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Institutional Perspective of Political Intolerance in the Epoch of Modernism: The Causes and the Way Forward

Ronald Osei Mensah

Ph.D. Student, Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Pearl Adiza Babah

Tutor, Department of Social Science,
Accra College of Education, Ghana

Agyemang Frimpong

Lecturer, Department of Public Management and International Relations,
Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), Ghana

Andrews Acquah

Assistant Lecturer, School of Education,
Valley View University, Ghana

Abstract:

Political intolerance has become the order of the day in this epoch of modernism. This study is therefore embarked upon generally to find out the nature of political intolerance in the era of modernism, the causes and possible solutions in curbing these intolerances in our media fronts. This study was directed by four main specific objectives. Specifically, the study sought to find out if political intolerance can be a tool for political instability, the acts of the media which causes political intolerance, ways of achieving political tolerance and how best the National Media Commission can help in curbing or minimizing political intolerances in our media fronts. Methodologically, the study made use of questionnaires as the main data collection instrument using purposive, convenient and simple random sampling as the main data collection techniques. There was other information solicited from other sources which included the internet, literatures on the media, archival findings and other related works. The data collected was analyzed using tables and simple percentages with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The analysis revealed that political intolerance can be a tool for instability in the country. It was also revealed that wrong reportage and the use of abusive language in our media fronts are major causes of political intolerances in our media. It was therefore recommended by the researchers based on the data collected that, consensus building and applying high journalistic standards are ways of achieving political tolerance in our media. It is also recommended that the National Media Commission (NMC) should provide public education and enforce strict rules in handling issues in the media.

Keywords: Political intolerance, epoch, modernism, institution, media

1. Introduction

The Media and their wide-ranging effects have been around ever since humanity started organizing into tribes and developing methods of communication. 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 polls 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 of 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 or politicians is not in power and pure hatred for those in powers (GNA, August, 2012). Political intolerance is becoming the order of the day in the Ghanaian society. It is uncommon to hear or read or watch on TV 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 individual groups and the nation as a whole. Political tolerance is critical to democracy and fundamental to the workings of parliaments and other legislature bodies. Nobody knows whether if practices such as yellow journalism on the part of the media are what promote political intolerance, it cannot be determined. That is why it has become very relevant to look at the causes political intolerance in the media landscape and ways to solve political intolerance in the era of modernism.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to look at the nature of political intolerance in the epoch of modernism.

1.2. Research Questions

- Is political intolerance a tool for instability?
- What acts of the media causes political intolerance?
- What are the ways of achieving political tolerance?
- What are the roles of the National Media Commission in curbing political intolerance?

1.3. Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to media personnel, politicians and students of the University of Cape Coast. Political programmes organized on the radio and television, news stories, features, languages used on the radio and television and some views of the respondents were examined. It involves a comparative analysis of media contents and methods or styles of presentation. Applying these techniques and using the above sources of gathering information and data was the most appropriate way of knowing the how the media influence political tolerance.

1.4. Limitations of the study

In the course of the study, researchers encountered a number of constraints and setbacks which include but not limited to the following; First of all, the researcher was faced with the problem of resources to undertake a wider coverage of the study. Hence limited sample size of the population.

Secondly, some students felt reluctant to fill the questionnaire because their tight schedules. Some of these students sent the questionnaires home with the intention of bringing it back. But unfortunately, some of the questionnaires were not returned back so the researcher had to print some additional questionnaire to make-up the sample size for the study.

Lastly, time was also a problem to this research. Because the time allotted to the research was very limited, researchers were not able to explore some areas of the research, therefore excluding some of the important segments of the population.

2. Literature Review

This section presents a summary of the related empirical literature reviewed for the study.

2.1 The Concept of Politics and Political Intolerance

Politics can be understood to imply any human activity or practice and an academic discipline or a field of study (Akindele et al. (2000). Politics is something about which virtually everyone has some ideas and it affects the lives of everyone. William Welsh (1973) & Robert Dahl (1956, 1976) capture these characteristics of politics in their works by asserting that politics is ubiquitous in human circumstances. Aristotle (384-322BC) observes that 'man is by nature a political animal'. Yet it has so far proved impossible to find a universally acceptable definition of politics. Political intolerance as a by-product of the misconception of politics has to do with the unwillingness of people to accept the political ideas or political ways of behaving that are different from their own political beliefs and ideologies. Gibson (2004), argues that a great deal of attention has been devoted by social scientists to the problem of political intolerance. Although more effort has most likely been devoted to understanding the voting preferences and behavior of ordinary citizens, political intolerance is one of the most investigated phenomena in modern political science (Gibson, 1992). Political tolerance can also be defined as 'the willingness to extend basic rights and civil liberties to person and groups whose viewpoints differ from one's own' (Patricia, 2002).

In a society, means of communication is the tool of tolerance, and leaders of a state are initiators, inspirers, organizers of social dialogue. State leaders are interested in keeping and strengthening the power by monitoring public impressions, feelings and reactions. A society needs a dialogue to be aware of social transformations and to influence the goings-on. One of the main social mechanisms that provide a tolerant social interaction is a public political discourse. The efficiency of a political discourse is defined by its reasonable and logical directives to the object of influence. Political discourse in the public administration system can lead to some result, making and execution of certain decisions. Political discourse in social interaction is a regulator of social relations, it helps to carry out public dialogue, form the audience's mood and regulate the social development process. Ambiguity or intolerance of political discourse causes social interaction breakdown. Intolerant behavior of an individual causes a response intolerant behavior of another interaction party. Intolerance reaction occurs in the situations when the conflicting parties exhausted other interaction means, first of all, consensus and negotiation ones which are implemented through public communication and discussions (Yu.V., 2016).

The aspects of the study of tolerance as a complex moral, psychological and political phenomenon remain significant to the scientific understanding. In the humanities knowledge field, set of tolerance problems is of an

interdisciplinary character. Not only content characteristic of tolerant ethnic, social and political behavior and interaction studied by researchers is important, but also the overall effect of processes and events described in the media. Intolerance can often serve as a partial manifestation of a society's level of fractionalization, particularly along social dimensions (Yu.V.,2016). Thus, mass intolerance can often result in the exclusion or diminishment of opposition groups from participating in the political system and targeted exclusionary policies (Gibson 2007, 2008). Furthermore, news media have the potential to reinforce these prejudices through the use of demeaning and dehumanizing language to describe groups, thereby rendering their marginalization more acceptable. Gibson (1998) argues that similar manifestations of intolerance may be a slippery slope leading to the suppression of minority rights, which would further strengthen grievances by those groups against the government. All told, mass societal intolerance creates or exacerbates existing grievances of social and political groups against either the government or other relevant groups within society. As Gurr (1971) and others have observed, if these grievances are salient enough to overcome collective action problems then groups are more likely to rebel and cause civil conflict within their respective countries.

2.2. Causes of Political Intolerance

According to Rukambe (2009) as cited in Ziema (2014) some of the factors responsible for political intolerances are;

Firstly, people tend to be politically intolerant when their interest is threatened or when they stand to lose benefits, powers and rights they enjoyed.

Secondly, a further cause of political intolerance is bigotry and dogmatism. that is 'my views and beliefs are true and always right'. It is common some political actors, especially the ruling elite, to believe their views, values and aspirations are absolute or gospel truth which all must follow without question. In this situation, as further explained by Rukambe (2009), anybody who expresses divergent views from those held by the ruling elite is labeled and dismissed as 'racist, reactionary sell-out, agent of imperialism, idiot, political prostitute, cockroach, dog, traitor, or prophet of doom'.

Thirdly, the politics of the belly is another cause of political intolerance identified by Rukambe. According to him, where and when people in a party, government, or in society at large, seek to position themselves to be considered for plum jobs, lucrative tender, or for any political favour, they tend to do anything and stop at nothing, to achieve their ulterior goals. They will badmouth and backstab friends and foes alike using any means at their disposal: from spreading false information via gossip and hoax e-mails to even plotting the 'elimination' of whoever they dislike or disagree with.

Fourthly, political intolerance abounds when citizens feel the avenues for dialogue and constructive engagement are restricted or shut down. Political pluralism and diversity require an environment in which citizens engage with each other and with public institutions in a free and open manner. If such avenues are non-existent or limited, people become disenchanting with democracy and revert to undemocratic (sometimes violent) means to vent out their frustration and anger.

Furthermore, another cause of political intolerance is citizen and political actors' ignorance about the rules of engagement in a democracy. According to Rukambe, more often than not citizens do not understand the rules that underpin democracy. And, if otherwise, then the question that arises is: why do some people consider it their right to say this area, village, or neighbourhood belongs to party A, or this is private land and we do not allow party politics here; or this our tribal land and your party has no support in this area, go elsewhere to your tribesmen for them to vote for you?

Political intolerance also grows in any environment where the rules of the democratic game are either non-existent, not clearly-defined, are simply not enforced, or are enforced unfairly. For example, where electoral systems and processes are skewed in favour of one group or political party and to the disadvantage of others; where electoral institutions lack independence and impartiality, or resources to carry out their mandate without fear, favour or prejudices; where electoral rules and procedures tend to inhibit free and open electioneering, or undermine a leveled playing for all in an election; or bar aggrieved parties from seeking and obtaining justice from courts; and where no regular and inclusive opportunities exist to reform electoral law, surely political intolerance will grow and will burst forth into the open in one way or another, over time.

Lastly, political intolerance also results from political parties and individuals who have lost national appeal and popularity and have now resorted to using the 'tribal or ethnic card' for their political survival. Such people would seek to mobilize political support along ethnic and regional lines.

2.3. The Connection between Media and Politics in Ghana

The increasing Politicization and Commercialization of the Fourth Republic Media has its background in the history and development of the press in Ghana. During pre-colonial times, the press was used as a political tool to link the center to the periphery then as a tool for information dissemination (Anokwa, 1997; Karikari, 1996; Altsehall, 1984). The press had a different composure during the pre- independence struggle. They were used to arouse '... consciousness of nationalism and pride in the face of colonial dominance and alien values' (Mytton 1983, p.38). In short, they were used as mechanism to fight colonial administration. The twist, however, was after independence. This institution which was used to fight, educate and air the views of natives became a tool for suppressing dissent (Wilcox, 1975 as cited in Amoah, 2016).

During Nkrumah's regime, followed by non-democratic regimes there was a long period of unconstitutional rule, that repressed press freedom. There have been both overt and covert mechanisms used by various regimes to politicize the media. The Nkrumah and other military dictators saw an immense control of the press in pursuit of either an agenda or the parochial political ambitions of the dictators (Anokwa, 1997; Asante, 1996; Ansah, 1991). The state media was mostly government control media that was manned by party supporters and loyalists.

However, critical newspapers and journalists were subjected to long prison terms, long period of banning, repressive legislations and forced flee to exile. Those who remained had resort to self-censorship as a means of survival (Danso-Boafo, 2014, p.268). In elaborating this, Asante (1996) cited the passage of Preventive Detention Act (PDA) passed in 1958, which allow critics of the regime include critical journalists to be detained up to 10 years in prison without trial. Again, the introduction of the Criminal Code in 1960 gave the regime the teeth to impose press censorship and restriction on the publication and importation of anything considered 'contrary to Public Interest' (Amoakohene, 2006). Subsequent non-democratic regimes were no better. For instance, just before, the fourth Republic, the then Provisional Defence Council (PNDC) government was also a classic example of a regime coupled with press intimidation. The government according to (Karikari, 2003) made stringent measure against the press. This entailed the arrest, detention without trial of publishers, editors, reporters and some were forced into exile. (Asah-Asante, 2004; Danso-Boafo, 2014) as cited in Amoah, 2016). The repressive laws such as the Newspaper Licensing Law, 1989, (PNDC 211) and the Preventive Custody Laws, 1989, (PNDC 4) gagged Ghanaians as well as the media.

On what grounds will Africa attain any meaningful development without the existence of the press? (Gadzekpo, 1960). According to Gadzekpo, the press as the 'watchdog' barks out any undemocratic behaviour inherent among citizens. The media contributes their quota by ensuring inclusiveness, transparency, rule of law and accountability among the government. She emphasis the need for the press leading the campaign against some vices such as corruption, abuse of power, and the current 'instrumental out' of politics in the sub-region. Therefore, she expresses worry on the antagonistic composure of some political leaders and citizens on the media when they expose some maladies in the state. In essence, the countries development is dependent on the critical and objective role of the fourth estate of the realm.

According to Obeng-Quaidoo (1987), the propensity of addressing issues such as exploitation, inequalities, political participation and legitimacy by any media institution warrants its contribution to any democratic process. A sharp perusal of the state's political history suggests that the media has not fully exhausted this role due to consistent military juntas. During these regimes, many covert and overt mechanisms were used to toe the press towards the dictates of a particular regime (Amoakohene, 2006). However, the inception of the fourth republic brought the 'watchdog' role of the press into full light, as observed by (Eribo and Jong-Ebot, 1997). Lowenthal (1997) has argued that, democracy can be consolidated only when institutions like the judiciary, legislature, civil societies and the press are strengthened. Thus, the quest for rule of law, accountability, transparency, equity, equality, et cetera, can only be realized only when these aforementioned institutions are provided with the necessary resources to thrive.

It is in this vein that Crenstil (1991) suggests that, some level of guided freedom should be given to the press to create, facilitate and maintain the democratic consolidation process. In his study on how critical both state-owned newspaper (Daily Graphic) and private-owned (The Pioneer) have been under the People's National Party (PNP) and the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), he observed that, whiles most papers were quiet critical under civilian regimes, they were a little careful with national issues under military regimes. The private media performed the role of 'anti-government' whereas the state-own media took the 'pro-government' stands. It is therefore justified that for a consolidated democracy to be upheld, and a strong vibrant private-owned media to complement activities of the state-owned media.

2.4. Media Theories

Theories are sets of statement(s) that explains social phenomena. Theories according to Saldana and Omasta (2018) distills research into a statement about social life that holds transferable applications to other settings, context, populations and possibly time periods. Frederick S. Siebert in 1963 presented the four theories of the Press to clarify the link between mass media and political society. How media is seen, controlled and dealt with is through the study of four distinct theories which generally commend on media behaviour and its authors in different societies. This study highlighted on three (3) of these theories.

2.4.1. Authoritarian Media Theory

This theory of the press was presented by Siebert, Peterson and Schuman in 1956. This is the oldest of the press theories. It is an idea that placed all forms of communication under control of a governed elite or authorities. Authorities justified their control as a means to protect and preserved a divinely ordained social order. This theory began in the 16th Century in Europe when Feudal aristocracies exercised arbitrary power over the lives of most people. All statuses during this time used the autocratic monarch system of rule. The press was organized to favour the idea of the monarch. Every idea that was published was to praise the king and God. No one was to go contrary to this. Anyone who did so was burnt and the printing press was also burnt. People were only allowed to publish when they had license. They were able to control what was being published through the granting of license. If you publish something without a license you are charged with treason and sedition.

The theory advocated that government was infallible and incapable of making mistakes. Media professionals are therefore not allowed to have any independence within the media organization. Also, foreign media was also subordinate to the established authority in that all imprinted media product were controlled by the state. This approach was designed to protect the established social order, setting clear limits to media which must talk about people and their problems in any manner.

2.4.2. Libertarian Media Theory or Free Press Theory

This theory was brought up by some libertarians such as John Milton (1608-1674), John Locke (1632-1704), Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). In contrast to the authoritarian view that the media should be controlled so that they do not interfere with the mission of the government, the libertarian theory emerged from a premise that the government should exist solely to serve the interests of the individuals. It holds 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. Wilbur Schramm said that the libertarian movement was 'foreshadowed in the sixteenth century, envisioned in the seventeenth, fought for in the eighteenth and finally brought into widespread use in the nineteenth'.

The theory was characterized by competitive exposure of alternative viewpoints attacks on government's policies are accepted and even encouraged; the media as a watch dog, Journalists and media professionals ought to have full autonomy within the media organization, there is no explicit connection between the government and the media, it is accountable to the law for any consequences of its activities that infringe other individuals' rights or the legitimate claims of the society and the protection of dignity, reputation, property, privacy, moral development of individuals, groups, minorities, evens the security of the state no infringement accepted from the media. Jefferson (1743) felt so strongly that a free press was essential to a democracy that he stated that if he had to select between a government without a free press or a free press without a government, he would prefer the latter.

Bismark Bebli, political reporter of the *Chronicle*, an Accra-based independent newspaper was attacked by irate supporters of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), while covering a post-election rally at Abeka-Lapaz, a suburb of Accra. According to Bedli, NPP supporters pronounced on him as soon as they realized he was a reporter. In a telephone interview with the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) Bebli said he was reporting for *Radio Gold* which had been accused by opposition elements as being responsible for their defeat (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2009).

In Ghana, media practitioners enjoy relative press freedom in Ghana. Journalists enjoy more freedom, cooperation, and respect in their dealings with the state (libertarian theory). However, there is still more to be done to ensure that this freedom, cooperation and respect are not infringed upon by both the government and media practitioners.

2.4.3. Social Responsibility Media Theory

This theory emerged as a result of conflict between professionalism and self-regulation of the press and pressure for the greater regulation of the media. Press regulation advocate that anti-domestic press can easily subvert the market place of ideas and use the media to transmit propaganda to fuel hearted on their own advantage. As early as the late nineteenth century, critics began to identify flaws in the libertarian theory. The free press was evolving in a manner that fell short of the idealistic libertarian goals. As the metropolitan press developed it became large and centralized. More and more media outlets became controlled by fewer and fewer owners, as chain ownership of newspapers grew. The press also became profit-oriented; selling newspapers and advertising space took precedence over the need to keep the public fully and accurately informed. Major criticism of how the press was functioning in the American society began to be heard and by the twentieth century, the voices for change were loud.

In 1947 an influential report issued by the Commission on freedom of the Press, chaired by Robert Maynard Hutchins, then chancellor of the University of Chicago, called for a social responsibility press. The report made it clear that freedom and responsibility go hand in hand and that the press should be periodically reminded of its responsibility.

The Social responsibility theory of the media emphasizes the freedom of the press and places responsibility on the media to practically abide by certain social standards. It opposes media regulation but believes that the press is automatically controlled by the community opinions, consumer protest and professional ethics.

2.5. Theoretical Definition of Political Tolerance

Tolerance has been considered as a fundamental prerequisite for democracy. Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus (1982) explains that 'tolerance implies willingness to permit the expression of ideas or interest one opposes. Political tolerance has been defined as the willingness one has to let certain individuals or groups express ideas that one opposes (Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus, 1982). Tolerance, can only exist when one opposes something, as it is the amount of freedom one gives to individuals, groups and ideas one opposes. Prothro and Grigg (1960) tried to discover whether there existed a consensus on general rights, and whether citizens were prepared to apply these abstract principles to specific situations in which unpopular groups of individuals might be involved. In a related study, Mc Closky (1964) compared political influence and rank and file citizens in levels of support for abstract principles and for the application of these principles of specific situations.

According to Crick (1973) a tolerant regime like a tolerant individual is one that does not restrict, much less suppress ideas that challenge its basic principles. Although there is some degree of conceptual confusion in the identification of tolerance and democratic norms or attitudes, some scholars consider tolerance as a fundamental principle of democracy that citizens are in some way obliged to understand and accept (Prothro & Grigg 1960, McClosky, 1964). It is clear that those citizens who are not fully tolerant are undemocratic or to some extent they harbour undemocratic beliefs. Therefore, to measure tolerance, respondents will have to identify the group they dislike most and an assessment of their attitude towards that particular group.

2.6. Empirical Literature on Tolerance

At its most literal level, the word 'tolerance' suggests an ability to merely put up with ideas and practices that one does not agree with. Despite the importance of the subject, the literature on political tolerance is not particularly largely extensive. The study of tolerance began with the influential commission, conformity and civil liberties by Stouffer (1995). Stouffer did studies on tolerance in the United States and abroad. Tolerance, can only exist when one opposes something, as it is the amount of freedom one gives to individuals, groups and ideas one opposes (Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus, 1979). Tolerance should therefore be measured, by measuring how much freedom somebody is willing to give his or her least liked group (Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus, 1982).

A recent research was conducted on the South African community by Gibson and Gouws and it was concluded that perception of threat is the main cause of intolerance in the South African community. Kenya for a very long period was known to be a stable and peaceful country until in 2007 when the country experienced post-election violence. Liberal democracy assumes that education and participation should create individuals with the ability to understand the interests of others and to conceive of the best interest of the entire society (Sullivan et al, 1982). The understanding here is that; tolerance will increase as education and the opportunities for meaningful participation in the political process increase. This shows how political tolerance has to deal with allowing certain controversial ideas, and minorities to express their ideas and enjoy freedom of rights. A research by Peffley and Rohrschneider (2001) on democratization and political tolerance shows that support for democracy is high in seventeen countries. Therefore, it is important to find how capable is the media in ensuring that there is tolerance among political activists.

A Magistrates' Court in Ouagadougou, the capital, on October 29, 2012 sentenced Roland Ouédraogo and Issa Lohé Konaté, both editors of privately-owned *L'Ouragan* newspaper to twelve months in prison on charges of defaming Placide Nikieme, the State Prosecutor. The two journalists who were taken straight to prison to begin their sentence were also fined an amount of CFA 4 million (about US\$ 7,800) in damages to Nikiema while the newspaper was suspended for a period of six months.

Furthermore, three Ghanaians, Justice Adoboa, reporter of *Financial Intelligence*, Ekow Moses of the daily *Ghanaian Voice* newspapers and Ignatius Annor, reporter of *Radio Gold*, a pro-government FM station were allegedly attacked by security guards of the former President of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor, for photographing his private residence without his permission. The guards also destroyed the working equipment of the journalists, all this as a result of political intolerance. It is surprising that we exhibit political intolerance as citizens, politicians in order to satisfy our personal desires in this epoch of modernism. This study now looks at the levels of political tolerance.

2.7. Levels of Political Tolerance

In knowing whether an individual is politically tolerant or intolerant we investigate whether respondents are willing to give the opposition group the chance to hold demonstrations as well. Substantively, the right to demonstrate is recognized virtually everywhere as a fundamental element of liberal democracy (Dahl, 1991). If a respondent denies this right to a disliked group, it would be fair to conclude that an individual is not willing to allow a disliked opponent to enjoy basic democratic freedom and this is the hallmark of an intolerant citizen. These can be used as a requirement for a liberal democratic government. If an individual is not willing to give this chance or right to the opposition group then one can say that the person is intolerant. To reject an individual of this right is a way of paving the chance for an undemocratic state or government (Rohrschneider, 1995). There are two levels of political tolerance that is the Micro-level model and the Macro-level model.

The Micro-level model is a level of political tolerance using strict individual-level data. At the individual-level, a variety of citizen characteristics have been hypothesized (and found) to engender political tolerance, including demographic variables (e.g., education, gender), as well as political (e.g., support for democratic values, conservatism) and personality orientations (e.g. authoritarianism). In knowing the levels of political tolerance under the micro level model, first of all, we have to make use of democratic activism. That is using civil liberties in enhancing tolerance of dissent by unpopular groups. Civil liberties helped Peffley & Rohrschneider (2001) in their research on democratization and political tolerance in seventeen countries in which citizens actually use civil liberties designed to voice dissent from majority policies. Imagine, for example, a citizen who challenges government policy by joining a demonstration or by participating in a boycott. By engaging in such forms of democratic behavior (as opposed to the routine act of, say, voting) the citizen is more likely to approve of extending such rights to unpopular groups (Pateman, 1976). For this, citizen experiences the benefits of democratic norms not just as abstract rules, but by practicing them as well. We have to know that, we do not simply focus on political interest; our argument presumes that this process works above and beyond a simple interest in politics. Also, we do not focus on routine acts of participation, such as voting. Instead, we focus on the beneficial effect of actually using civil liberties. It is important to distinguish our concept of democratic activism from more conventional forms of political behavior such as voting and political interest. While liberal democratic theorists have long promoted the benefits of political participation for raising levels of political tolerance.

Secondly, is the use of democratic ideals. Authors conceptualized democratic norms at two different levels of abstraction under democratic ideals; one reflecting more generalized support for democratic principles as well as democracy and another at a lower level of abstraction reflecting support for civil liberties when they conflict with other values (Sullivan et al 1985).

Also, value free speech scale is another level measured by summing responses and asking respondents to choose between free speech versus other values.

Last of all is Conformity. It states that various personality dispositions, such as authoritarianism, self-esteem and dogmatism, have been found to be related to political tolerance. (Adorno, et al 1950, Sullivan, Pierson and Marcus 1982).

We also have the Macro-level model of political tolerance. It is being indicated that political tolerance should be greater in a more stable democratic nation. On the other hand, citizens in more stable democratic nations have more opportunities to practice tolerance through elections, pluralistic conflicts of interest and many others. In order to test whether the macro-level variables explain any cross-national variation in levels of tolerance when after controlling for the effects of individual-level characteristics there are some things to be done.

Firstly, we need to add the national-level indicators to survey the data. Muller & Seligson (1994) found evidence for their claim that 'the successful persistence of democracy over time is likely to cause an increase in levels of civic culture attitudes'. In the macro-level measures the focus is on the ability of institutional factors to increase levels of political tolerance in a country. As indicated earlier, an important lesson that synthesizes the democratization and tolerance literatures is that political tolerance should be greater in more stable democratic nations that have successfully persisted over time. When civil liberties have been in place for longer periods, citizens have more opportunities to apply democratic norms to disliked opponents. Likewise, citizens in more stable democratic nations have more opportunities to practice or observe toleration through elections, pluralistic conflicts of interests, and so forth, and this should increase citizens' appreciation of tolerance. Democratic learning model emphasizes not just whether a country is democratic but, more importantly, how *long* a system has been democratic.

It is widely recognized that, democracies are more likely to develop when countries have reached a certain level of GNP/Capita, infrastructure, communication network, or higher levels of education (Lipset 1959; 1993). The table below is an example of the level of political tolerance of some people in the west land in the case of Kenya 2007 Post Election violence.

Group	Education	Socio-Economic Status	Security Concerns	Level of Tolerance
Teachers	High	High	Low	More tolerant
Ethnic Leaders	Medium	High	Low	More tolerant
Business People	Medium	High	Low	More tolerant

Table 1: Political Tolerance in Westland-Peaceful Area

Source: Researched by Mudenda Lushomo in the Case Kenya- 2007 Post Election Violence

As noted earlier, Kenyan has a centralized system of government, bureaucrats where positioned at the headquarters who served this area. Most of the bureaucrats working in the public administration had a college level of education making their education status to be high. On the socioeconomic indicator, all of them occupy the high-class strata in society as they are seen to be government representatives who formulate and implement policies on behalf of the state. On social trust, most of them did not have any challenge with inviting someone from a different ethnic group for dinner. Most of them also said most of their friends hailed from other ethnic groups. In terms of general trust, it was common for the bureaucrats to think that no one could be trusted on face value judgment until proved trust worthy as trust cannot be built over a day. Most bureaucrats said that, trust could not be restricted to ethnicity as it is an individual virtue, by implication a person is not trusted because of his ethnicity but because he has proved that he can be trusted. Therefore, they do not trust people from their own ethnic group but they are ready to extend their trust to people of other ethnic affiliation. Therefore, it can be concluded that trust was low among the bureaucrats who were interviewed and it was a kind of bridging trust as they were able to extend their trust to people from other ethnic groups.

On the security concerns, most of the bureaucrats interviewed said they did not perceive any threat from the group they mentioned as most disliked. Most bureaucrats mentioned politicians as the group they disliked most in society. In their residential areas, most of them said there was good security and also their work place is situated in the prime area of Nairobi highly secured by state police and private security firms. There their security concern indicator for both women and men very low (Lushomo, 2007)

2.8. Measurement of Tolerance

We have two (2) main measurement of tolerance. They are the Least-liked Approach and the Content-Controlled measure.

2.8.1. Least-liked Approach

This approach allows respondents to select the groups about which they are questioned. In its most recent manifestation respondents are presented with a list of groups and asked to rate each individually on the basis or degree of 'dislike' versus 'like' (Barnum & Sullivan, 1989). All respondents are being asked whether they will tolerate their most disliked group. By Stouffer measures, intolerance has declined over the last several decades. Stouffer (1955) found powerful links between tolerance and education which he expected would lead to increased tolerance in the future. The extent to which political tolerance is linked to determinants likely to go through progressive changes that will in turn ameliorate political intolerance is thus an important empirical question. According to Stouffer (1955) empirical studies, basic demographic has sought to influence political tolerance. From the least-liked measures, the issue of whether there is

a change in the levels of intolerance cannot be determined. According to Stouffer measure, those who are better educated are more tolerant.

On the other hand, the Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus (1982) measure are with the assertion that there is no direct relationship between level of education and intolerance. One of the strongest predictors of political intolerance is the perception of threat that one's political opponent is threatening. A major finding of Sullivan, Pierson and Marcus (1982) is that, intolerance is strongly linked to the perception that the out-group possesses a threat. Those who are threatened are much more likely to display intolerance toward a group and this is very clear in the least-liked approach.

The advantage of the least-liked approach is that, it is not dependent upon the researchers to know what sorts of groups are salient and unpopular at the moment; the respondents themselves tell the researchers what the groups are. This makes the least- liked approach useful across time.

A liability of the approach, however, is that respondents may name relatively trivial groups as their most disliked-group.

2.8.2. A Content-Controlled Measure

The content-controlled measure of tolerance is important for comparative studies. The importance of different group identified across national contexts is contrary to the traditional Stouffer method where the researcher would have to select a group known to be equally controversial. This measure asked respondents to identify their least-liked group rather than eliciting reactions to a group preselected by the researcher. In the Content-Controlled, each respondent is asked about the same group, but instead in the sense that each respondent is asked about a stimulus that is his or her most disliked group in contemporary politics.

The least-liked group standardizes responses by establishing that individuals are refusing to tolerate some group which is important to them. Tolerance is measured through a set of questions. Sullivan, Pierson & Marcus (1979) premised on the assumption that intolerance can best be inferred when individuals deny the civil liberties of a group. For example, if researchers ask individuals if they are willing to tolerate communities, respondents who identify strongly with that group are unlikely to provide intolerant responses. These responses would be recorded as tolerant; but not so the respondent simply did not have the opportunity to express tolerance.

3. Research Methodology

The study area is the University of Cape Coast. 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 purely made use of the 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. Out of the total number of students, the sample size selected was one-hundred and twenty (120). The researchers used the level 400 students of the Sociology and Anthropology department offering Communication and the Media as a course mounted in the department. The total number of level 400 students who mounted the course for that particular semester were one-hundred and seventy-two (172). Out the total population of 172, Slovin's formula was adopted to set limit for the number of students to be selected from the Communication and Media class. The Slovin's formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n= the sample size, N= sample frame or the target population and e = Degree of freedom with a margin error of 0.05 (confidence level of 95%). Therefore, a sample size of 120 students were selected from the class and used for the study. A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). The study is based on both primary and secondary data collected from relevant sources. The primary data was collected by interviewing the Communication and Media students from the sociology and anthropology department of the University of Cape Coast. In addition, secondary sources of information have been used such as books, journals, articles from the Media foundation for West Africa (MFWA) among others. Due to the nature of the research, the researcher resolved to use purposive and convenient sampling procedures which are non-probabilistic. These techniques were adopted by the researcher because it saved time, prevent the researcher being bias and also helped the researcher to get the right responses since it was also purposive. Convenient sampling procedure was adopted since it made the researcher to have a face to face interaction with his respondents and prevented the liability of being bias. The purposive sampling technique was also selected to get some media practitioners and politicians whose answers or views will really fit into the study. Simple random sampling helped well to also select the said students for the study. After the collection and coding of data, an analysis was done using a software package known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. The researcher made sure to abide by the ethics in social research. Respondents were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the data obtained from the field. The findings are presented in tables and it makes use of percentages to make meaningful interpretations of the data gathered. This is primarily based on major issues raised in the questionnaires.

The demographic information of respondents in this study covered their sex data, age data, marital status data and data regarding their various ethnic groups.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	85	70.8
Female	35	29.2
Total	120	100.0

Table 2: Sex Characteristics of Respondents

In this research, the sample size was one- hundred and twenty (120) of which eighty-five (85) were males representing 70.8 percent and thirty-five (35) were females representing 29.2 percent as seen from Table 2 above. This means that males numbered most in the communication and media class of the department of sociology and anthropology. It can therefore be inferred from this data that males are more than females in the University of Cape Coast.

4.1. Age Groups of Respondents

This research sought to also know the age group of respondents. This was because age is a vital variable that can inform responses one way or the other and this can influence the reliability of the research. The responses of respondents are shown in Table 3 below.

Age	Frequency	Percent
15-19	8	6.7
20-24	104	86.7
25 and above	8	6.7
Total	120	100.0

Table 3: Age characteristics of Respondents

From the research, the ages of one-hundred twenty (120) respondents sampled were grouped into from 15-19, 20-24 and 25 and above. Among the respondents, eight (8) people fell between the ages of 15-19 representing 6.7 percent, One- hundred and four (104) people fell between the ages of 20-24 representing 86.7percent and eight (8) people fell between the ages 25 and above representing 6.7 percent. This means that majority of the respondents fell within the ages of 20-24 meaning that majority of students in the University of Cape Coast fall within the ages of 20-24. It is also clear that, majority of people who are involved in issues of politics and the media is dominated by those within the ages of 20-24 and this tells how accurate and reliable the information ascertained for the research will be.

4.2. Marital status of respondents

This part of the research looked at the marital status of respondents. Concentrating on the married, unmarried and divorced.

Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	8	6.7
Unmarried	110	91.7
Divorced	1	0.8
no response	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4 above shows the marital status of respondents with their frequencies and their corresponding percentages. Out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents, eight (8) people were married representing 6.7 percent, one-hundred and ten (110) people were not married (unmarried) representing 91.7% and one person was divorced representing 0.8 percent. This shows that most of the respondents to this research were students who were not married. The above confirms that majority of our respondents fell within the ages of 20-24 and they are the people abreast with issues of media and political tolerance hence not married.

4.3. Ethnic Groups of respondents

Researchers sought to find out the ethnic affiliations of respondents. This helped in giving the research a direction.

Ethnic group	Frequency	Percent
Mole Dagbani	7	5.8
Akan	75	62.5
Ewe	21	17.5
Ga/ adangbe	10	8.3
Nzema	2	1.7
Yuroba	4	3.3
no response	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0

Table 5: Ethnic Characteristics of Respondents

In this research, each respondent had an ethnic background and research has revealed the various ethnic background of respondents. It is revealed that out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents sampled, seven (7) people are from the Mole Dagbani ethnic group representing 5.8 percent, seventy-five (75) people are from the Akan ethnic group and it has a representation of 62.5 percent, twenty-one (21) people are Ewes representing 17.5 percent, ten (10) people are Ga/adangbe's representing 8.3percent, two people are from the Nzema tribe also representing 1.7 percent and four (4) people are also from the Yuroba tribe representing 3.3 percent From the above it is realized that, the Akans dominated the research. This can give us a clear indication that Akans dominated the University of cape Coast and this can be justified because it is found on an Akan land.

4.4. Is Political Intolerance a Tool for Instability?

Researchers solicited views of respondents to find out really if political intolerance can be or is a tool for instability. To answer this question, communication and media students of the University of Cape coast were measured on a four-point Likert scale 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree and 4-strongly agree. This is shown in Table 6 below.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	1.7
Disagree	3	2.5
Agree	22	18.3
Strongly agree	91	75.8
no response	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

Table 6: Political Intolerance; a Tool for Instability

The findings of the study indicated that political intolerance can be a tool for instability in a country. Out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents sampled, ninety- one (91) people said they strongly agree that political intolerance can be a tool for instability in a country representing 75.8 percent. Two (2) people were of the view that, political intolerance can never be a tool for instability representing 1.7 percent. So, from the above, it is seen that most of the respondents are of the view that political intolerance can be a tool for instability.

It was also seen from the Literature that, Soviet communists like Lenin and Marx defined the media as extension of the state that foster unity and social cohesiveness. However, they also believed that these interpretations are influenced by our particular social context, such things as our ethnicity, our gender and our occupation and also the believe that each of us make our own interpretations of media messages.

4.5. What are the Acts of the Media which Causes Political Intolerance?

This research question sought to find out acts of the media which causes political intolerance because several literatures made it clear that some countries have had their economic activities disrupted and human lives endangered as a result of the media perpetrating political intolerance. Researchers were interested in looking at the context of Ghana.

Acts	Frequency	Percent
Continuous criticism by phone- in- callers	3	2.5
Being bias in evaluating political performance	12	10
Giving political leaders the platform to negatively insight its followers	14	11.6
Allowing abusive views and language on the media	22	18.3
Hosting panel discussions consisting of people with different political views	8	6.7
Exaggeration of some political issues	11	9.2
Disallowing opposition party members to express their views	8	6.7
Wrong reportage	36	30
no response	6	5
Total	120	100

Table 7: Acts of the Media which Causes Political Intolerance

Respondents were asked about the acts of the media that perpetrate political intolerance. Respondents gave different views concerning some acts of the media that perpetrate political intolerance. Out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents three (3) people said continuous criticism by phone -in-callers' causes intolerance representing 2.5percent, twelve (12) people also said when journalists are bias in evaluating political performance causes intolerances representing 10.0 percent, fourteen (14) people also representing 11.6 percent said giving political leaders the platform to negatively insight their followers also causes political intolerance. Twenty-two (22) people representing 18.3 percent said allowing abusive languages on air can cause political intolerances. Eight (8) people also said hosting panel discussions consisting of different political views can cause political intolerance representing 6.7 percent, eleven (11) people said exaggeration of political issues also causes political intolerances representing 9.2 percent, eight (8) people said disallowing opposition party members to express their views representing 6.7 percent causes political intolerances. Thirty- six (36) people said wrong reportage or wrong relay of information by media men also causes political intolerances representing 30.0 percent. Based on the data collected and analysed it can therefore be concluded that the two main acts of the media which causes political intolerance are wrong reportage by media practitioners and allowing abusive views and languages on the media.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana made it clear in chapter 12, article 163 under 'Freedom and Independence of the Media' that 'All state-owned media shall afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions'. This clearly tells media operators and practitioners that all people irrespective of their race, ethnicity, political affiliation and status must be given fair hearing in terms of political discussions in their bit to express their views and ensuring appropriate level of tolerance in discussions. The Constitution of Ghana further made it clear in chapter 12, article 167 (b) that the National Media Commission must 'take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of high journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media'. This clearly gives us an indication that the media has to be free and independent, and without any bias in delivering serious matters. Also, the media must be professional and objective in performing their roles especially when holding political programmes and shows. Factors such as media bias, sensationalism, propaganda, over-commercialization, trivialization, polarizations and distortions negatively affect the contribution of the media in ensuring political tolerance. Literature clearly educate us that Rwanda genocide was caused as a result of the information which was relayed by the media to the public. This should tell all media practitioners in Ghana and beyond that in this epoch of modernism the media should be professional, objective and value free as much as possible and in doing these, the intolerances we see in our media fronts can be minimized to a reasonable and acceptable level.

4.6. What are the Ways of Achieving Political Tolerance?

This research question sought to find out the proper and better ways of achieving political tolerance. Respondents were very objective with their responses.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strengthen or deepened democracy	1	0.8
Consensus building	65	54.2
Applying high journalistic standards	29	24.2
Recruiting qualified media practitioners	14	11.7
Stopping politics forever	10	8.3
no response	1	0.8
Total	120	100.0

Table 8: Ways of Achieving Political Tolerance

Out of one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents interviewed on how political intolerance can be achieved, sixty-five (65) people representing 54.2 percent said political tolerance can be achieved by consensus building; twenty-nine (29) people representing 24.2 percent said political tolerance can be achieved by applying high Journalistic standards, fourteen (14) people representing 11.7 percent also said political tolerance can be achieved by recruiting qualified personnel in the media, ten (10) people also said political tolerance can also be achieved by stopping politics forever and this had a representation of 8.3 percent, one (1) person also said through a strengthened democracy representing 0.8 percent. It is recalled from the Literature review that, the Social responsibility media theory of the media by Maynard, 1947 emphasizes the freedom of the press and places responsibility on the media to abide by certain social standards. It opposes media regulation but believes that the press is automatically controlled by community opinions, consumer protest and professional ethics. This clearly confirms the data above that consensus building and high journalistic standard are key ways or measure in achieving political tolerance in an epoch or era of modernism in this 21st century.

4.7. Are Efforts made by National Media Commission to Curb Political Intolerances in our Media?

Respondents were interviewed whether efforts are being made by the National Media Commission to curb political intolerances in the media. To answer this question, communication and media students of the University of Cape coast were measured on a four-point Likert scale 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree and 4-strongly agree. This is shown in Table 9 below.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	13	10.8
Disagree	28	23.3
Agree	67	55.8
Strongly agree	8	6.7
no response	4	3.3
Total	120	100.0

Table 9: Efforts of the National Media Commission

Respondents were asked if efforts are being made by the media commission to curb political intolerances. Out of the one-hundred and twenty (120) respondents, sixty-seven (67) people representing 55.8 percent said they agree that efforts are being made by the media commission to curb intolerances, twenty-eight (28) respondents said they disagree that the National Media Commission is doing their best possible to help curb intolerances. Based on the data supplied to researchers by respondents, researchers can say that majority of the respondents were of the view that the National Media Commission is doing their best to ensure high journalistic standards in our media fronts and in so doing achieving political tolerance and minimizing political intolerances in our media.

4.8. How Can the National Media Commission Help Curb Political Intolerance in the Media?

Respondents were interviewed on how the national Media Commission can help curb political intolerances in the media. Respondents freely shared their views on the subject. The views of respondents are clearly presented on Table 10 below.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Through public education	33	27.5
Through sanctions	14	11.7
Enforcement of strict rules	22	18.3
Instituting of checks on media content before publicizing them	15	12.5
Banish biased media practitioners	14	11.7
Organize workshop for its members	15	12.5
no response	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0

Table 10: Ways of Curbing Political Intolerance by the National Media Commission

From Table 10 above, respondents were asked how the National Media Commission can help curb political intolerances. Respondents gave divergent views about the question. Thirty-three (33) of the respondents said through public education political intolerances can be curbed representing 27.5 percent, twenty-two (22) of the respondents said by the enforcement of strict rules representing 18.3 percent, fourteen (14) people each said through sanctions and by banishing biased media practitioners with 11.7 percent respectively. Fifteen (15) of the respondents also expressed that we must institute checks on media content before publicizing them whilst the other fifteen (15) people also said that workshops should be organized for media practitioners with corresponding percentages of 12.5 percent respectively. From the table and data above it can be concluded that public education by the National Media Commission and the enforcement of strict rules are ways of curbing political intolerances in our media fronts.

Chapter 12 of the 1992 constitution, which guarantees the freedom and independence of the media, stipulates in Article 167 (b) that the National Media Commission is to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media.

5. Conclusion

This research was carried out purposely to find out the level of political intolerances that exists in our media fronts in the era of modernism. The study went ahead to scientifically look at the triggers of these intolerances and the way forward in solving these intolerances with the help of our institutions like the National Media Commission in our political and media divide. From the outcome of the study, it has been realized that political intolerance can be a tool or mechanism for political instability in a country. The study can further conclude that wrong reportage (that is wrong relay of information) and the use of abusive language (s) are trigger factors for political intolerances in our media and political divide.

On how to achieve political tolerance, respondents claimed that consensus building and the application of high journalistic standards are measures to achieve that. Respondents also made a strong affirmation that the National Media Commission as a regulatory body to the media are making great efforts to curb or minimize the level of political intolerances we see in our media fronts. Lastly, from the institutional perspective of the National Media Commission, political intolerances can be curbed from our media fronts through public education and the enforcement of stricter rules.

6. Recommendations

In line with the findings enumerated above, the researcher is 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:

- Media should apply ethics of fairness, balance and accurate dissemination of information. That is ethics in journalism must be adhered to and practiced properly.
- Media houses must also recruit qualified personnel to run programmes on media fronts particularly political programmes.
- 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.
- 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
- High Journalistic standards should be applied and enforced strictly by the National Media Commission assigning various media houses to check tolerance.
- 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

- Abusive languages and inflammatory statements by some politicians should not be allowed and re-played by the media during their shows
- Strict rules must be applied by the National Media Commission to ensure high level of decorum and tolerance in our media fronts.
- High sense of objectiveness should be observed in addressing public issues particularly political issues.
- Promotion of national unity through collective programmes and consensus building
- 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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