constraints.

Due to the nature of the research, the researchers resolved to use purposive and convenient sampling procedures which are non-probabilistic. These techniques were adopted by the researchers because it saved time, prevent the researchers from being bias and also helped the researchers to get the right responses since it was also purposive. Convenient sampling procedure was adopted since it made the researchers to have a face to face interaction with respondents and prevented the liability of being bias. The purposive sampling technique was also selected to get some media practitioners and politicians as well.

Questionnaires were the main instrument used for this research. The use of questionnaires was to provide the respondents convenience to respond to the questions in their own opinions. The questionnaires contained 22 closed ended questions and 8 open-ended questions and they were self-administered. The questionnaire was structured into 5 sections. The first section (Part A) of the questionnaire required respondents to produce their demographic information based on their sex, age, academic level, religion, marital status and ethnicity. This was Section A of the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was made up of both open ended and closed ended questions, Section B of this research was a mixture of the closed and the open-ended questions. This part focused on the nature of political intolerance in the media. Questions in this section were centered on the problem statement. Along the line, respondents were also asked to tick 'Yes' or 'No' or 'if other, specify'. This was done to make sure respondents also expressed their free and open opinion on the topic under study. In this same part, respondents were also asked to 'Agree' or 'Disagree' with some questions. Respondents attempted these questions by ticking "A" if they "Strongly Agreed", "B" if they "Agreed", "C" if they "Strongly Disagreed" and "D" if they "Disagreed".

Sections C and D of the research also solicited responses based on the problem statement. Section C tried to know the factors responsible for political intolerance in the media whilst section D tried to know the role of the media in solving these intolerances and Section E tried to find appropriate measures to solve these intolerances in the media.

The researchers personally delivered the questionnaires to respondents at the various lecture theatres and at accidental meeting with respondents. The researchers were very careful with the kind of questions respondents were answering and tried not to influence the respondents in any way. The researchers gave the necessary guidelines to respondents as to how to fill questionnaires to prevent common errors. The researchers gave respondents adequate time to fill the questionnaires. Most of the respondents used 9-10 minutes in filling of the questionnaire.

Data analysis was done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0). After the data had been collected, they were edited and then coded. The coded values were input into the value view of the SPSS after which the actual data collected from the field in coded format were input into the data view of the SPSS. Frequency tables were used in the data analysis.

7.0 Results and Discussions

7.1 Research Objective One: To find out the nature of political intolerance

The first research objective was to find out the nature of political intolerance. As part of the research objectives, it looked at the nature of political intolerance. The nature took into respondents views of political intolerance, the manifestations or forms of political intolerance and the people that perpetrate intolerance the most. The results are presented in Table 1-3.

Table 1 - *Respondents View of Political Intolerance*

Responses	N	%
Inability to accommodate views on political issues/ rejection of political criticism	56	46.6
Instability in the country	15	12.5
Unscrupulous act of politicians	6	5.0
Prevention of political views from people/ not allowing people to share their views	5	4.2
Lack of respect among politicians/ lack respect for oppositions view	21	17.5
Disrespecting the civic rights of people	6	5.0
Use of abusive and violent languages/ unethical means in addressing a public issue	3	2.5
Violation of laid down procedures during political talks, discussions or debate	3	2.5
No response	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2017.

It is imperative to know that, out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents sampled, majority of them had different opinions about what political intolerance is. Out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents, fifty (56) people said political intolerance is the inability of politicians to accommodate people's view on political issues or the rejection of political criticism and this had a representation of 46.6%, it was likewise seen from the literature that, tolerance can only exist when one opposes something, as it is the amount of freedom one gives to individuals or groups express ideas that one opposes (Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus, 1979)

Fifteen (15) people also were of the view that political intolerance is whereby there is instability in a country and this had a representation of 12.5 %. Six (6) people understood political intolerance as the unscrupulous acts demonstrated by politicians representing 5.0 %.

Five (5) people also said that political intolerance is whereby peoples political views are prevented by others representing 4.2 %. Twenty-one (21) people were of the view that, political intolerance is the lack of respect among politicians and this had a representation of 17.5 %. Six (6) people also said that political intolerance is whereby people's civic rights are disrespected representing 5.0 %. Three (3) people also said that, political intolerance is the use of abusive and violent languages or the unethical means of addressing a public issue. Other three (3) people also said that, it is the violation of laid down procedures during political talks, discussions or debate. Both views had corresponding percentages of 2.5 % respectively.

Lastly, five (5) also had no idea of what political intolerance was, representing 4.2 %. From the above, it can be seen that, the research explored different views of respondents on what political intolerance is. It can be deduced from the results that, most of the respondents had a clear view of political intolerance. This means that, the research was very objective since it accepted views from all categories of people.

Table 2- *Forms of Political Intolerance*

Forms	SA	A	SD	D	NR	TOTAL
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
Court Case	25(20.8)	53(44.2)	8(6.7)	31(25.8)	3(2.5)	120(100)
Incivility	26(21.7)	63(52.5)	12(10)	15(12.5)	4(3.3)	120(100)
Threats of violence	49(40.8)	48(40.0)	6(5.0)	15(12.5)	2(1.7)	120(100)
Personality Cults	16(13.3)	64(53.3)	10(8.3)	25(20.8)	5(4.2)	120(100)
Character Assassination	38(31.7)	53(44.2)	7(5.8)	18(15.0)	4(3.3)	120(100)
Vilification	34(28.3)	49(40.8)	14(11.7)	17(14.2)	6(5.0)	120 (100)
Backstabbing	37(30.8)	51(42.5)	16(13.3)	12(10.0)	4(3.3)	120 (100)
Destruction of Public Property	23(19.2)	51(42.5)	17(14.2)	22(18.3)	7(5.8)	120(100)
Threats of death	15(12.5)	39(32.5)	29(24.2)	32(26.7)	5(4.2)	120 (100)

Source: Field Data, 2017. Scale: SA (*Strongly Agree*), A (*Agree*), D (*Disagree*), SD (*Strongly Disagree*), NR (*No Response*)

From the table above, respondents were asked to express their views on the forms in which political intolerance may take. Respondents' opinions showed that Forty-nine (49) people were of the view that political intolerance normally takes the form of threats of violence representing 40.8 %. Thirty-eight (38) people also expressed that character assassination is a major form in which intolerance takes in Ghana representing 31.7 %, Thirty-seven (37) people representing 30.8 % also expressed that backstabbing is usually a form in which political intolerance takes in Ghana. Thirty-four (34) people also expressed that vilification is also a form in which political intolerances at times takes or exhibit.

On the other hand, twenty-nine (29) people representing 24.2 % expressed that political intolerances in Ghana do not at most times take the form of threats of death. Seventeen (17) people also representing 14.2 % expressed that political intolerance do not usually take the form of destruction of property in Ghana.

From the above it can be seen that political intolerance usually takes the forms of threats of violence, character assassination, vilification, backstabbing and the destruction of public property at times. This is a clear

indication of what is happening in Ghana now. Conclusively, we can say that, threat of violence is the major form of political intolerance in Ghana.

Table 3 - *Perpetrators of Political Intolerance*

Perpetrators	SA	A	SD	D	NR	TOTAL
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
Politicians	70(58.3)	37(30.8)	4(3.3)	8(6.7)	1(0.8)	120(100)
Journalists	16(13.3)	59(49.2)	19(15.8)	23(19.2)	3(2.5)	120(100)
Phone-In-Callers	57(47.5)	45(37.5)	5(4.2)	10(8.3)	3(2.5)	120(100)
Ministers	34(28.3)	53(44.2)	11(9.2)	17(14.2)	5(4.2)	120(100)
Editors	10 (8.3)	64(53.3)	14(11.7)	30(25.0)	2(1.7)	120(100)
Religious Leaders	8(6.7)	25(20.8)	39(32.5)	45(37.5)	3(2.5)	120 (100)
Intellectuals	11(9.2)	57(47.5)	20(16.7)	28(23.3)	4(3.3)	120 (100)
Business Leaders	15(12.5)	48(40.0)	19(15.8)	35(29.2)	3(2.5)	120(100)

Source: Field Data, 2017. Scale: SA (*Strongly Agree*), A(*Agree*),D(*Disagree*),SD(*Strongly Disagree*), NR(*No Response*)

From Table 3 above, seventy (70) people said that, politicians perpetrate political intolerance the most among all other people in the list with a percentage of 58.3 %, fifty-seven (57) respondents also realized that phone-in-callers also perpetrate political intolerance representing 47.5 % followed by thirty-four (34) people also claiming that Ministers of state also perpetrate political intolerance with a representation of 28.3%. Respondents also realized that religious leaders, intellectuals, business leaders and journalists do not at most times perpetrate political intolerance. Thirty-nine (39) people representing 32.5 % said they strongly disagree that religious leaders perpetuate political intolerance. Twenty (20) people also said that intellectuals do not at most times perpetrate political intolerance representing 16.7 %. Nineteen (19) people each also said that business leaders and journalists do not perpetrate political intolerance representing 15.8 % respectively. So, it is realized that politicians and phone-in-callers (indigenes of the country) perpetuate political intolerance the most.

7.2 Research Objective Two: To find out the main factors responsible for political intolerances in our Ghanaian society.

The second research objective was to find out the main factors responsible for political intolerances in our Ghanaian society. The results are presented.

Table 4 - *Main Causes of Intolerances in Ghana*

Causes of Intolerances	N	%
Unfair Elections	8	6.7
Ethnocentrism/tribal differences	31	25.8
Corruption/ selfishness on part of state officials	11	9.2
High level of illiteracy/ ignorance about politics	20	16.6
Disrespect among political leaders and subordinates	12	10.0
Misunderstanding among political leaders/ exhibition of propaganda	18	15.0
Unethical practices of media practitioners	3	2.5
Mismanagement of state resources/ Lack of accountability in governance	11	9.2
No response	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2017.

Respondents were asked by the researcher the main cause of intolerances in Ghana. Most of them expressed their views on what is causing political intolerances in Ghana. Out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents eight (8) people expressed that unfair election is the main cause of intolerances representing 6.7 %, thirty-one people also expressed that ethnocentrism or tribal differences is the main cause of political intolerances in Ghana representing 25.8 %. Eleven (11) people also said that corruption is the main cause of intolerances representing 9.2 percent, twenty (20) people also expressed that high level of illiteracy on politics is the main cause of political intolerances representing 16.6 %, twelve (12) people representing 10.0 % said that disrespect among political party leaders and subordinates is the cause of political intolerances.

In addition to the above, eighteen (18) people also expressed that misunderstandings among party leaders is the cause of intolerances in Ghana representing 15.0 %. Three (3) people also expressed that unethical practices by media practitioners is causing intolerances representing 2.5 %, eleven (11) people also expressed that mismanagement of government resources, the mismanagement of state funds is causing the intolerances in the country representing 9.2 %. Six (6) people answered no response representing 5.0 %. From the Literature

review, it was realized that, where the media becomes bias mainly for profit and personal gains, the society and the country suffers as a whole. (Gandhi, 2005). Among all the responses so far, it is realized that ethnocentrism or tribal differences is causing all the intolerances in the county.

7.3 Research Objective Three: To investigate the role of the media in ensuring political tolerance.

The third research objective was to investigate the role of the media in ensuring political tolerance. The results are presented 5.

Table 5 - *Some Roles of the Media in Ensuring Political Tolerance*

Responses	N	%
Organize workshops and seminars to educate people on politics	44	36.6
Allow objective comments/ constructive criticisms	10	8.3
Ensure free and fairness in reportage	14	11.7
Ensure fair treatment to all political parties	15	12.5
Implement appropriate measures that regulate the activities of media men/ politicians	8	6.7
Bringing people from different political affiliates to discuss developmental issues	9	7.5
Ensuring efficient information dissemination	15	12.5
No response	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2017

From table 5, respondents were asked of the active role the media can play that can ensure political tolerance. Forty-four (44) respondents representing 36.6% were of the view that, seminars and workshops should be organized in order to educate people on politics; fifteen (15) people said there must be fair treatment to all political parties whilst the other fifteen (15) also said that there must be efficient dissemination of information representing 12.5 % respectively. Fourteen (14) people said that there must be free and fair reportage by media men and women representing 11.7 %.

Ten (10) people representing 8.3 % said that constructive criticisms should be encouraged; nine (9) people also said that people from different political backgrounds should be invited to speak on developmental

issues representing 7.5%. Eight people (8) said appropriate measures that would regulate the behaviour of media men should be implemented whilst five (5) people answered no response to the question.

It is recalled from the literature review that, the Libertarian theory holds the view that; the media should serve the people rather than the government and that the best way to find the truth is to have as many opinions aired as possible. The theory was of the view that, the media should serve as watch dogs, journalists and media professionals ought to have full autonomy within the media organization, there is no explicit connection between the government and the media. From table 5, majority of the respondents said, media should play their role by organizing seminars and workshops, others also said that, information dissemination should be without any sort of bias; others also said that, equal opportunities should be for all.

8.0 Conclusions

This research was carried out purposely to know the role of the media in ensuring political tolerance and appropriate ways of solving these intolerances in the media. From the outcome of the study, the most influential role the media can play in ensuring political tolerance in Ghana is by applying high journalistic standards or professional standards in the delivering of their media duties by not being bias or ethnocentric and also by them organizing seminars and workshops for its members as well as Ghanaians.

It was realized from the study that political intolerance in Ghana took many forms especially the forms of threats of violence and character assassination. Others were backstabbing, threats of death and incivility. The outcome of this study revealed that all these forms of intolerances was as a result of the entrenched positions (ethnocentrism and partisanship) some media practitioners and some politicians take when discussing political issues on the media fronts.

The study revealed that the main cause(s) of political intolerances in Ghana were ethnocentrism, high level of illiteracy among people and misunderstanding among political activists. That is why the research was so interested to find how the media can check these acts.

9.0 Recommendations

In line with the findings enumerated above, the researchers are of the high conviction that the following recommendations are noteworthy to help media practitioners, politicians, policy makers and the ordinary Ghanaian to maintain fairness and exhibit proper conduct on media fronts. The following are the recommendations obtained from the research:

1. Media should apply ethics of fairness, balance and accurate dissemination of information. That is ethics in journalism must be adhered to and practiced properly.

2. Media houses must also recruit qualified personnel to run programmes on media fronts particularly political programmes.
3. Workshops and seminars should be organized for politicians and media practitioners as time goes on to enlighten them on proper media ethics and public speaking.
4. Media houses should engage in pre-interviews with the representatives of various political parties who come on air to ensure that these representatives are well informed about the issues to be discussed before they are allowed to air their views.
5. High Journalistic standards should be applied and enforced strictly by the National Media Commission (NMC) assigning various media houses to check tolerance.
6. Free and fair reportage must be ensured and also political party representatives should be given equal opportunities to air their views on the radio and the Television.
7. These abusive languages and inflammatory statements by some politicians should not be re-played by the media during their shows.
8. High sense of objectiveness should be observed in addressing public issues particularly political issues.
9. Promotion of national unity through collective programmes.
10. Lastly is public education on the negatives of political intolerance by agencies such as the National Media Commission (NMC), Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and other concerned agencies.

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