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**UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF CELEBRITY CAPITAL THROUGH  
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE ROLE OF CELEBRITY POLITICAL  
ENDORSEMENTS IN 2008 AND 2012 GHANA ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

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**LAWRENCIA AGYEPONG**

# ABSTRACT

**Lawrencia Agyepong**

## **Understanding the Concept of Celebrity Capital through an Empirical Study of the Role of Celebrity Political Endorsements in 2008 and 2012 Ghana Election Campaigns**

Research on political marketing in Africa in general and Ghana in particular has focused little attention on the use of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns. At the same time, prior research on the use of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns has predominantly focused on Western democracies and the application of marketing brand theories to the examination of celebrity political endorsement. Such research studies include very little investigation on new and emerging democracies, especially in Africa while the theories have proven inadequate to explain how the persuasive qualities of celebrities are utilized within the political field. This thesis, like Driessens (2013) is advocating that theorising celebrity as a form of capital can explain the qualities of celebrity which can be transferred across social fields including the political field. At the same time the socio-political conditions that enable celebrities to migrate from the entertainment to the political field are specific to their national and historical contexts (Ribke 2015) as presented in the Ghana context.

The study therefore examines theories of celebrity capital and how this capital is utilized in the form of political endorsements in the political field of an emerging democracy like Ghana. The thesis enhances the arguments about how theories of celebrity capital can be used to explain the role of celebrity political endorsements in shaping political communication and political marketing during election campaigns while providing the socio-political conditions that shape celebrity migration into the political field in Ghana.

# **DEDICATION**

This Thesis is dedicated to my Father, John Owusu-Asante and my Brother, Kwame Owusu who both passed away in February and March 2015. Even though you did not live to see me complete this journey, I did it and I know you are both proud of me wherever you are.

And to King Solomon, you know who you are!

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# ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	:	<i>British Broadcasting Corporation</i>
CDD	:	<i>Center for Democratic Development</i>
CE	:	<i>Celebrity Endorser</i>
CM	:	<i>Campaign Manager</i>
CNN	:	<i>Cable News Network</i>
CPP	:	<i>Convention People's Party</i>
CPE	:	<i>Celebrity Political Endorser</i>
EC	:	<i>Electoral Commission</i>
FG	:	<i>Focus Groups</i>
FGD	:	<i>Focus Group Discussions</i>
FM	:	<i>Frequency Modulation</i>
GBC	:	<i>Ghana Broadcasting Corporation</i>
GJA	:	<i>Ghana Journalist Association</i>
GMC	:	<i>Ghana Media Commission</i>
GNA	:	<i>Ghana News Agency</i>
GSS	:	<i>Ghana Statistical Service</i>
MP	:	<i>Members of Parliament</i>
NDC	:	<i>National Democratic Congress</i>
NPP	:	<i>New Patriotic Party</i>
PM	:	<i>Political Marketing</i>
PP	:	<i>Progress Party</i>
PRAAD	:	<i>Public Records and Archival Administration</i>
R	:	<i>Respondent</i>
RQ	:	<i>Research Question(s)</i>
UGCC	:	<i>United Gold Coast Convention</i>
UK	:	<i>United Kingdom</i>
UP	:	<i>United Party</i>
USA	:	<i>United States of America</i>

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# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

From Bono's humanitarian campaigns to George Clooney and Angela Jolie's work in Sudan, celebrities have been known to use their popularity to push their political causes into the mainstream of public discourse. Celebrities within established Western democracies have been known to loudly and proudly voice their support for a particular political party or candidate, and to demonstrate their support through fundraising, advertisements, speeches, concerts and sometimes appearances on campaign platforms. This role has been investigated extensively by a number of researchers (e.g., Street, 2002, 2004, 2012; Kuehl, 2005, 2010; Drake and Miah, 2010; Ribke, 2015). Outside of the Western context, however, the literature on this topic is scant, and this thesis will be one of the first to look at these issues in an African context.

This thesis is about political strategies in election campaigns in Ghana, an emerging, or so-called third wave, democracy (Huntington, 1991, 1993)<sup>1</sup>. The focus of the thesis is on the role of celebrity political endorsements as part of political campaign marketing in the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns, drawing on emerging theories of celebrity capital. The study looks at the perspectives of the Ghanaian media, voters, election campaign managers of the two main political parties in Ghana, and celebrity political endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns. Using a mixed methods approach, the study examines theories on celebrity capital (Driessens, 2013; Gunter, 2015; Hunter, et. al., 2009)<sup>2</sup> and how celebrity capital is utilized in the form of political endorsements in the political field of a third wave democracy like Ghana. This research is located firmly in political communication and political marketing literature, however theoretical inspiration was also found in the literature on celebrity politics which is discussed in chapter 2. Although celebrity political endorsements have been treated as

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<sup>1</sup> Third-Wave democracy refers to the period between the 1970s and 1990s where over thirty countries around the world especially in Africa, Asia and South America made transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic governance.

<sup>2</sup> Celebrity Capital has been explained fully in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

part of the political communications and marketing, especially during election campaigns, celebrity political endorsement has gradually gained recognition as a sub-discipline of celebrity studies (Street, 2002; Street, 2004; Drake and Miah, 2010; Marsh et al., 2010).

Most of the literature in the celebrity political endorsement sub-discipline has focused on established Western democracies, with very little investigation on new and emerging democracies, especially in Africa. This thesis will therefore enhance the application of how theories on celebrity capital can be used to explain the role of celebrity political endorsements in shaping political communication and political marketing during election campaigns in an African context. The thesis advocates for a reconceptualization of celebrity capital which will help to explain the unique qualities of celebrity and how it influences power dynamics within the political field through the many roles a celebrity can play. At the same time, the focus on a third-wave democracy, Ghana, with political party and media systems distinct from those of established Western democracies contributes to the literature on the role of celebrity political endorsements in political campaigns in Africa, which as a whole has, until now, been excluded from the literature in this field. This will therefore help to contextualize the similarities and differences in how celebrity political endorsement is utilized in election campaigns in a westernized democracy versus in an emerging African democracy.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Prior research (Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012; etc.) on the use of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns has predominantly focused on Western democracies. This is because in such countries it is not uncommon or unusual to see celebrities from the television, music, or film industries take political positions or make political statements (e.g. Pease and Brewer, 2008; Kuehl, 2010; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008 examination of Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Barack Obama during the Democratic Party's primaries). Many Western media analysts (Austin et. al., 2008; Collins, 2007; Duvall, 2007; Street, 2004, 2011, 2012; Young and Pinsky, 2009) have, however, expressed misgivings about this phenomenon, pointing out that celebrities are not necessarily knowledgeable about political situations, yet they may have an influence on the public's opinion. On account of their fame, when celebrities express support for a cause or a political candidate or party,

the media, the general public and even policy makers take notice (Duncombe, 2007). It is the perceived influence and visibility that celebrities can bring to their causes that has led to them to endorse political campaigns and candidates. It is similarly for this reason that political parties and individual candidates actively seek such celebrity endorsements. According to Smillie (2004), celebrities and politicians offer one another something that they individually lack: while elected officials have credibility, they are often not liked; and while celebrities are often well-liked and admired, they may not have credibility or respectability in the eyes of the public. Therefore, supporting a political cause brings personal satisfaction and respectability to a celebrity while the political candidate, party or cause receives money and media attention based on the celebrity support. The question of whether the voting public really care whom actors, television stars, sports stars and musicians endorse and whether they rely on the opinions of these celebrities in casting their vote has been examined in previous research, which is discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Understanding the perceived effects of celebrity endorsements, as part of political campaign strategies, clarifies the role of celebrity in the current political scene, especially in emerging democracies in Africa.

Given this backdrop, this thesis investigates the role of celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns in Ghana. It examines how such endorsements were represented in the media reporting of the elections, how political parties view the role of celebrities in their election campaigns, how celebrities view their role in election campaigns, and how voters view the role of celebrities in election campaigns. This thesis is situated within theoretical frameworks on celebrity studies and political marketing literature. This dual framework is based on the fact that, according to Henneberg (2003), celebrity political endorsement is a political marketing instrument which can foster useful conditions during political campaigns. Yet there is also an emerging body of literature that concentrates all aspects of celebrity, including the production, distribution and consumption of this fluid phenomenon within different social fields, especially the political field. Investigating celebrity political endorsements in Ghana is relevant because it addresses a clear gap in the research on celebrity political endorsements in this specific context. Previous studies on political marketing in Ghana has indicated its importance (Hinson & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010), its potential role in voting behaviour (Alabi, 2007), and the clear use of branding (Mensah, 2009 and 2011) in elections in Ghana, but the use of celebrity political endorsements in particular has not received scholarly

attention (See chapter 2 on political marketing in Ghana). This is in spite of the number of media stories that seem to support the notion that Ghanaian celebrities wield a certain amount of influence within the field of politics.

This thesis will focus on two election campaigns; the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The decision is based on the fact these two periods witnessed many Ghanaian celebrities, especially from the entertainment and media fields, endorsing presidential candidates and political parties. It also stems from the fact that in democracies, the most intense period of political marketing and communication occurs during election season. During this time, political actors intensify their efforts to convey their messages to the largest number of potential voters possible as part of their push to be (re)elected (Petroick, 1996). The timeframe of the thesis covers the most recent election campaign in 2012, thereby providing grounds for a comparison with the previous election in 2008 and a prediction for the next election in December 2016. It is therefore informative to investigate whether the use of celebrity political endorsement constitutes a significant aspect of marketing candidates and parties, and whether celebrity capital makes a difference in the political field of Ghana.

## **1.2 Understanding Celebrity**

Effectively investigating celebrity political endorsements, as this thesis aims to do, necessitate clarifying what constitutes celebrity and the different roles celebrities play in politics, especially given the fact that studies of celebrity political endorsements are grounded in celebrity culture and celebrity politics. A celebrity (Turner, 2004; van Krieken, 2012; Marshall, 1997; Giles, 2000) can be generally defined as a person that stands out due to his or her visibility, which has been achieved through mass media and has led them becoming well-known and recognizable to diverse publics. Celebrity is a social construct, which creates difficulty in conceptualizing and defining it (Seifert, 2010). The wide range of approaches that have been taken in the field of celebrity studies has resulted not only in conceptual diversity but also in the ambiguity of common terminology. This conceptual diversity stems from a correlation between the field in which the celebrity in question found fame and the label they receive. Thus, for example, the term superstar is predominantly applied to athletes, actors, and singers/musicians, while idols and icons are usually artists in the pop music category. Celebrity, however, is

not restricted to a specific field but indicates a centralized quality which is reliant on media-generated fame.

While there are many definitions of the phenomenon referred to as ‘celebrity’, what is central to all of them is that it describes those people who are recognizable or well-known as a direct result of their concentrated and constant representation in mass media forums. A definition that is particularly relevant to this thesis is that of Rojek (2012) refers to celebrity as the accumulation of attention capital via self-promotion and exposure management (2012:104). This view is key because it provides an answer to the failure of alternative definitions to grasp the convertibility of celebrity. This view redefines celebrity as a form of capital, and has been supported by Driessens (2012, 2013, and 2014). Therefore, within this thesis, the designation of celebrity is reserved for those individuals who have gained intense and persistent public recognition through self-promotion and exposure management.

### **1.2.1 Celebrity and politics**

This thesis is concerned with the visible interconnection between the media, the entertainment industry and politics. This has resulted in the phenomenon referred to as ‘celebrity politics’. The involvement of celebrities in politics is particularly ubiquitous in the United States of America where the phenomenon has its historical beginnings. Gamson (1994) asserted that the Kennedy era inaugurated the modern era of mass-mediated political celebrity, while Turner (2004) claimed that the election of Ronald Reagan as president of the United States could be regarded as the point at which the “production lines of celebrity and politics most empathically converged” (2004:15). From its historical beginnings in the United States, celebrity politics has been observed in other developed and developing political systems around the world as well.

This phenomenon seems to affect various aspects of political life, including campaigns and elections (Duvall, 2007), policy agendas (Brockington, 2009) and international affairs (Clarke, 2009; Cooper, 2008). The expanding literature on the different roles that celebrity plays within the political field and how celebrity culture shapes politics has been referred as typologies of ‘celebrity politics’. It is within these typologies that this study is situated.

West and Orman (2003) attempt to classify celebrity politicians by identifying five different typologies of ‘celebrity politics’. Specifically, these are “the political news

worthies”, which refers to politicians who gain celebrity status due to their skill at public relations and self-promotion; the ”legacies”, meaning those that gain celebrity status by virtue of being the children or spouses of former politicians; “event celebrities”, who are victims who gain notoriety overnight due to a tragedy or life situation; and lastly, what they refer to as “famed non-politicians”, which encompasses people who become famous in fields outside of politics who then run for office or become associated with political activism.

Street (2004), on the other hand, identifies two types of celebrity politicians. He described the first type as those who come from a background in show business or who use their fame, celebrity status and techniques of popular culture to seek and gain elected office (for example, Arnold Schwarzenegger or Ronald Reagan). He characterized as the second type as celebrities who use their fame and status to influence the exercise of political power (for example, Bono or Bob Geldof).

Marsh et al. (2010) offer a more specific typology of celebrity politics, proposing the distinctions of ‘celebrity advocate’, ‘celebrity activist/ endorser’, ‘celebrity politician’, ‘politician celebrity’ and ‘politician who uses others’ celebrity’ (2010:327). According to them, this classification allows us to see the various roles played by celebrity politicians. However, the most apt definition of celebrity politics comes from Wheeler (2013), who refers to celebrity politics as a set of techniques, rooted in the production of fame, that officeholders and notable citizens might employ for the purposes of aggregating and representing public opinion related to electoral democracy, policy advocacy, and international diplomacy (2013:8).

Irrespective of the typology or definitions of the various roles that celebrities play in politics, the central focus of this study is on the celebrity endorsers who use their fame and status to influence the exercise of political power, especially in terms of voting choices. Thus, in this research, the focus is on Street’s (2004) second type of celebrity politics, that is, well-known individuals using their fame and status to influence the exercise of political power, which is similar to Marsh et al.’s (2010) ‘celebrity activist/endorser’, i.e., those that use their fame to advance a political course or action.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term celebrity endorsement refers to the public pledge of support for a political candidate or party by a person who is well-known or famous in areas such as music, sports, movies, or television, excluding politics. Such a public pledge

of support can be in the form of an appearance on a campaign platform, fundraising for a political candidate/party, an appearance on political adverts for a party or candidate, and any other such public declaration of support. The definition used here is produced on the basis of the review of other definitions in previous sections of this chapter.

### **1.3 Justification for the Research**

Despite the fact that many political contests have included celebrity endorsements, especially in established democracies, there has been little effort to understand the role of endorsement within the larger political marketing strategy during election campaigns. According to Street (2012), while celebrity involvement in politics in its various forms has become a popular topic in political discourses, it can also be recast as the blurring of pop culture, political platforms and stars. A number of recent studies have considered the question of how celebrities are used in political communication, such as Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Wood and Herbst, 2007; and Morina et al., 2012. These researchers have applied marketing theories on product endorsement to explain the use of celebrity endorsement in the political field. They have, however, failed to analyse celebrity as a form of capital which, when utilized in the form of political endorsement, can form part of a viable political marketing strategy and as a political communication tool. The aforementioned studies also predominately reflect academic debates in the USA and European countries, although recently, research has also been undertaken on emerging democracies in Latin America and Asia (e.g. Centeno, 2010, the Philippines; Henneberg, 2007, Taipei, Taiwan; McCann and Lawson, 2003, Mexico). The African context has largely been ignored, and as a result, there exists very little research on celebrity politics and celebrity capital through the use of celebrities in political campaigns, especially as part of a political marketing strategy, in Africa as a whole and in Ghana specifically. It is these gaps within the research and literature that this thesis seeks to fill. First, it does this by making a strong case for the conceptualization of celebrity as a form of capital which can be used in different social fields such politics field to change the dynamics of the political arena during election campaign marketing. Secondly, for an evolving democracy like Ghana, where the margin between the winner and the loser of an election can be as little as one percent (Ephson, 2003; Alabi, 2007), the role that celebrity capital can play in the form of celebrity political endorsements in political campaigns and political marketing during an election period, cannot be ignored.

With the spread of a new wave of democracy across Africa, this study attempts to extend the academic analysis of political marketing, political communications and celebrity politics (that is, the overlap between the media, the entertainment industry and politics) to Ghana. This is important because celebrities are believed to resonate with the symbolic meanings and values of the particular culture that bestows their prominence on them (McCracken, 1989). Thus, the selection of celebrity political endorsers as an election campaign strategy might provide insight into the fundamental cultural orientations, perceptions, attitudes and values of Ghanaian society.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This thesis has two main objectives. The first objective of the thesis is to investigate the role of celebrity endorsement in elections in Ghana in order to understand what makes them attractive to political parties/candidates as endorsers during election campaign marketing. This is because the intricate link between celebrity and politics usually becomes apparent in election campaigns and election outcomes in terms of which political party/candidate wins or loses an election. Studying the role of celebrity endorsement in election campaigns in Ghana serves as an indicator of the extent to which the use of celebrity political endorsement is tolerated by the media, political party campaign machinery and, more importantly, by the electorate during election campaigns in an evolving democracy like Ghana. Wheeler (2011) argues that the impact that celebrities have on politics should not be frivolously ‘dismissed as an erosion ... , but must be viewed within the framework of a change in political aesthetics in which there will be positive and negative outcomes’ (2011:16). The study considers whether celebrity political endorsers yield enough value by their inclusion in political parties’ or candidates’ campaigning efforts to justify the time, effort, and money expended on obtaining and publicising such endorsements.

The second objective of this thesis is to uncover the nature of celebrity migration from other fields into the political arena in Ghana, an emerging democracy, in relation to the country’s political and media systems, and whether celebrities distort or otherwise affect the power plays within the political field. The current century has seen a rising number of celebrities finding success in the field of politics in established democracies (for example, Donald Trump and Arnold Schwarzenegger in the United States and Peter

Garret in Australia), as well as in new and evolving democracies, as is the case with Imran Khan in Pakistan. In the same way, politicians are promoted as celebrity personas and employ celebrity-style public relations tactics in their dealings with the media and the electorate (as exemplified by Tony Blair's 'rock star' imagery and Barack Obama's use of Twitter). The extent to which celebrity is tolerated in the politics of a particular country depends on the construction of that country's national culture, media systems and political systems, including party politics. The systems in Ghana which is discussed extensively in Chapter 3 provide an indication of the role that celebrity plays in the politics of Ghana generally and during election campaigns in particular. Ghana offers an interesting perspective on the role of celebrity in the political field in a third-wave African democracy operating a political system which is a hybrid of the American-style presidential system and the British party-based parliamentary system. The thesis provides answers to how celebrity migration affects the political field and whether such celebrity migrations shape and influence the power plays in politics in Ghana.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

While the literature on celebrity involvement in politics is growing, there has been criticism that the focus has been more on theory and speculation about this phenomenon rather than on providing hard evidence regarding the influence of celebrities on politics and how this can be situated within approaches to political communication or marketing (Street, 2012; Duvall, 2007). This thesis therefore explores the role that celebrity involvement in politics, namely endorsement, can play within political marketing by looking at how celebrity endorsements are represented in the media's election coverage, how political parties view the role of celebrities in their election campaigns, how celebrities view their role in election campaigns and how voters view the role of celebrities in election campaigns.

Secondly, the literature has predominately focused on established democracies like the United States and European countries, such as the United Kingdom. Although celebrity politics has been observed in varying degrees in different political systems (Mukherjee, 2004; Street, 2004; West and Orman, 2003), very little is known about its use in Africa and how it is affecting the adoption of political marketing tools in Africa's new and emerging democracies like Ghana. The focus of the thesis contributes to the literature on

celebrity political endorsement and political marketing in election campaigns by testing theories of celebrity political endorsement developed in Western contexts in the Ghana context.

Thirdly, previous studies on celebrity political endorsements have focused on effect of the endorsement on political outcomes especially on voting intentions (e.g. Garthwaite and Moore, 2008; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs's 2012; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Henneberg, 2007). Such research studies have recognised the difficulties in evaluating which voting intentions resulted out of celebrity political endorsement. Empirically estimating the effect and influence of such endorsements is impossible when there could be other complex factors at play and these could affect voting decisions as demonstrated in all of the studies mentioned above. This thesis looks at effect in terms of perception of influence of celebrity political endorsement as one of the factors that informs voting decisions. These perceptions are solicited from not only voters as done in previous studies on celebrity political endorsement but from campaign managers, celebrity endorsers and from media coverage. In addition, previous studies have not looked at the effect of celebrity endorsers on campaigns in the area of campaign coherence and relationship of celebrity endorsers with campaign team members and finally, effects research have not examined the effect of political endorsement on the celebrity. This forms part of the thesis examination of effect of celebrity political endorsements.

Finally, this thesis extends the theory of celebrity as a form of capital as advanced by researchers such as Driessens (et. al., 2012, 2013, 2014), Rojek (2012) and Gunter (2015), and suggests a reconceptualization of celebrity capital. This concept of celebrity capital is elaborated upon in the literature review (chapter 2). The thesis argues that reconceptualising celebrity capital explores new ideas required to explain the effects of celebrity in various fields as well as its migration across numerous fields. The theoretical underpinnings of the study applies Bourdieu's Field Theory and notion of capital while drawing upon previous studies and the frameworks proposed by Dreissens, Rojek, Gunter and Couldry, is discussed in the literature review as well as in the discussion chapter in terms of the empirically-drawn conclusions. The argument made here is that celebrity capital has a particular definition as well as particular rules that govern its utilisation in many fields, including the media, politics, society and culture. The thesis also sheds light on how this form of capital is resisted, recognized and tolerated by other agents within

various fields. The thesis is not claiming a definitive conclusion on why celebrity should be reconceptualised. The thesis is rather expanding the understanding of how celebrity, as capital, behaves in different national contexts, advancing the argument that celebrity permeates all aspects of our lives and evaluates its worth when examined through the Field Theory and seen as capital.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of this thesis, empirical data is used to answer the overarching question, namely: What is the role of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns in Ghana? In order to answer this query, the thesis looks at the role of celebrity endorsement in political campaigns from four perspectives: the media, the electorate, the political campaign machinery and celebrity endorsers. Thus, five specific research questions were derived from the primary question above, as follows:

### **RQ1. How are celebrity endorsements of political parties/ presidential candidates reported in news media election coverage?**

It has been suggested that the media plays an important role in the voting behaviour of the electorate while at the same time influencing the behaviour of political parties and candidates during election campaigns. The media is similarly important in the production, distribution and consumption of celebrity by providing visibility to celebrity activities, which contributes to their fame (Rojek, 2001) and to their accumulation of celebrity capital (Driessens, 2013). Operating on the idea that celebrities occupy a privileged place in the media field, the media provides celebrities with a kind of symbolic access to the power structures of everyday life (Couldry, 2000).

Different media systems exert distinct influence based on the power and influence accorded it by the state, which is a meta-field according to Couldry (2003). The media is seen as having a distinct influence and their coverage of a story generates particular effects on electorates and political campaigns. The answer to this research question will reveal the media narrative of celebrity political endorsement coverage and indicates the extent to which the agents within the media field construct celebrity politics in Ghana, and how this shapes celebrity capital in the political field. Analysing how celebrity political endorsements have been framed in media texts through the coverage of such endorsements yields insight into the broader cultural and societal acceptance of celebrity

involvement in the politics of Ghana as well as into the extent to which this involvement is accepted or resisted by agents within the political field.

**RQ2. How do voters view the use of celebrity endorsements during election campaigns?**

The effect of celebrity endorsement on election outcomes has been the subject of most of the research on celebrity political endorsement (e.g. Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Jackson, 2007; Morin et. al., 2012; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011). These studies have mainly used theories from marketing to explain the effects of celebrity endorsement on election results. This thesis shifts the focus on effects of endorsement by examining voters' perceptions about the role of celebrities in politics in general and the use of celebrity endorsement in particular as a campaign strategy. The answer to this research question increases knowledge of the way members of the Ghanaian public perceive celebrity culture and how it behaves in various fields, especially politics. This also provides an understanding of the public acceptance or rejection of celebrity as a type of capital, especially as one that can be used for political purposes. This yields empirical underpinnings for the discussion on celebrity capital and how it shapes political marketing and political communication in an emerging democracy.

**RQ3. How do voters view celebrities who endorse political parties/presidential candidates during election campaigns?**

This research question seeks to glean voters' perceptions on the migration of entertainment and media celebrities into the political field. It extends the meaning transfer theory used in the literature on celebrity endorsement to show how the meanings attached to particular celebrities are transferred to the political party/candidates that they endorse (e.g. Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012). The purpose of this question is to answer whether the meanings attached to political parties/candidates by the voting public are similarly transferred to the celebrities who offer endorsements. It evaluates whether such meaning transfer has an impact on the career or status of the celebrity endorser from the perspective of the voting public. This sheds further light on the public's acceptance of or resistance to the migration of celebrities from one field to another and whether, in the process of the migration, their celebrity capital will have a cross-field effect.

**RQ4. What is the campaign role of celebrity endorsements according to the political parties?**

As mentioned previously, political parties engage in political campaigns as part of their marketing efforts to attract voters with the hope that such efforts will result in securing political power for their party/candidate. This research question examines the value of celebrity endorsements to a political party's campaign efforts from the perspectives of the two major political parties in Ghana. It examines whether political parties use celebrity endorsement as part of their campaign strategy because celebrity capital is viewed as a valued resource. This is based on the literature that suggests that celebrity status affords discursive power, being as such a voice that cannot be ignored (Marshall, 1997).

This research question therefore explores the intricate link between celebrity and politics which comes to the fore during election campaigns as well as the extent to which celebrity tactics like endorsement affect the overall campaign strategy of political parties, from their perspectives. This question also explores the extent to which actors from the country's political party system will tolerate the invasion of celebrity in the political field, especially celebrities who migrate to the political field from the entertainment and media fields.

This is deemed relevant to this field of research because no research as yet has examined the use of celebrity endorsement in election campaigns as a marketing strategy for political parties/candidates from the perspective of political parties/candidates themselves. Previous studies have focused mainly on the effects of such endorsements on voters, as described further in the literature review. However, in order to understand how celebrity capital alters power dynamics in the political field, agents from the field can provide valuable insight into how they view celebrity politics and the extent to which they accept or resist celebrity presence within the established political party system.

**RQ5. What is the role of celebrities in election campaigns according to celebrities who endorse political parties/candidates?**

Research on celebrity culture, including celebrity politics and celebrity political endorsement, primarily has focused on empirically analysing media texts and measuring the effects of endorsement through questionnaires and experiments conducted with the voting public. Very few researchers have carried out research on celebrities from the perspectives of the celebrities themselves, by gathering data directly from celebrity respondents. Young and Pinsky (2006, 2009) and Driessen (2013, 2014) are among the

very few researchers that have successfully used celebrities as research subjects. It is, however, important to explore the perspectives of the celebrities themselves in order to deepen the understanding celebrity and how famous people permeate the various arenas of society. Such insight is as important as exploring the media and audience responses to the celebrity phenomenon. This is one of the gaps that this thesis seeks to fill. Answers to this research question yield an understanding of who these individuals are, how they view their celebrity status, including the qualities and characteristics they possess that catapulted them into celebrity, how they feel about the way they are represented by media and the public, their fans and critics, and finally, their perspectives on their role as endorsers of political parties/candidates. Of particular interest here are their views on whether their celebrity capital, accrued from their original fields, is useful in the field of politics.

### **1.7 Organization of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction and gives an overview of the entire thesis. It explains the concept of celebrity political endorsement and explains how the concept is applied in the fields of political marketing and celebrity politics. The chapter also defines celebrity and celebrity politics. It then explains how this research fits into the existing literature, and introduces the research questions, rationale and contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2 comprises the literature review, which looks extensively at studies on political marketing, celebrity politics and celebrity political endorsement. The review identifies gaps within the literature and how this research fills those gaps. This chapter also discusses the theoretical lens upon which the thesis is based.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed background on Ghana. This includes an extensive overview of the political, political party, and media systems in the country and identifies how these systems contribute to the political situation and celebrity politics. It examines how the Field Theory can be applied to the political, party and media system and how these fields shape celebrity and its capital.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the methodological approach used in the research and the processes used to gather data. It also discusses the analytical framework which is used to

interpret the role of celebrity endorsement in political campaigns in Ghana from the four different perspectives of the media, political parties, voters and celebrity endorsers.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 focus on the analysis of the data, which is built upon the methodological approach and the various methods used to gather data to answer the research questions. Thus Chapter 5 contains the analysis of the media content in relation to the research question of how the media covered celebrity endorsements of political parties/candidates in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Chapter 6 analyses the perceptions of a sample of voters regarding celebrity politics in general and the use of celebrity endorsement in election campaigns in particular. This analysis is based on focus group discussions with a sample of the voting public. The final analysis chapter is Chapter 7, which focuses on the perceptions of political party campaign managers about the use of celebrity endorsements as an aspect of their election campaign marketing strategy and on the perceptions of a selection of celebrities who endorsed political parties or candidates in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. These analyses are based on in-depth interviews with campaign managers and celebrity endorsers.

The final chapter is Chapter 8. This chapter comprises a discussion of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework of this thesis. The chapter also discusses the reconceptualization of celebrity capital in light of the research findings. Finally, the chapter describes the conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion of the findings and reflects on the contribution of the thesis to knowledge in addition to acknowledging its limitations.

# Chapter 2 - Literature Review

## 2.0 Introduction

This literature review chapter examines emerging concepts in political marketing in relation to celebrity political endorsement and concepts within the celebrity studies literature. This will include a review of the various approaches to understanding celebrity political endorsement within the literature on political marketing/communication and celebrity politics, noting their conceptual, theoretical and empirical implications and limitations for understanding celebrity political endorsement, celebrity capital, political marketing and communication in an emerging democracy like Ghana. It was argued in chapter one that celebrity political endorsement has been treated as an aspect of political communication and marketing, especially during election campaigns. Thus, research on celebrity political endorsement has, since its inception, been situated in the wider research and literature on political marketing. This thesis, however, is positioned in the dual literature on political marketing and the growing and emerging literature on celebrity studies, for several reasons. First, political marketing is an evolving discipline and thus attracts researchers not only from the mainstream marketing field but also from fields such as media and communications, political science, international relations and social sciences (Street 2002, 2004, and 2012; West & Orman, 2003). Secondly, literature on celebrity studies, on the other hand, is a relatively new and emerging discipline that is concerned with examining the production, distribution and consumption of celebrity, and celebrity political endorsement has gradually gained recognition as a sub-discipline of celebrity studies. Finally, situating this research into these two disciplines offers the unique opportunity of looking at celebrity capital as a concept within Ghanaian society, and how this concept shapes its use in political marketing in Ghana.

The next sections of this chapter look at key concepts in political marketing in general and the concept of celebrity political endorsement within the political marketing literature in particular. This is followed by a review of the key concepts of celebrity political endorsement within celebrity studies literature, and the chapter concludes by explaining the theoretical framework for this thesis.

## 2.1 Political Marketing

This thesis examines the use of celebrity political endorsement as an aspect of political marketing in Ghana during election campaigns, and thus is positioned within the political marketing and celebrity studies literature. In this section, literature on political marketing, especially how the principles can be applied in research in Ghana, is examined, and theories about celebrity political endorsement within the marketing field are discussed in relation to previous research.

The application of commercial marketing techniques and concepts to the realm of politics is occurring all over the world, though to varying degrees. Many political parties and political actors have realized the need to gather market information through polls and focus groups. The results of such intelligence gathering are then used to inform political parties and political actors about the way to present their policies and ideologies to the voting public. It has, therefore, become necessary for political parties and political leaders to use marketing techniques not only to sell themselves and their policies but also to decide what to offer to the electorate in terms of what policies to adopt, what type of leadership to select to best present these policies, and finally, what communications method to use for policy delivery (Collins & Butler, 2002). The literature on political marketing during election campaigns looks at the use of marketing concepts in the development of a strategic relationship between politicians and their political parties on the one hand, and voters or potential voters on the other hand, through three key elements. Lee-Mashment (2003) and Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2011, 2014) have identified these key elements as *message development, message dissemination and relationship building*.

Most political campaigns, especially in established democracies and more recently in emerging democracies, now rely heavily on political marketing for success in elections (O’Cass, 2001). Henneberg (2002) says that political marketing allows for the use of marketing theory to account for the “strategies and instruments” (2000:94) used by politicians, political parties and the political machinery. In the same vein, Lees-Marshment (2001) explains that political parties can use political marketing to increase their chances of winning elections by altering aspects of the political party’s and candidate’s behaviour, including policies, membership, leadership and organizational

structure, to suit the nature and demands of their electorate (Lees-Marshment, 2001a and 2001b; 2002; Kotler and Kotler, 1999; O’Cass, 1996; O’Shaughnessy, 1996, 1990; Newman, 1994; Sabato, 1981).

Political marketing, however, is still seen as a sub-discipline and, therefore, researchers in this field try to provide legitimacy for its theoretical basis by borrowing from traditional marketing concepts, such as “marketing orientation” (Narver and Slater, 1990; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990), the “exchange characteristics” of the political market (Egan, 1999; Collins and Butler, 2002), and the “service-dominant” paradigm (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Henneberg and O’Shaughnessy (2007) observe that the field’s “historical development out of marketing theory provides the ontological rationale for political marketing” (2007: 9).

Lees-Marshment (2001) further observes that research related to marketing and political parties has mainly focused on themes such as political leadership, organizational structure, electoral support, and campaign strategy. Lott and Reed (1989) explained that the political market should be seen as consisting of voters, challengers and incumbents. This market can be found anywhere political parties and electorates meet or communicate to sell and buy political products. In such a scenario, the electorate corresponds to the buyers, and the political parties correspond to the sellers in a standard marketing analysis, while at the same time, there are competitors within that environment with their own strengths and weaknesses. Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2011, 2014) developed an advanced model for examining political marketing campaigns which seeks to showcase the process of political marketing during political campaigns as a distinct discipline from economic marketing. That is, it has its own methodology which can predict the behaviour of political actors and voters more comprehensively than the direct application of marketing principles to the political ‘market’. What constitutes the political market is the target audience, i.e. voters, being courted by a number of political parties within a particular political environment. The acceptability of a political party or political candidate within a particular political environment can be considered the basis or the very source of any meaningful showing of a political party or candidate in an election, while the campaigns cultivate acceptability for actual gains.

### **2.3 Political Marketing in Ghana**

The political marketing literature has, in recent times, ceased to be dominated by research focused on established Western democracies, as the literature on emerging and ‘third wave’ democracies around the world is growing (Greene, 2011; McCann & Lawson, 2003, Mexico; Miller & Niemi, 2002, Eastern Europe; White, Rose, & McAllister, 1996, Russia). Nonetheless, there are even a few publications on the use of political marketing in Ghana. However, this extant literature on political marketing in Ghana offers little in the way of concrete theoretical concepts, focusing rather on how political marketing is utilized in election campaigns. The research also predominately focuses on the 2008 general election. This is mainly due to the fact that this election constituted one of the most fiercely and closely contested elections in the country and was one in which political parties and candidates were actively seen to be using political marketing strategies and tactics for their campaigns.

Gyimah-Boadi's (2009) research, for example, concentrated on campaign strategies and patterns of the two leading political parties in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), during the 2008 elections. He concluded that the image of presidential candidates became important, with the candidates depicting themselves as “God-fearing” and dedicated to the “material uplift of Ghanaians”. The use of slogans became a prominent feature of the campaigns, with the NPP adopting the slogan “We are moving forward,” referring to their promise to advance the country to middle-income level, should they win. The NDC’s slogan emphasized the need for a change in the leadership and direction of the country. Gyimah-Boadi also observed that while the marketing strategy involved campaigning in all regions of the country, the parties concentrated on their respective strongholds, thereby indirectly courting votes based on ethnicity. His research is especially relevant because he scrutinised the use of negative and attack adverts as a campaign strategy.

In a study conducted by Hinson and Tweneboah-Koduah (2010), the focus was on the importance of political marketing in electoral victories in African nations, using the 2008 Ghanaian presidential elections as the case study. They looked at the marketing strategy employed by the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the incumbent party that lost the general elections. Their research used Butler and Collins’ (1994) political marketing structure and found that all four of the themes discussed by Butler and Collins (1994) played a role in the defeat of NPP. Product factor, comprising the presidential candidate, the party, and

its ideology, was identified as a key theme. All of its components had been badly damaged by allegations of corruption, insensitivity, and arrogance. Organizational variables, including neglected foot soldiers, resulted in an unmotivated core of supporters unwilling to campaign vigorously for the party. The process factors encompassed the inability of the NPP to translate the advantages of incumbency into strengths. As for market factors, the NPP's lack of market segmentation of voters worked against the party. This research is significant because it is one of the few studies in the literature that is dedicated to political marketing in an African context and it highlights the significance of the process orientation factors of political marketing theory to the fortunes of political parties in Africa.

Another approach adopted to studying political marketing in Ghana has been to measure the acceptability and effectiveness of a political party's marketing approach. Such a study was conducted by Alabi (2007) using an analysis of electoral data from the four presidential elections that had taken place thus far in the Fourth Republic. The study compared political marketing variables, such as dimensions of the political market, the political product and the 'Political Product Support Services', with the effects of ethnicity on political marketing outcomes in the country. The research found that political marketing strategies in Ghana focus more on political marketing support services, especially media relations, news management, campaigns, particularized benefits and other promotional activities, leaving product design and presentation to ethnicity, religion and personality.

A similar project was undertaken by Mensah (2009) to test the effectiveness of a political party's marketing approach by conducting a semiotic study that focused on the growing use of signs, sounds and symbols in political marketing in Ghana. His study concentrated on how political parties and candidates in elections between 2000 and 2008 made use of certain images of identifiable relevance to their target voter bloc in order to convey messages to that constituency. He described the use of popular symbols and slogans, such as 'hopping kangaroo' for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the 'finger wriggling' signs of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), as "an embodiment of what the two parties stood for and the summation of what they wanted to tell their audience" (2009:79). He concludes that through the use of such slogans and symbols, the voting public became political messengers themselves by unconsciously invoking the two parties' campaign

signs and related sounds in public spaces whenever they came into contact with people campaigning on behalf of the party who Mensah (2009) refers to as ‘party messengers’.

What these studies on political marketing demonstrate is a lack of concrete theoretical concepts from the way their research has been formulated and this is reflected in providing concrete evidence to support their findings. For example, Gyimah-Boadi's (2009) research did not have a developed theoretical framework, while Alabi's (2007) methodological approach was weak. Such weakness in research on political marketing in Ghana is addressed by Mensah (2011), who advocates for the incorporation of all three political marketing elements, i.e. the party, the policy, and the candidate, into a single, comprehensive resource for building a political brand. Focusing on the NPP, his study demonstrated that party values should be considered an integral part, along with policy and candidate attributes, in building a perfect political brand identity. He concluded that the strategies and the tactics with which the NPP executed its electioneering campaign have parallels in marketing's brand architecture concept.

The review of studies on political marketing in Ghana shows that whilst there has been contemporary research on this topic and in this context, most of them have issues both theoretically and conceptually. In addition, there is nothing specific in the literature on the use of celebrity endorsement as a political marketing tool or strategy, either in mainstream political campaigns or electoral campaigns. As noted by Stratmann (2005), “endorsements represent another area of research where little empirical work has been done... endorsements of candidates by the local media, celebrities or other political figures can have a direct or indirect effect on election outcomes” (2005:151). In addition, the theoretical underpinnings of each of the studies, apart from that of Mensah (2011), failed to consider how the unique political, party and media systems in the country contributed to political marketing in Ghana and its effect on the voting public.

## **2.4 Celebrity Political Endorsement**

As mentioned in the previous section, research on political marketing in Ghana has neglected the use of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns as part of their political marketing strategy. This is despite the fact that the use of celebrities for the purpose of political endorsement is seen as a critical part of the political marketing-mix, involving the co-ordination of all marketing instruments. As the background on political

marketing has described, celebrity endorsement activities have been integrated into campaign (communications) strategies in Ghana as elsewhere (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2002). Nevertheless, the celebrity political endorsement literature to date lacks a Ghanaian context.

What the celebrity endorsement literature proposes is that endorsements can potentially increase interest in the endorsed party or candidate, leading to higher voter turnout and ultimately a higher voter share. On the other hand, endorsements could also decrease interest in a political party or candidate, especially in cases where the celebrity political endorser in question comes under criticism during the course of the campaign. Celebrity endorsers can be used by political parties and candidates to reach a target audience and gain acceptability within a political market, which can then translate into a meaningful showing in an election. There are some researchers that dispute the value of endorsements, including those from celebrities. This is based on a belief that rational voters (Downs, 1957) usually rely on party- and candidate-specific information, and are therefore unlikely to be impacted by additional cues like endorsements by celebrities (Schuessler, 2000). However, this view has been challenged by the findings of a number of studies, some of which are discussed below, such as Jackson and Darrow (2005).

Research on the use of celebrity endorsement for political marketing has gone through several phases. The theoretical lens has, however, consistently been on the selection of celebrity endorsers and how this selection can have the desired effect on the intended audience/the public/citizens. Such research tries to focus on the effects of celebrity politics, celebrity political involvement and celebrity political endorsements by determining whether a celebrity's status influences public opinion (Kelman, 1961; Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs's 2012; etc.). The conceptual framework of such studies seeks to demonstrate similarities between celebrity endorsement of brands in commercial advertising and of political candidates and/or parties in political campaign communication. Thus, the focus of such studies has been on testing marketing concepts developed for the celebrity endorsement of brands, like source credibility theory, identification and the related social comparison and parasocial interaction theory and the meaning transfer theory. The next sections look at these conceptual frameworks and how they have been applied in a number of previous studies on celebrity political endorsement.

### **2.4.1 The Source Credibility Model**

Hovland and his associates can be credited with laying the foundation for this research agenda in the early 1950s with their development of the source credibility model (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). The source credibility model theory contends that the effectiveness of a communicator's message depends on the perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of the communicator (the endorser) (Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1991). Thus, if the source, in this case the celebrity political endorser, is deemed credible, believable and trustworthy by the target audience (the voting public), he/she can influence beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and/or behaviour through a process called internalization. This means that the intended receivers of the communicated information accept a source's influence in terms of their personal attitude and value structures (Kelman, 1961). A credible celebrity political endorser generates a positive effect by increasing and reinforcing trust and credibility in the political party or candidate in the minds of target voters due to the perceived high integrity or the enhanced expert status of the celebrity.

Jackson and Darrow (2005) used the source credibility model theory to examine the effects of Canadian celebrities' political statements about American foreign policy on the public opinion of Canadian youth. They found that respondents were more likely to agree with a political statement when they were informed that the statement came from a celebrity because they believed that celebrities embody a credibility factor. This study is relevant to research on celebrity politics because the outcome showed that the political influence of celebrity status is not guaranteed for all celebrities. Who the celebrity is and their perceived status can influence the extent to which they can affect public opinion.

Jackson's (2007) study using the source credibility model also examines the impact of celebrities' endorsements of certain political beliefs on the attitudes of young Americans, and finds that young people are significantly more likely to agree with a position when it is endorsed by a celebrity. Similar to the findings of Jackson and Darrow (2005), he cautions that celebrity endorsers must be selected carefully, since the value of such endorsement, that is, its influence on public opinion, varies greatly depending on who the celebrity is. Jackson (2007) provides evidence suggesting that celebrity status by itself may not be the most important factor, but credibility and an appropriate match-up between the idea or field and the endorser also matters. He arrived at this conclusion by comparing the effects of three celebrities, Zack de la Rocha (an American rapper, poet

and activist), Tim McGraw (American country singer and actor), and Michael Jordan (an American former professional basketball player and entrepreneur), and found that these three celebrities had different effects. While De La Rocha's and McGraw's support increased the likelihood of a respondent agreeing with a statement, Jordan did not have the same effect on respondents. It was noted, however, that De La Rocha and McGraw only had an effect when the sample was restricted to those respondents who regularly listen to the genre of music to which each of those artists belongs (2007:74–76).

Similarly, Inthorn and Street (2011) conducted empirical research among young people aged seventeen and eighteen in the United Kingdom on their perceptions and attitudes towards celebrity politics. Their findings seem to suggest that people's attitudes towards celebrity politics are constructed around their understanding of the power structures which govern the politics of the particular public sphere they inhabit. Young people responded positively to celebrity politics because to them, it represents an alternative to formal politics. Some celebrities were rated higher and had a greater advantage in terms of influence than elected politicians due to the perceived public access to the private lives of celebrities. This made them more credible than elected politicians, whose private lives are unknown to the public. A similar research among young adults to test their perceptions about celebrities' political opinions and endorsements was conducted by O'Regan (2014). The findings of the research however suggested that young adults are less likely to trust the celebrity endorsement of a political candidate. The young adults sampled for the research expressed the perception that celebrities are not more informed about politics than the average citizen and thus cannot be relied on as a credible source for important political information. Although the research finding of O'Regan (2014) differs from that of Inthorn and Street (2011) research on celebrity endorsement effects on young adults, it must be mentioned that O'Regan (2014) also found that young adults believe that celebrities influence the way people think which supports the third person effect theory.

Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs's (2012) study also looked at how a celebrity endorser's perceived credibility, as well as his or her sex, affect an endorsed political candidate's credibility, voting behaviour and voter attitudes. The aim of the study was to test the source credibility model theory and the meaning transfer theory (see the next section). Using an experimental design, students recruited as participants were provided with different versions of a news story describing a celebrity's endorsement of a political

candidate. The results show that although participants recognized the differences between high- and low-credibility celebrities, neither the credibility nor the endorser's sex had an effect on their attitudes toward the endorsed candidate, their perceptions of the candidate's credibility, or their intended voting behaviour, since those qualities of the endorser do not transfer to the endorsed candidate. What the research findings suggest is that credibility of a celebrity has no effect on the ability of that celebrity to influence political public opinion and behaviours.

Results from previous research on celebrity political endorsement using the source credibility model have been mixed. This has been noted especially in research conducted on young adults, as shown from the literature reviewed above. Though the research demonstrates that choosing a credible celebrity endorser can help a political party or candidate disseminate their message, the perceived credibility of the endorser does not necessarily transfer to the endorsed party or candidate. This means that having a credible celebrity political endorser might not translate into a political advantage during an election campaign.

#### **2.4.2 The Meaning Transfer Model**

This section reviews the meaning transfer theory as it has been used to explain the effects of celebrity endorsers on political campaigns. The meaning transfer theory was developed to explain how a celebrity political endorser can influence citizens' political choices. According to McCracken's (1989) Meaning Transfer Model, celebrity endorsements are special examples of a more general process of 'meaning transfer'. In other words, the symbolic meanings evinced by celebrities are transferred to the endorsed brand/product. With celebrity political endorsement, it is hoped that a transfer of the positive characteristics associated with the endorser will translate into a positive response to the endorsed political party or candidate.

Zwarun and Torrey's (2011) study uses the model to examine the role celebrity status may play in potential voters' evaluation of a political candidate presented in a newspaper article. The study's participants indicated a greater propensity to vote for a political candidate who was a recognizable Hollywood actor than an unknown candidate in a political race, regardless of how substantive the political information provided about the candidate was. Younger people were more likely to vote for a celebrity candidate than older voters, but how liberal or conservative participants professed to be was not a

significant factor in the decision to vote for the celebrity. The study concluded that celebrity status is meaningful both to motivated, thoughtful voters as well as to those who are less motivated and informed. What the study demonstrates is that the meaning associated with a celebrity becomes relevant when that celebrity seeks political office him- or herself, especially among young voters. This study gives some indication of how celebrity status can translate into political advantage for a celebrity when that celebrity migrates into the political field.

Using the same model, Pease and Brewer (2008) examine the effect of Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Barack Obama during the Democratic Party's primaries on voters' opinions, perceptions and intentions to support Obama. The meaning transfer model was used in their study as part of Popkin's (1991) "by-product theory of information". The "by-product theory of information" relates to the capability of voters in using limited information to think about campaigns in strategic ways in order to evaluate not only a candidate's desirability but also that candidate's viability in winning an election when compared to other alternatives. Popkin's theory provides a framework for researching the role that entertainment and media celebrities can play in such a political process. Through an experimental design, participants were exposed to news about Oprah's endorsement. The extent to which they espoused a favourable opinion towards Obama and the extent to which they saw him as likable were then measured. The researchers found that news coverage of the endorsement had the potential to shape public opinion about Obama's prospects for winning the nomination, although participants indicated that the endorsement did not influence their likelihood of voting for Obama. The significance of the research is that it is consistent with the research on third-person effects (Davison, 1983; Liu & Lo, 2014; Chung & Moon, 2016) on decision making. The study also highlights the fact that voters drew on information about Oprah's celebrity and transferred the meaning associated with her status, gathered from non-political aspects of their lives, including the influence of her book club, in order to determine that the endorsement could increase the possibility of Obama being elected. The findings of research using the meaning transfer model demonstrate how the qualities associated with a celebrity's status can be utilised for political advantage, whether in the form of the celebrity winning political office for him- or herself, or endorsing a political party or candidate, through the migration of his or her qualities into the political field.

### **2.4.3 Social Comparison Theory, Identification and Para-social Interaction**

The three theories of “social comparison”, “identification”, and “para-social interaction”, are merged here because they are interrelated in understanding the effects of celebrity political endorsement on voters. The first, “Social Comparison Theory”, postulates that individuals reach their decisions through a process of comparing their potential decision with those made by other individuals within their social grouping (Festinger, 1954; Mettee & Smith, 1977). Celebrities become part of an individual’s social grouping through what is called para-social interaction. Theory of “identification” refers to the process of identifying with a person, object or idea which then becomes an influencing agent in decision making processes. The related though conceptually distinct theory to identification is the theory of para-social interaction. The theory of “para-social interaction” (Horton, and Wohl, 1956; Giles, 2002 ) looks at how individuals forge personal relationships with celebrities by considering them to be interpersonal, though most, if not all, of their interaction with the celebrity is, in fact, mediated (Gregg, 2005). Although para-social interaction and identification are seen as distinct theories, para-social interaction may lead to identification (Bae, Brown, & Kang, 2011). Thus, an individual comparing their choice of candidate to a celebrity’s political endorsement is based first on their assumption that the celebrity is part of their social group by means of para-social interaction which leads to identification with the celebrity, and then they use social comparison to eliminate or reduce doubt and strengthen their decisions. Kuehl (2010) referred to the above theories to explain how Oprah’s endorsement of Obama helped his candidacy by influencing Americans’ decision-making in the 2008 presidential election. On the basis of these theories, Kuehl (2010) suggests four functions of celebrity political endorsement in a political campaign, namely: awareness and publicity for a candidate influence undecided and first time voters, providing a uniqueness factor in the form of rhetorical force as well as optimal investment transfer from the celebrity to the political candidate.

A similar study was conducted by Garthwaite and Moore (2008) on Oprah Winfrey’s endorsement of the then-presidential candidate Barack Obama before the 2008 Democratic presidential primary. Using identification and para-social interaction as key concepts, they assessed the endorsement’s impact by analysing subscriptions to *O, The Oprah Magazine* and the sales of books Oprah has recommended as measures of her influence. The study made a direct correlation between the para-social relationship that

exists between Oprah and her fans, who identify with her through their subscriptions to *O, The Oprah Magazine* and by reading books she recommends. The study concluded that Oprah's endorsement had a positive effect on the votes and financial contributions Obama received, and on voter turnout. However, the result of this research has some empirical issues because it could not find any connection between the measure of Oprah's influence and outcomes in previous elections or consider other underlying political preferences of voters. Based on subscriptions to *O, The Oprah Magazine*, Garthwaite and Moore (2008) estimated that Winfrey's endorsement was responsible for approximately one million (1,000,000) additional votes for Obama without providing empirical evidence of how that figure was obtained.

The body of literature reviewed above show a focus on applying marketing concepts for the celebrity endorsement of brands, including the source credibility theory, identification and the related social comparison and para-social interaction theories, as well as meaning transfer theory, on the political field. Such studies have regarded political candidates or parties as brands in the political market and thus subject to similar brand marketing. This is evident in the focus of such research on measuring the effects of celebrity political endorsements on election outcomes. It is, however, difficult to credit the effect of an election outcome to a particular strategy, like the use of celebrity political endorsement, without understanding other possible considerations of voters which might have influenced their voting decisions. This is the reason empirical evidence of the effect of celebrity political endorsement on election campaigns is weak, and why most studies have relied on experimental designs. Also, except for a few studies like Henneberg's (2007) research on the Taipei City Counselor election in 2002, the research has mainly focused on the United States, the United Kingdom and other well-established democracies.

The importance of Henneberg's (2007) research lies in its serving as an initial, descriptive case study of celebrity endorsement in politics. The aim in adopting a case study inquiry was to establish and enumerate political actors' interpretations and perceptions in order to understand and gauge contemporary models of celebrity political endorsement. The research concluded that, because of the perceived importance of such endorsement, and the subsequent media coverage of it, to the campaign process, celebrity association became one of the main 'cues' available to the electorate to inform their political decision-making. Thus, the process of an individual voter making sense of the political environment seemed to be at least strongly mediated, if not shaped, by celebrity influence

and the endorsement of particular counsel or candidate. Celebrity political endorsement, therefore, was seen to dominate the external political environment of the Taipei council election and was thereby the main ‘context’ that impacted the political actor, in this case, the electorate. This research is significant because, compared to the United States and other developed democracies, Taiwan has relatively recently moved to democratic governance and has a different cultural package as well. Thus it looked at celebrity politics in a non-Western democracy.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the focus of early studies on celebrity endorsements has been on testing their effect on political outcomes. However, empirically estimating the effect and influence of such endorsements is difficult. The difficulty lies in the fact that effects are measured after the political outcome, as demonstrated in all of the studies mentioned above, thus making it difficult to credit the outcomes to celebrity endorsement when there could be other complex factors at play which affect voting decisions. This problem is reflected in the methodological choices of early researchers on celebrity political endorsement. Most of them relied on experimental methodological design, and the results have been mixed regarding whether celebrity political endorsements are effective in altering attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. While this existing research provides insight into the persuasive qualities of celebrities within the political sphere, it does not demonstrate why and how celebrities wield such persuasive qualities within a given political and media system. Thus, simply applying marketing brand theories to the examination of celebrity political endorsement as an approach does not explain how the persuasive qualities of celebrities are utilized within the political field.

## **2.5 Celebrity Capital**

There is a recent body of research that seeks to provide insight into the qualities wielded by celebrities which make them attractive as political endorsers. These recent studies have relied on Pierre Bourdieu’s (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) notion of “Capital” and “Field Theory” to explain the influence of celebrity in the political arena. This new and evolving body of research is advancing the theoretical concept of celebrity as capital and considers how this capital works within the political field. This theoretical concept offers new insight into the qualities in celebrity and how such capital can be utilized as a whole, and

for political endorsement specifically, within the political field. This concept therefore forms the primary theoretical basis of this thesis.

### **2.5.1 Pierre Bourdieu's Theoretical Construct of Capital**

Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical constructs of capital and fields provide a valuable framework for understanding the qualities of celebrity and how these qualities can be utilized by celebrities themselves and the people associated with them. According to Bourdieu, capital refers to a resource that gives the holder power and advantage within a particular social space. One important point about capital, according to Bourdieu, is that it "does not exist and function except *in relation to a field*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:101, emphasis added). What this means is that capital cannot be discussed without relating it to a field because from Bourdieu's perspective, social spaces are divided into various fields. Within any given field, there is a constant struggle for positioning amongst the various actors (Bourdieu, 1991). These constant struggles for dominance by actors within a particular social field depend on the accumulation of the capital required for that field. Each field is governed by a set of rules and regulations for entry, and a certain kind of capital is needed for an actor to gain recognition within the field. Bourdieu identifies different forms of capital which can be accrued by individuals and which can have an effect on their positioning within the field. The two most important forms of capital, according to him, are economic and cultural capital. Economic capital "is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights" (Bourdieu 1986: 242), while cultural capital can only exist in an embodied, objectified, and institutionalised state.

Based on this, Bourdieu makes three distinct observations about capital and how it operates within a field. First, the amount of capital possessed by actors in a field relative to one another determines the amount of power they wield and their position (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). Secondly, capital can be accumulated by actors through various means, resulting in the uneven possession of it. In other words, some actors accumulate more capital than others, and consequently this will result in actors with more capital having power and dominance over those within the field with less capital. Finally, one form of capital, from Bourdieu's perspective, can be converted into another form to the benefit of actors within a field or across fields. Applying this theoretical concept to celebrity, current

research has been able to shed light on the concept of celebrity as a capital and on the type of capital wielded by celebrity. Researchers have also examined the fields celebrity capital is associated with and what the implications are for political communication and marketing when celebrity capital operates within the political field.

Unlike conceptions of celebrity that define it in terms of people who are recognizable or well-known as a direct result of their concentrated and constant representation in mass media forums (see Chapter 1 under defining celebrity), a Bourdieu-based approach conceptualizes celebrity as a social construct. Using Bourdieu's fields' theory, celebrity, with the defining characteristics of being visible, famous, and having an elite status, is found in several social fields. Thus, celebrity is no longer limited to the entertainment field; as societies become more mediatised, celebrities have been found in the field of politics, gastronomy, medicine, literature, and even religion and economy (Street, 2004; McKernan, 2011; Lewis, 2010). At the same time, some celebrities operate across fields. This mobility and convertibility of celebrity has been referred to as "migration" by Driessens (2013). It occurs where a celebrity uses both their relative autonomy as a public personality and their celebrity status to develop other professional activities within their original field or to penetrate other social fields. Driessens (2013) concludes that migration within a field by a celebrity occurs when the celebrity diversifies his or her activities within the field in which they have established their celebrity status, while migration across fields occurs when a celebrity uses their celebrity status to gain or force access into another social field. Thus, celebrities from the entertainment field are crossing over into the political field, gastronomic field and literary fields. Celebrities from the political field have found stardom in the entertainment field and literary field. In Bourdieuan terms, celebrities are endowed with a certain quality referred to as "capital" which is a useful resource that endows the celebrity, as well as those associated with him or her, power and advantage within the particular social field(s) in which they operate. As Driessens (2013) puts it, celebrity has become a valued power source in multiple social fields such as the political, cultural and economic fields. This is mainly because celebrity is field-specific but has cross-field qualities.

For celebrity to be a capital which can be used as a resource for power and advantage within a social field, certain conditions must be extant within that social field. This is discussed in the next section.

### 2.5.2 Celebrity Capital and Social Fields

There are variances in the recognition and importance attached to a celebrity's capital, and this is dependent on the social field in which the celebrity is active and/or seeks to migrate into. This is because as already mentioned, all social fields have their own rules and regulations that govern them, such as the requirements for entry into the field and what capital is required for an actor within that field to attain power and dominance. Due to the nature of celebrity capital, it can be used to distort and change the power dynamics of an actor's original field, while at the same time can be transferred into other fields outside of the person's original field. The thesis argues that celebrity capital influences the power dynamic in social fields in three different ways.

First, for celebrity capital to affect and distort the power dynamics of a field, that social field must be *celebritized* (Driessens, 2013). A social field becomes celebritized through a meta-process whereby that it becomes mediatised and through this mediatisation, attention and visibility becomes concentrated on a person propelling them into celebrity status. This then results in celebrity becoming a valuable resource which can then be used in power struggles within that social field. This means that celebritization does not happen by itself but is dependent on the mediatisation of a social field. According to Couldry (2003a), mediatisation of a social field occurs when the media is seen as the provider of discursive regimes, by, for example, framing social issues, influencing agendas and legitimising representations of the social world. This function of the media in the social world has resulted in it monopolising what counts as symbolic capital within particular fields and influencing the exchange rate between different forms of symbolic capital. Modern celebrity is a creation of the media, whereby the conferring of celebrity status to an individual or group is achieved through the attention/visibility and promotion of that individual/group by the media. It can be presupposed that with the mediatisation of social fields, celebrity would become a source of social prestige, and the capital in celebrity could then be used in exchanges within or between social fields. As mentioned previously, this is based on the convertibility of celebrity capital into other forms of capital. At the point that this becomes possible, a social field is said to be celebritized. Celebritization can therefore be summed up as the societal and cultural changes that occur within a social field as a result of celebrity. Driessens (2013) succinctly describes the process:

...mediatization can be considered both a prerequisite and a possible catalyst for celebritization. Since celebrities are essentially media personalities, it can be expected that the social field in which they are

produced will be, to some extent, already mediatized. (Driessens, 2013:650)

It must be noted that some social fields are more celebritized than others depending on how mediatized that field is. Consequently, the ability of celebrity capital to disrupt the relative value of the different kinds of capital needed for dominance in a social field is dependent on the degree to which that field is celebritized.

The next section of this chapter explores how different authors have examined the concept of celebrity capital empirically. Their different approaches are discussed and evaluated according to their relative strengths and weaknesses.

## **2.6 Previous Research on Celebrity Capital**

Conceptualising celebrity as a form of capital is not new; however, recent literature has seen an increase in the application of this notion, which has sparked debate about how this form of capital can be defined in order to explain the source of the power of celebrity in various social fields. While some authors have mentioned the concept without exploring it in detail (Kerrigan et al., 2011; McCurdy, 2010; Negra, 2010; Tyler and Bennett, 2010; Weaver, 2011), other researchers have advanced an in-depth theoretical explanation of the concept. Such scholars have sought to embed celebrity capital either subtly or explicitly in Bourdieu's Field Theory.

### **2.6.1 Celebrity Capital as Attention/Visibility Capital**

Celebrity capital has been defined by a number of media researchers as *the accumulation of media visibility*. Cronin and Shaw (2002), for example, see celebrity capital as an accumulation of media visibility which can result in symbolic capital. They studied the symbolic capital generated by academics in the form of distinctions, reputation and prizes. They conclude that for academics to amass celebrity capital, which can propel them into celebrity status, there is a need to accumulate media visibility in the form of strategically-placed sound bites and on-tap expertise provided to media outlets. This is because, based on their research, leading scholars who have no media presence, irrespective of their academic distinction, reputation and prizes, will remain unseen and unheard of within the wider public sphere, unlike scholars who might not have such a high level of distinction but do have a public presence.

The description of celebrity capital as the accumulation of media visibility was further expanded by Davis (2010) in his study on celebrity politics. He applies Bourdieu's notion of capital to the political field, taking inspiration from media and cultural studies (Evans & Hesmondhalgh, 2005; Holmes & Redmond, 2006). On this basis, Davis (2010), what he terms 'media capital' is developed and can be accrued in accordance with Bourdieu's capital forms. This leads to the accumulation of the symbolic and political capital necessary for advancement in the political field. Davis elevates the importance of media capital because, for him, journalists act as cultural intermediaries moving between the political field and the various publics.

Furthermore, Davis (2010) proposes different means of distinguishing and classifying media capital and describes how it can be accrued. Based on Bourdieu's (1991) two symbolic forms of capital in the political field, 'personal' and 'delegated', Davis proposes the specifications of institutionalized media capital, which is associated with the individual's position within a political party or state institution as it is conveyed by the media to the wider public, and individualised media capital, which is linked to the individual's performances and associations, as reproduced in the media over time. He also contends that media capital can be generated both internally (linked to individual political actors' contributions to the total political capital within a political field) and externally (in connection with symbolic capital produced and wielded outside the field and linked to the wider citizen) relative to the political field. Davis (2010) also introduces the concept of 'mediated performance capital', which contributes to the accumulation of the four identified forms of media capital. Celebrity politics is a product of mediated media capital, which is linked to media-oriented performances, and to the media-filtered consumption and evaluation of such performances. The media seek to engage with their publics by focusing on the personal stories of political actors and celebrities, thereby becoming willing participants in the manufacture and consumption of celebrity culture. At the same time, such constant and persistent coverage bestows symbolic capital on individuals, which then becomes transferable as political capital, and this forms the backbone of celebrity politics.

Davis' theory is empirically grounded, supported by interviews with various politicians and journalists. This theory also offers a framework for comparative analysis by anticipating variations in celebrity politics depending upon the types of media and the political system. In addition, he provides a quantifiable framework for tabulating the

accrue ment of media capital by looking at media exposure in terms of the number of appearances and the circulation size of the media outlet (Davis, 2010). However, the theoretical concepts in Davis's work, especially those related to the accrue ment of media capital, are difficult to appraise due to a lack of definitional precision. An example is the continual reference to various forms of media capital, such as what he calls "externally generated institutionalised media meta-capital" and "externally generated individualised media meta-capital", which are subsets of journalist-based media capital and media cultural capital, respectively. Nevertheless, Davis's study provides a solid foundation for examining celebrity capital within the political field and its implications for political marketing/communication.

van Krieken (2012) sees celebrity as the "embodiment of a more abstract kind of capital—attention" (2012:54). Applying the Matthew Effect (also referred to as accumulated advantage concept that argues that people who already have status are often placed in situations where they gain more) to the field of academia, van Krieken explains that academics who achieve the status of Nobel Laureate or people who have established a name for themselves in the field receive far greater attention than their lesser known colleagues, even when they perform at similar levels. Thus, in his view, celebrity is "primarily a matter of the accumulation and distribution of attention" (van Krieken, 2012:55). Collins (2007) looked at celebrity capital as a combination of van Krieken's (2012) attention capital and Davis's (2010) media capital by measuring celebrity capital through the accumulation of media visibility, in the form of recurrent media representations of a celebrity, which confers on celebrity capital an attention-generating capacity. Collins (2007) defined celebrity capital, as part of Bourdieu's fields theory, as "a particular configuration of symbolic capital that is required (among the other forms of capital) to inhabit and operate successfully as a cultural commodity within the field of entertainment" (Collins 2007: 191). Interestingly, Collins limits celebrity capital to the field of entertainment. His proposal to measure celebrity capital by studying the accumulated media visibility of a celebrity emphasises the economic value of celebrity rather than the symbolic value. Consequently, Collins's (2007) concept of celebrity capital has several limitations. First, by limiting celebrity capital to a specific field, the entertainment field, he does not account for the use of celebrity as a means of acquiring power, which has been observed in several other fields, especially the political field. Most importantly, by explaining celebrity capital as a kind of attention-generating phenomenon

which is accumulated through media visibility, it cannot be seen as a form of symbolic capital, although he seeks to portray it in this way. This is because symbolic capital, which is one of the core concepts in Bourdieu's Field Theory, is defined by Bourdieu as the recognition or legitimization of economic and cultural capital in a certain field. Bourdieu refers to symbolic capital as "nothing other than economic or cultural capital when it is known and recognized, when it is known through the categories of perception that it imposes" (Bourdieu 1989: 21). Symbolic capital is manifested in the form of legitimacy and respect bestowed on an individual or organization owing to the reputation that the individual or organization has acquired within a particular field. According to Bourdieu (1990), therefore, symbolic capital becomes apparent when a resource accumulated in one field becomes symbolically valuable in another. Therefore, Collins (2007) cannot associate celebrity capital with symbolic capital since the study is limited to the entertainment field and does not provide a cross-field reference for how celebrity capital can be seen as an aspect of symbolic capital which is accumulated in the entertainment field but symbolically valuable in other fields.

The idea of celebrity as a form of media capital through the accumulation of media visibility is further explored by Heinich (2012), who supports the notion that celebrity capital is the accumulation of visibility generated through media representation. Her work proposes that celebrity capital has its material basis in recurrent media representations or accumulated media visibility, and so must be viewed as having a specific kind of attention-generating capacity. She arrives at this conclusion by analysing the transformation of the formation process of public figures that resulted from the expansion of media systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Heinich (2012), the increased diffusion of visual images of public figures brought about by the development of new forms of media has resulted in the construction of public figures based on their visibility. Thus, in her research, she focuses on celebrity capital as a form of visibility capital, which is bestowed by the media and can be useful in many ways.

Analysing the work of Collins (2007) and Heinich (2012), Driessens (2013) supports the definition of celebrity capital as recognisability or an accumulation of media visibility as a result of recurrent media representations. He is however emphatic that celebrity capital cannot be reduced to a type of symbolic capital as upheld by Collins (2007). Using the core concepts of Bourdieu's Field Theory Driessens (2013) explain how symbolic capital differs from celebrity capital and offers empirical evidence on what constitutes celebrity

capital. According to Driessens (2013), Bourdieu conceived of modern differentiated societies as social spaces, consisting of a number of specialized and semi-autonomous social fields, such as journalism, politics, social science, religion, and cultural production. These social fields do not have sharply drawn boundaries. Within them, individuals continuously struggle for rank and position. The position of the individuals depends largely on the volume and nature of the capital that he or she can accumulate.

According to Driessens (2013), of all of the types of capital identified by Bourdieu, the most difficult ones to define are social and symbolic capital. Social capital is “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986:286). Thus, the volume of an individual’s social capital depends on the number of people that can be mobilized within his or her network. Driessens’s definition of symbolic capital (2013) is even more ambiguous because Bourdieu himself defined it in different ways. The confusion is often increased by divergent subsequent interpretations by other scholars. Bourdieu wrote that symbolic capital is “nothing other than economic or cultural capital when it is known and recognized, when it is known through the categories of perception that it imposes” (Bourdieu, 1991:21). By detaching symbolic capital from economic and cultural capital, Bourdieu depicts it as a separate form of capital that can be accumulated by an individual. Thus, symbolic capital should be understood as “publically recognized authority” (Swartz, 2013:84) or as “the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration, or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (cognisance) and recognition (reconnaissance)” (Bourdieu, 1989:7). Based on these insights, Driessens (2013) argues that it is necessary and much more fruitful to separate celebrity capital from symbolic capital because celebrity capital gained through recognisability as a result of media visibility cannot be reduced to symbolic capital or recognition. This is because, from Driessens’s perspective, while symbolic capital is usually field-specific, celebrity capital has capabilities across social fields. Achieving visibility through the media does not automatically result in recognition or symbolic capital within all public spaces. That is, having a certain amount of celebrity capital does not automatically lead to having symbolic capital or recognition when other forms of capital are deemed more important within a particular field. Thus, while celebrity capital can result in symbolic capital

within one field, it might not yield symbolic capital within another field given the importance placed on other competing forms of capital within that field.

Driessens (2013) demonstrates the difference between celebrity capital and symbolic capital using the example of a Belgian celebrity professor, Torfs. Torfs gained celebrity capital by accumulating visibility through his circulation on entertainment media such as appearances on talk shows and hosting entertainment shows. He thereby gained symbolic capital within the media field by being recognized as funny and eloquent. This symbolic capital in the media field did not, however, translate into symbolic capital in the academic field, where his media representations were dismissed as irrelevant. Thus, what counts as symbolic capital within one field is not necessarily transferable as symbolic power in to another field.

In all of the aforementioned literature where Bourdieu's concepts of fields and capital have been applied to explain the qualities or resources found in celebrity status, which can be referred to as celebrity capital, the most important measure of celebrity capital is media visibility. As a result, there is a need to understand what is meant by media visibility and how it translates into celebrity capital. According to Brighenti (2007), the mass media is a field made up of high visibility, which is conferred upon people who visit the field. The process of conferring visibility by the mass media is both instant, like a flash, and extended over time, like a halo. Consequently, media visibility has to be constantly renewed and repeated. Visibility can be empowering by offering recognisability, and in social spaces where there is a reliance on high media visibility, this empowerment results in struggles for visibility played out within the mass media landscape (Thompson, 2005). This poses an interesting conundrum for celebrity capital, especially if we are to accept the notion that its basis is accruing media visibility. This means that amassing celebrity capital depends on recurrent media representations, without which the celebrity capital will quickly fade or be lost. It is this need for constant media visibility that feeds celebrity culture. The result is that these forces make room for a few individuals with the allure to command scarce public attention as opposed to the mass of temporary or disposable individuals, or "celetoids", as Rojek (2001) referred to them.

### **2.6.2 Celebrity Capital as Reputational Capital**

Hunter et al. (2009), on the other hand, regard celebrity capital as a celebrity's "public awareness, their favourability, their personality, reputation, and the public's knowledge of past behaviours" (2009:140). For them, celebrity capital is a kind of reputational capital that can be used as a strategic asset for increasing the perceived trustworthiness, credibility, reliability, responsibility, and accountability of a celebrity and those associated with him or her. By viewing celebrity capital in this manner, Hunter et al. provide a means of operationalising celebrity capital, especially as it relates to its consequences for business. They used the examples of such celebrities as pop star Justin Timberlake, who invested heavily in social media, including the social media site Myspace, where he holds the position of creative director, and Oprah Winfrey, who launched her own network, the eponymous Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). Through these examples, the study reveals how celebrity capital works when celebrities are employed as endorsers for a business venture or a brand and when they are entrepreneurs by being involved as (part) owner, initiator, or manager. The research does not explain, however, what celebrity capital is and how it translates into reputational capital when it is transferred to the business field. Also, by including favourability as a dimension of celebrity capital, the definition they used encompasses an evaluative element which is difficult to assess based on their definition of celebrity. This study is relevant because it tries to promote the idea that celebrities have different amounts of celebrity capital. For the purposes of their research, they compared the celebrity capital of celebrity entrepreneurs to that of celebrity endorsers, concluding that celebrity entrepreneurs can increase the reputational capital of business ventures more than endorsers.

Gunter (2015) adopts a different approach to the concept of celebrity capital. According to Gunter (2015), celebrity capital is the value that celebrities have which can generate significant returns for those using celebrity to promote their interests; as he puts it, "capital' as an indicator of value can be measured in many other ways" (Gunter 2015:3). This is a clear departure from other research on celebrity capital. In his view, the source of celebrity capital is the possession of psychological capital, which he sees as the manipulation of audiences into connecting with the celebrity on an emotional or psychological level. Gunter (2015) envisages celebrities as role models whose actions and statements can influence the public, which foretells the importance of public perception throughout his work in which he examines the psychological, consumer,

corporate, political and health capital of celebrities, dedicating a chapter to each. The weakness in Gunter's (2015) work stems from his envisaging celebrity capital as simply a means of generating value, that is, as something which can generate returns for those using it. This is a simplistic approach to understanding the capital found in celebrity. It does not account for the migration of a celebrity from one field to another or how different fields react to celebrity capital. In effect, Gunter (2015) sees all social fields as operating under the same rules. These weaknesses in Gunter's (2015) work strengthen Bourdieu's theory as a credible way forward in discussing celebrity as a form of capital. The strengths of Bourdieu's theory lie in the recognition of the fact that different rules govern different fields and the power struggles that take place in those fields. Each field recognizes different types of capital as important and as a source of symbolic power within that field. Thus, celebrity capital behaves differently in the different fields that it is introduced to. This has not been captured by Gunter (2015).

All the literature discussed so far has sought not only to define celebrity capital but has built discussion of this capital around Bourdieu's theoretical concept, and their different approaches have varying strengths and weaknesses. Of particular relevance to this thesis is the suggestion of these approaches that celebrity capital is related to attention and visibility, which is accumulated through media presence. In effect, celebrity capital is mostly created through the attention and visibility that a celebrity attracts through a sustained media presence. Dreissen (2013) then introduces the concept of the migration of celebrity capital from one field to another. However, all the literature discussed above have not considered what happens to celebrity capital once a celebrity migrates from one social field to another and has to transfer celebrity capital into other forms of capital that can be recognised within that social field the celebrity has migrated to.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

As mentioned previously in this chapter, this thesis focuses on the role of celebrity political endorsement in political marketing strategies during general election campaigns in Ghana. Thus, the literature review concentrates on understanding political marketing theories in relation to celebrity political endorsement, and concludes that the theories offered do not explain the kind of power that celebrities wield in the political field, especially when it comes to the endorsement of political candidates and parties by

entertainment and media celebrities. The review suggests that a more suitable theoretical concept to explain the power of celebrity within the political field is Bourdieu's notion of capital. The theories discussed in the literature review demonstrate the need to understand how popular culture, in the form of celebrity, shapes citizens' political decision-making, especially voting decisions during general elections. According to van Zoonen, "Politics has to be connected to the everyday culture of its citizens; otherwise it becomes an alien sphere, occupied by strangers no one cares and bothers about" (2005:3). Thus, looking at celebrity involvement in politics in the form of endorsements facilitates an investigation into how popular culture might be used to secure political support.

In this thesis, therefore, adopting Bourdieu's concept of capital to explain celebrity capital offers a theoretical lens from which to understand how celebrity behaves in a field, especially the political field, which is the focus of this study. This is because Bourdieu's theoretical lens offers a way of integrating two disciplines, celebrity studies and political marketing/communication, to explain the role of celebrity in the political field, especially when it comes to celebrity political endorsement. Literature on political marketing shows that political parties must be viewed as brands (Mensah, 2011; Henneberg, 2002; Lees-Marshment, 2001), and as such, different marketing strategies are used to promote the political brand or the image of the brand leader. In this case, marketing principles can be applied to enhance the brand image, and one of these strategies is the use of celebrity endorsement. On the other hand, research on celebrity endorsement to date has focused on the qualities of celebrities that make them appealing as political endorsers. Bourdieu's concept of capital is especially relevant when discussing celebrity because Bourdieu wrote at length about the convertibility of one type of capital into other forms. In this sense, capital can incorporate all of the theories on celebrity political endorsement expounded in the various source theories. By conceptualizing celebrity as a form of capital, it is possible to integrate it into all of the reviewed literature, besides providing a means to analyse celebrity political endorsement. Celebrity capital can be converted into other forms of capital in other social fields, as proposed by Driessens (2014). Celebrity capital can be converted into economic capital as money through merchandising, social capital as valuable contacts which can lead to increased access to previously closed networks, symbolic capital as recognition within a specific social field, and political capital as political power through being elected to public office. Similarly, viewing celebrity capital as the accumulation of recurrent media representation illuminates the

role that the media plays in celebrity culture and within other social fields. This has been referred to by Couldry (2012) as media meta-capital, which influences both the definition of capital and the rule dynamic in many social fields. This indicates the importance of the media both as manufacturers of celebrity capital and avenues for its recognition in other social fields.

It is also important to note that the migration of celebrity capital into other social fields can affect the power dynamics at play within those fields. This is because celebrity capital can cause a disruption in the value of the other kinds of capital at play within a social field. This is especially true in the political field when entertainment celebrities enter it as political candidates, endorsers or advocates. Consequently, this research builds on the previous work of Davis (2010) and Driessens (2012, 2013, and 2014) by examining the celebrity capital of entertainment celebrities who endorse political candidates or parties. The research will therefore focus on the migration of celebrity capital from the entertainment and media fields to the political field and how this migration affects the power dynamics and the value of other capital within the political field through the endorsement process in Ghana. Adopting Bourdieu's Field Theory provides a means for analysing the role of celebrity in the political field in the following ways:

1. By defining celebrity as a form of capital, it provides a conceptual framework for analysing the role of celebrity in the political field.
2. Provides a way of looking at how celebrity capital is utilized by celebrities to influence the political field and at the wider discursive view of this capital as it is recognized and used by the powerful to further their political ends.
3. Offers a framework for analysing the exchange rate of celebrity capital being transferred to the political field as well as who determines that exchange rate.
4. Lastly, provides a means to analyse the impact of the migration of celebrity capital to the political field on celebrities in terms of their ability to successfully convert their capital within the political field or not.

The reviewed literature also confirms that most of the research on celebrity politics and the use of celebrity political endorsement has focused predominantly on established Western democracies, especially those of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. However, the phenomena of celebrity politics and celebrity involvement in politics are spreading to fledgling democracies elsewhere; as a result, they merit examination within the unique political and media systems of those countries.

Accordingly, this thesis provides insight into the interplay between popular culture, in the form of celebrity politics, and political marketing in the context of an emerging democracy, namely, Ghana. It illuminates how celebrities from the entertainment and media fields migrate their celebrity capital to the political field in the form of endorsement for political parties/candidates and how this migration confers an advantage (or not) on the endorsed candidate/party. The results of this thesis reveal how celebrity capital can shape political communication and the marketing of political parties/candidates during elections in the context of an emerging democracy.

In the next chapter, background information about Ghana is provided with a focus on understanding the media, political and party systems of the country and how these systems shape the political market. The background of Ghana is important to delimiting the perimeters within which this research is undertaken. According to Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2011), the efficacy of political marketing strategies depends on their being based on certain key indicators, such as a country's particular political system, and this is dependent on the political traditions of the country as well as on its democratic orientation; the media system, including the degree of regulation of the mass media market; and the demographic structure of the country. It is hoped that this background information will aid in understanding of the unique behaviour of celebrity capital within Ghana's political field.

# Chapter 3 - Background on Ghana

## 3.0 Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the theoretical framework for this thesis is based on Bourdieu's concept of capital. According to Bourdieu (1991), capital operates within a field, and therefore it is important to understand the fields within which celebrity capital is being discussed. Also as mentioned in Chapter two, according to Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2011) concept on advanced political marketing, effective political marketing strategies is based on some key indicators such as a country's particular political system which is dependent on the political traditions of the country as well as the democratic orientation of the country; the media system including the regulation of the mass media market and the demographic structure of the country. Thus, this chapter provides a detailed background on Ghana, an emerging democracy, including an extensive overview of the political field of the country, with particular attention to the political and party systems. Secondly, the chapter presents a background on the media and entertainment fields by examining the media organisations in Ghana as well as on the celebrity culture and how it operates in the country. The chapter concludes by identifying how the systems at work in the political and media fields contribute to the political market and the role celebrity plays in the politics of Ghana.

## 3.1 Demographical Background

Ghana is located on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea, with Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Togo to the east, and Burkina Faso to the north. According to the Government Statistician Service (2012), the population of Ghana is 24.2 million, with women constituting the majority. Most of this population is concentrated around the capital city, Accra, and other large cities like Kumasi, Tema, and, more recently, Sekondi-Takoradi due to the discovery of oil in that region.

The social, economic and demographic structure of the country has not changed much since independence from the British Empire in 1957. Despite the recent discovery of oil

in commercial quantities, the primary sector, comprising agriculture, mining, quarrying, and forestry, continues to dominate the economy in terms of its contribution to output, employment, revenue generation, and foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture continues to be the main economic activity and currently accounts for about 51 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. This sector employs about 54 percent of the labour force. The remaining 46 percent are mostly employed informally in mining, quarrying and forestry occupations. Poverty is pervasive, with more than half of the population living on less than a dollar a day. Unemployment is equally high, especially as the country evolves into a more urbanised state. The social structure remains predominantly traditional, rural, and informal, with close family links. The population is also fairly young, with relatively high but declining fertility and low mortality rates (GSS, May 2012). This demographic makeup affects the political landscape of Ghana because the voting public is made up primarily of relatively young people who are mostly illiterate or semiliterate, and the majority of whom are unemployed or work in the informal sector.

## **3.2 The Political Field in Ghana**

The political field in Ghana is made up of the political system and the party system operating in the country, and these two systems influence the power dynamics of the political field.

### **3.2.1 The Political system in Ghana**

Ghana, like the majority of African countries, has undergone various political transitions from slavery to colonial rule, to multi-party democracy after attaining independence, and subsequently to periods of military dictatorship before returning to multi-party democracy in 1992 (Austin, 1961; Monfils, 1977; Anebo, 1997; Handly and Mills, 2001). The first post-independent constitution of 1958 was annulled by a military coup in 1966, and attempts in 1969 and 1979 to reinstate multi-party democracy were also thwarted by coups in 1972 and 1981, respectively. These periodic military interventions in the politics of Ghana have had a great impact on the country's party and media systems.

However, 1992 witnessed a change in the socio-political landscape of Ghana when Ghanaians overwhelmingly voted for a constitutional mandate in a referendum, thereby ushering in the fourth republic and making a transition to democracy by introducing multiparty elections. The new constitution stipulates the organization of presidential and

parliamentary elections by a permanent, independent Electoral Commission (EC), to take place on 7 December every four years. The elections are to be held across the 10 regions of the country (EC, as of 25 August 2011, <http://www.ec.gov.gh/node/8>) by secret ballot under universal suffrage for all citizens over the age of 18. The Electoral Commission is also mandated under the new constitution to re-demarcate as well as increase or reduce the number of seats in parliament following elections based on a population census. This function resulted in an increase in the number of seats in parliament from 200 in 1992 to 230 seats in 2004, and a further increase to 275 seats in 2012.

On 18 May 1992, the ban on party politics which had been in force since the 1981 military takeover was lifted in preparation for multi-party elections. The first elections of the Fourth Republic were organised and carried out in December 1992, and this process has been repeated every four years since (Ayee, 1997; Larvie and Badu, 1996). The constitution ushering in the Fourth Republic came into force on 7 January 1993, when Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, who had been a military dictator from 1981 to 1992, was inaugurated as President of the Republic and members of Parliament were sworn into office. Although the elections were faulted with many irregularities and controversies (Smith, 2002), in the minds of Ghanaians, it was the first step towards ensuring the return of the country to constitutional rule instead of dictatorship. This ushered in a political system that is a hybrid of the executive presidency of the American political system and the British parliamentary system. The President of the country must, by law, appoint Ministers of State, the majority of whom, according to the Constitution, have to come from Parliament. This is very similar to the British system. The Parliament of Ghana also operates very much along the lines of the Parliament of Westminster.

The year 2000 saw a historical consolidation of Ghana's reconstituted democracy. Though it marked the third set of polls to be held under the fourth republic of the country, it was remarkable because for the first time in the country's history, political power was peacefully transferred from one political party to another. The NDC party handed over power to the NPP party which won the 2000 elections. 2008 saw a similar transition, with the NPP party peacefully handing over power to their opponents, the NDC party. This is a clear indication that multi-party democracy has become accepted as the political system for Ghana.

Competition in Ghanaian politics is high, especially given the perceived willingness of voters to shift support between the various political parties from one election to the next. This is evident in the change of political power from the NDC party to the NPP party following the 2000 elections, and vice versa in 2008. The literature also affirms that Ghanaians are experienced at multiparty elections, which is evident from the fact that the two main parties (the NDC and the NPP) have alternated in governing during the current republic. The parties share support from a margin of flexible voters who shift their allegiance based on political, moral, personal, and policy issues as well as environmental factors (Ephson, 2003; Lindberg and Morrison, 2005; Alabi, 2007).

Analysts of elections in Ghana believe that as much as 35 percent of the voting population in Ghana are swing voters or shifters, and they usually determine the final outcome of elections (Ephson, 2003). Due to this high number of swing voters, political parties have to work on appealing to them. In a recent study of core and swing voters, Lindberg and Morrison (2005) present evidence that supports the notion that Ghanaian voters are distinguished by socioeconomic factors, including the rural/urban divide, level of education, occupation status and sector, and income level. On the other hand, Ghanaian voters tend to have strong ties to political parties based on historical, tribal, family, religious and socio-economic sentiments. These divisions and sentiments are reflected in the voting patterns evident in the elections. However, since the margin between the winner and loser of an election can be less than 2%, (constitutionally, a winner can be declared in a presidential election upon receiving 50% plus one vote in the tally of all valid votes cast) appealing to that small core of swing voters can make or break the election results for a political party or candidate.

### **3.2.2 The Party system**

Throughout the four republics that Ghana has witnessed since independence, political parties have been central to Ghana's democratic process and the conduit for political participation through elected office. This supports the assertion that despite the criticism, political parties remain the backbone of every democracy (Dahl, 1989; Mair, 2003). Political parties in Ghana continue to provide the structures that act as mediators between citizens and the state (Norris, 2001) and perform crucial functions such as recruiting political actors who can then exercise the symbolic power delegated by the citizens of the country for the purposes of governing (Strom & Muller, 1999). The importance of political parties to the political scene in Ghana is demonstrated by the fact that all

candidates hitherto elected as President as well as the majority of those elected as Members of Parliament (MPs) have run on a political party's ticket. There have been a number of attempts by candidates not affiliated with any political party to contest both presidential and parliamentary offices; this has met with very little success. No independent candidate has won the presidency and in the 2000 and 2004 elections, only four and one independent candidates, respectively, succeeded. This is mainly due to the country's hybrid presidential-parliamentary constitution, based upon which a presidential candidate selected through party primaries is then elected directly by popular vote in the same way that a Member of Parliament is. This makes political parties very powerful agents in Ghana's democracy.

The political party system in Ghana follows a broadly predictable line shaped by the early political struggle for independence from the British Empire. The first political parties were established in the 1950s in alignment with left/right ideological structures, specifically adopting either socialist or capitalist ideologies which reflected the orientations of their founders. Dr Kwame Nkrumah and his radical 'Convention Peoples Party (CPP) occupied the left whilst Dr K. A. Busia/Dr J. B. Danquah and their UGCC party, which later metamorphosed into PP, UP, and now the NPP, adopted a right-leaning ideology (Anebo, 1997). Academic analysts of the political party system in Ghana have noted a remarkable degree of continuity in Ghanaian party politics, showcased in the recurring duality between derivations of the two historical political traditions, the Nkrumahist and that of Busia/Danquah (Jeffries, 1980; Chazan, 1989).

The current party scene of the fourth republic largely reflects the two traditional political ideologies, as it features a social democracy made up of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and a capitalist ideology advocated by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) (there are other smaller parties of insignificant membership). The NDC rose on the populist remnants of Rawlings's military regime (1981-92). It is ideologically akin to the Nkrumahists as the supposed party of the commoners, and adopts similar electoral strategies. The NPP, on the other hand, is dominated by the intellectual, business, and professional elite, and is dedicated to liberal governance and a free market economy. The NPP is believed to cater to many urban adherents.

Both the NPP and the NDC maintain relationships with their ideological counterparts in the UK and the USA, sending high-level party delegates to attend political party

conferences in these countries. Such trips are seen as an opportunity to learn more about political organization, fund-raising and voter mobilization (Mensah, 2011). Thus it can be argued that campaign practices in Ghana are consequently influenced by both the candidate-centred campaigning of the US and the British party-centred system. However, this influence is circumscribed by indigenous Ghanaian factors which affect the electoral system, the local media, and especially the patterns of partisan identification.

Of particular significance is the way ideological leanings have gradually become melded with other identifications such as tribe, family, religion, and other sectional divisions over the years. Although the 1992 constitution expressly forbids political parties to be formed along the lines of tribe or religion, research has shown that political parties continue to mobilize voters through appeal to these 'subconscious identifications' rather than ideological cleavages (Nugent, 2001; Ninsin, 2006).

The relegation of ideology to the background and the shift in focus to aspects of personal identity is driven by a shift in both party and voter mentality. This is manifested in the country's voting patterns. Firstly, there seems to be a clear trend of regional voting whereby the centre of the country, Ashanti, the eastern and parts of the central regions lean heavily towards the NPP, whereas the outlying regions of Volta in the east, and the western and Brong-Ahafo regions, along with the Upper East and Upper West in the north favour the NDC. The second voting pattern reflects the urban-rural divide in voting behaviour. While the NPP tends to win votes in principal cities and regional capitals, the NDC tend to win the rural vote. However, there are exceptions to this pattern in the historical strongholds of the two political traditions (Nugent, 1998; Ninsin, 2006; Mensah, 2011).

Voting outcomes in Ghana are difficult to predict. Few voters identify with either party's ideology; rather, many voters cast their ballots on the basis of family attachment to a particular political party. Other voters are believed to go with the electoral hype or political parties that seem the most appealing during electioneering campaigns (Mensah, 2011). This in turn has forced political parties to appeal to ethnic and religious sentiments in order to increase their voter share (Nugent, 2001; Ninsin, 2006; Alabi and Alabi, 2008). Mensah (2011) believes that it is this form of identifying potential voters by political parties that informs political party structures in Ghana, especially in terms of party membership, funding issues, candidate selection, and other party-related issues.

Regarding party membership, Ninsin (2006) identifies two forms in Ghana, formal and informal (2006:12). The formal member of a political party is a committed card-bearer who contributes to the party's activities in the form of paying dues and attending party meetings and political rallies, and is likely to canvass for votes for the party either at the local or national level, as well as delivering his or her own guaranteed vote during elections. On the other hand, informal members or supporters, who constitute the majority, only vote for the party at general elections and can be convinced to vote for another candidate or political party if they feel disillusioned by the party they primarily identify with. The majority of voters can be categorized as floating or independent, meaning that their allegiance to a particular party is volatile (Ephson, 2003). Their political leanings can be swayed depending on factors such as the ethnic identification of the party leadership or by key issues specific to the election.

Political party membership affects party funding. In Ghana, political parties procure funds primarily through membership dues and donations from party leaders and sympathizers (CDD-Ghana, 2005). This renders political parties financially weak, which forces them to be operated by political entrepreneurs (2006:15) who use their wealth to assume leadership positions in the party in order to further their own and their supporters' interests. Thus, by means of financial and material incentives, such political entrepreneurs are able to effectively buy votes and influence decision-making within the political party in their favour. Political parties also rely heavily on sister parties in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States for the funding of their political activities in Ghana. For this reason, a high premium is placed on the maintenance of a cordial relationship with those party affiliates. In particular, sister parties from these Western democracies have provided support for political parties in Ghana in the area of campaign strategy during elections (See chapter 7 for an analysis of the data collected from discussions with campaign managers about party funding).

The problem with funding for political parties has contributed to the dominance of two parties in Ghana's political landscape since independence (Handly and Mills, 2001; Nugent, 2001). Smaller political parties find it hard to compete within the political market in the areas of membership dues, logistics, training, and tax exemptions, all of which are

available to the larger parties through donor agencies, sister-party organizations, the Electoral Commission, and the government.

Thus, the NDC and the NPP have dominated in all six elections held under the fourth republic, generally in alternation. The NDC won the first general election and was in power from 1993 to 2000. They were then followed by the NPP from 2001 to 2008; the NPP then lost the election in 2008 and returned power to the NDC again in 2009.

The two parties' together account for more than 91 per cent of the total votes cast in every election and monopolise the socio-political discourse of Ghana (Morrison, 2004). The results from the six elections held to date show that individual party dominance is fragile and vulnerable to competition, and both parties are constantly jostling for core party membership and support stakes (2006:18) in order to look electorally good well before every election campaigns starts. The 2012 elections saw the two parties extending their monopoly on the Ghanaian political scene since together they polled over ninety-eight percent (98%) laying claim to almost all the constituents.

### **3.3 The Media Field**

For the purposes of this thesis, the media scene in Ghana is discussed in relation to how it influences and shapes the political field. As stated by Negrine and Stanyer (2007), “all communication between social actors and political matters are through interpersonal means or mediated” (Negrine and Stanyer, 2007:1), especially in matters related to political campaigning and political marketing during elections. The media creates and propounds a narrative of the political process in Ghana similar to the way the media operates in many more thoroughly democratized countries. What differs is the objectivity of the narrative, which is to a large extent shaped by the political system and the media processes, such as political-ideological alignment, commercial outlook and professionalism of media personal. These processes are discussed in the following sections.

#### **3.3.1 The Media System**

To understand the media field of Ghana, it is necessary to comprehend the system within which the media operates. Of all of the democratic institutions in the country, Ghana's media system has seen the greatest transformation since its liberalization was enshrined

in the 1992 constitution. Until the beginning of 1993, the Ghanaian media comprised one state-regulated broadcasting house, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), which operated the radio and television stations throughout the country, and two state-regulated newspapers, *The Daily Graphic* and *The Ghanaian Times*, which supplied all print media nationwide (Gadzekpo, 2005; Intermedia, 2005). With the liberalization and deregulation of the media and communications industry in 1996, the media have become very competitive. The state is no longer the only important actor in establishing the mass media infrastructure since the majority of media organisations are privately owned. Growth has not been limited to the print media but rather the entire media industry (television, radio, print, and telecommunications, including fixed and mobile telephony and the internet) has expanded dramatically, thriving both in establishment and patronage. Ghana now boasts more than one hundred FM stations scattered throughout all of the regions, about forty newspapers, eight television broadcasting houses (Ghana Media Commission extract published in 2012), and international cable networks such as CNN, Al Jazeera, and the BBC, amongst others. Privately owned media conglomerates like Multimedia Group and Despute Group have sprung up in the country as well. Such conglomerates boast of ownership of print, radio, television and online media setups.

This liberalisation has affected the relationship between political institutions and the public by making it more similar to that of most other liberal democracies; consequently, radio, television, and print have a great impact on the political system (Mensah, 2011). *The Statesman*, a national newspaper, at one point observed the increasing competition within print media in the country, asserting that, “If a vibrant private press is the hallmark of a healthy democracy then Ghana has it in abundance” (Morgan, 2006; Mensah, 2011).

This shift in the media landscape from state-owned to a thriving, private, liberalized press has resulted in an independent media system where even the politicized state owned media only serve the interests of the incumbent government to a limited degree while still retaining some freedom and diversity of opinion in political discourses. This is because the presence of so many privately owned media organisations means that the only way for the state-owned media organisations to be economically viable is to showcase a level of political neutrality. Access in terms of variety and regional spread of these media organisations has provided an avenue for citizens from all walks of life to contribute, become informed, and make decisions within the media forums provided. Although this

is the trend observed among all media formats, the radio is believed to have experienced the most growth and achieved the most popularity among citizens. Gadzekpo (2005) observed that about 90 per cent of the Ghanaian population listen to the radio, and 69 per cent of this number listen to it at least once a day. The radio boasts such popular usage due to the fact that programmes use a mixture of English and the local languages. Radio also has the widest local reach, with most regional capitals and principal cities being home to several FM radio stations. Mensah (2011) also observed that radio is the cheapest means by which citizens can obtain information as radio sets can be shared in open spaces like the home, workplace, and commercial venues such as transport terminals.

A more recent development within the media landscape is the proliferation of online media networks. These allow for widespread participation in political discussions, especially within diaspora communities. Almost all of the major radio and television networks now have online versions which grant access to Ghanaians living abroad.

### **3.3.2 The Media and the Political Field**

The Ghanaian media has a peculiar discourse with political actors which can be traced to the political outlook of the owners of the media organisation. As mentioned above, the state-owned media organisation promotes the agenda and programmes of the government currently in power. However, in order to be viable as a business, it must necessarily present some of the views and ideologies of opposing political parties. Private media owners, on the other hand, are usually aligned with a particular party. In fact, some of these media organisations are owned directly by political parties or by ranking members of political parties (Mensah, 2011). Thus, the majority of these media organisations promote particular agendas that are deemed beneficial to the political aspirations of the owners. The organisations' agendas become more overt during political campaign seasons, during which these media organisations try to balance the political interests of the owners with enough ostensible objectivity to ensure their economic viability.

During political campaigns, especially in an election year, political actors use the growing relationship between the media and the public as a platform to engage citizens and the electorate in a much more diverse and sustained ways. The constitution of Ghana places no limitations on the purchase of political advertising spots on any media, nor does it prohibit the setting up of new media channels. According to Mensah (2011), the party

leadership of the NPP, for example, saw the growing media as an opportunity to run a cost-effective campaign to counter what they saw as their main challenger's, the NDC's, grass-roots mobilization as well as the demographic change of Ghanaian society from the 2000 to 2004 election campaigns. The media in Ghana are therefore seen as vital to the political discourses in the country.

The growth of online media platforms is having an impact on how political parties promote their campaign messages to the electorate. Being able to gain access to the media through the internet means those political parties' campaigns must reach not only on citizens living within the geographical territory of Ghana but also those living around the world in diaspora. The economic contributions of members of the Ghanaian diaspora afford them influence on the voting choices of their relatives in Ghana although they themselves might not be eligible to vote in Ghana elections. This area has not been researched. The growth of online media has not, however, surpassed the power of the traditional media in political discourse. The radio still remains the media format with the greatest reach in Ghana (Gadzekpo, 2005; Mensah, 2011).

### **3.3.3 The Media and Celebrity Culture in Ghana**

Though not an area that has been investigated in the Ghanaian context, there are a growing number of celebrity-focused media outlets in Ghana. This is especially evident within the print and online media, which features publications and websites such as *Graphic Showbiz Magazine*, *ghanacelebrities.com*, *omghana.com*, and *ameyawdebrah.com*. These gossip-heavy, tabloid-like media outlets are dedicated to the country's celebrity industry, providing news on the lives and activities of famous Ghanaians from various fields like entertainment, sports, religion and politics. Other media organisations are also providing celebrity gossip news and programs. At the same time a number of ordinary people are gaining celebrity status through their self-promotions on social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Some of these social media celebrities have eventually found fame on the entertainment and media scene. This has led to the gradual imbedding of celebrity culture into the everyday lives of Ghanaians. Various fields within the wider social space have witnessed the rise of celebrity through the visibility accorded particular individuals by the media covering those fields. In this way, the political field has also seen the rise of celebrities, with some political actors achieving celebrity status because of the constant media visibility granted to them. Also, a number of celebrities have migrated from other fields into the political field, bringing their status and the coverage

associated with it along with them. Thus, as the fundamentals of both of the main political parties have become increasingly similar in terms of how they believe the country ought to be governed and as the electorate is known to relegate party ideology to the background when making voting choices, political campaigning now centres on promoting the image of the candidate for president or other office. Thus most of the campaigning is akin to the US style where the image of the candidate is promoted (Mensah 2011) especially in the media. This has led to political actors gaining celebrity status while celebrities from other fields are seen endorsing and campaigning for various party/presidential candidates. This interplay between politics and celebrity and how this is play out during election campaigns is the focus of this thesis in order to illuminate the phenomenon, which until now has not received acknowledgement in the literature.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The literature demonstrates that there is a belief that the media system in Ghana operates in a free and fair media environment (Karikari, 2000; Mensah, 2011). However, within the current dispensation the independent press often takes a partisan, anti-government stance while state-owned media also reports thoroughly and generally positively on the ruling government's activities, albeit in a more subdued tone than in the past (Karikari, 2000; Mensah, 2011; Gadzekpo, 2005).

The overview of the political, party and media systems operating in Ghana presented in this chapter forms a relevant background against which to situate this research. According to Henneberg (2004), research into political marketing for any multi-party democracy must include a look at the political system, the party system, and the media system as units of analysis that will support the two main variables of the marketing concept, which are competition and exchange. Hesmondhalgh (2005) also argues that any study on celebrity politics and celebrity involvement in politics must address the processes by which 'celebrity' is produced in different political and media systems, as it is these systems that produce the markets and facilitate the consumption of celebrity politics. This is due to the fact that variations in political party and media structure can be significant in the production and role of celebrities and celebrity involvement in politics. This stance, that celebrity politics must be examined together with a country's media and political system, is supported by Street (2012), who also maintains that these systems can account for variations in the phenomenon of celebrity politics in different countries.

Thus, this chapter has provided the context within which this study was conducted. As mentioned in Chapter 1, most of the previous research on celebrity political endorsement has focused on established Western democracies. Studying the role of celebrity political endorsement in Ghana therefore exposes the role of celebrity in the political field of Ghana in relation to the country's political, party and media systems. By providing insight into these systems and how they shape the tolerance of celebrity, or the lack thereof in Ghana, this chapter has laid out the background upon which the empirical analysis of the collected data was based.

# Chapter 4 – Methodology

## 4.0 Introduction

As explained in chapter one, the focus of this research is to explore the role that celebrity political endorsements play in general election campaigns in Ghana. This chapter outlines the methodological design of the inquiry, which has the following objectives:

1. To investigate the role of celebrity political endorsement in elections in Ghana in order to understand what makes the use of this strategy attractive to political parties/candidates as an aspect of election campaign marketing.
2. To uncover the nature of celebrity migration from other fields (in this case media and entertainment field) into the political arena in Ghana, an emerging democracy, in relation to the country's political and media systems. This includes looking at whether celebrities distort or otherwise affect power dynamics within the political field.

In order to achieve these objectives and informed by the theoretical debates discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), taking into account the local context as discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 3), the following five research questions have been posed. It is expected that the answers to these questions, gleaned through the use of the selected methods, will help achieve the objectives of the thesis.

**RQ1.** How are celebrity endorsements of political parties and presidential candidates reported in news media's election coverage?

**RQ2.** How do voters view the use of celebrity endorsement during election campaigns?

**RQ3.** How do voters view celebrities who endorse political parties and presidential candidates during election campaigns?

**RQ4.** What is the campaign role of celebrity endorsement according to the political parties?

**RQ5.** What is the role of celebrities in election campaigns according to celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates?

This chapter reflects on the choice of methodology and justifies the selected methods, which are based largely on how they can provide data which can be used to answer the research questions. As explained in chapter two, this research is positioned within the wider political marketing and celebrity studies literature because celebrity and politics has featured in both literatures. The selection of methods for the thesis was therefore informed by previous literature, the methodological and analytical insights of Thrall et al. (2008), Mensah (2011) and Driessens (2013a, 2013b, and 2013c).

#### **4.1 Mixed Methods**

This research adopts a mixed methods approach, which involves the use of two or more methods that draw on different meta-theoretical assumptions (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006:3). While most research on celebrity political endorsement has adopted only a single method for collecting empirical data (e.g., Jackson, 2007; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008), a few recent studies in the field of political marketing, celebrity politics and celebrity political endorsement (e.g., van Spanje, 2010; Mensah, 2011; Thrall et al., 2008; Driessens, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; Mazzoni and Ciaglia, 2014) have demonstrated that there is a significant advantage to using mixed methods for such research.

Using a mixed methods approach to gather data on social phenomena has several distinct benefits. These include an increase in the accuracy of the findings (Kelle, 2001); the generation of new knowledge about a phenomenon through combining the findings from diverse methodological approaches (e.g. Foss and Ellefsen, 2002; Moran and Butler, 2001); the reproduction of a complexity and multi-faceted ontology of a phenomenon (Boaler, 1997; Coyle and Williams, 2000; Deren et al., 2003); and the provision of a foundation upon which to rationally examine a theoretical framework (Bowker, 2001; Coxon, 2005; Nash, 2002; Pawson, 1995). Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that quantitative and qualitative methods can be used simultaneously to answer a research question. Also, Lang and Lang (1968) presented a powerful case for mixed methods research by conducting field research around what they called ‘critical political events’. Their research made it clear that mixed methods approaches are well-suited for studies that are ‘by design, open-ended in an effort to “explore” rather than test specific propositions’ (1963:39). The use of mixed methods is a valuable research strategy in exploratory research such as this research which has multiple dimensions, that is, the

perspectives of voters, campaign managers and celebrity endorsers as well as media coverage of celebrity political endorsement in Ghana.

The rationale for the use of mixed methods is derived from Bowker (2001), who advocates for the use of multiple methods to capture the complexity and multiple contexts of a phenomenon. Celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns within a new and evolving democracy like Ghana is a complex phenomenon. This is because while there has been research on this phenomenon in well-established democracies like those of the USA and Western Europe as well as in other evolving democracies in South America and Asia, the phenomenon has not been explored in the African context. Thus, this study takes on the challenge of looking at celebrities within the media, social, cultural and political complexity of an African country whose democracy is still young.

Though research on celebrity studies has established the crucial role the media plays in creating and sustaining celebrity by providing visibility and a distribution channel for celebrities' activities (Couldry, 2004; Giles, 2000; Rojek 2001; Boorstin, 1992), celebrity capital, as used for political endorsement, cannot be analysed as only a category of media content or a genre of media discourse. Mixed methods approaches offer a number of ways to define and analyse celebrity capital through celebrity political endorsement during election campaigns within the media, political and party systems that operate in Ghana while also yielding an account of its function and significance within the country's political field. Mazzoni and Ciaglia (2014) used mixed methods approach to research the complexities associated with the blurring of lines between celebrity and politics. Their research focused on how Italian politicians are managing the celebritisation of politics. Using mixed method approach in their study, their research relied on data from content analysis and interviews. Following a similar approach, this thesis adopts a mixed methods approach by collecting data from three main sources to provide answers to the research questions.

The first method, qualitative and quantitative content analysis, is used to answer **RQ1**, about how news media outlets cover celebrity endorsements of political parties and presidential candidates. As mentioned in chapter one, inherent in this question is the fact that the media plays an important role in the voting behaviour of the electorate while at the same time also influencing the behaviour of political parties and candidates during election campaigns. The media is similarly important in the production, distribution and

consumption of celebrity by providing visibility for celebrities' activities, which contributes to their fame (Rojek, 2001) and to their accumulation of celebrity capital (Driessens, 2013). Operating on the notion that celebrities occupy a privileged place in the media field, the media provides celebrities with a kind of symbolic access to the power structures of everyday life (Couldry, 2000). In order to answer RQ1, content analysis is carried out on news items (in the form of articles from an online news site) that focus on celebrity political endorsement in Ghana's 2008 and 2012 election campaigns.

The second method is focus group discussions with citizens of Ghana who are of voting age (eighteen or older). The data derive from these discussions are used to answer **RQ2**, which concerns how voters view the use of celebrity endorsements during election campaigns. This research question shifts the focus to the voters' perceptions about the role of celebrities in politics in general and the use of celebrity endorsement in particular as a campaign strategy. Thus, the answer to this research question provides an understanding of the voting public's acceptance or rejection of celebrity as a type of capital, especially as one that can be used for political purposes.

In addition, the focus group discussions provide answers to **RQ3**, about how voters view celebrities who endorse political parties or presidential candidates during election campaigns. This research question seeks to glean voters' perceptions on the migration of entertainment and media celebrities into the political field. It extends the meaning transfer theory used in the literature on celebrity endorsement to show how the meanings attached to particular celebrities are transferred to the political party/candidates that they endorse (e.g. Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012). The purpose of this question is also to ascertain whether the meanings attached to political parties/candidates by the voting public are similarly transferred to the celebrities who offer them endorsements. The answer to the question can provide a means of evaluating whether such meaning transfer has an impact on the career or status of the celebrity endorser from the perspective of the voting public. The answer to the research question thereby sheds further light on the public's acceptance of or resistance to the migration of celebrities from one field to another and whether, in the process of the migration, their celebrity capital has a cross-field effect.

The third method adopted for this research is in-depth interviews with selected celebrity political endorsers and party campaign managers from the 2008 and 2012 elections.

Interviews with party campaign managers are carried out to answer **RQ4** regarding the campaign role of celebrity endorsements from the point of view of the political parties. This research question examines the value of celebrity endorsements to a political party's campaign efforts from the perspectives of the two largest political parties in Ghana. It examines whether political parties use celebrity endorsement as part of their campaign strategy because celebrity capital is viewed as a valuable resource. It could be viewed as such based on the supposition that celebrity status affords discursive power, that is, that it confers on celebrities a voice that cannot be ignored (Marshall, 1997). Answers to the research question will provide a means of exploring the intricate link between celebrity and politics, which comes to the fore during election campaigns, as well as the extent to which celebrity tactics like endorsement affect the overall campaign strategy of political parties, from their perspectives. This question also explores the extent to which actors from the country's political party system will tolerate the invasion of celebrity into the political field, especially celebrities who migrate there from the entertainment and media fields.

The in-depth interviews with celebrity political endorsers are used to provide answers to **RQ5**, about the role of celebrities in election campaigns according to celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates. The purpose of this question is to seek the perspectives of the celebrity political endorsers themselves by gathering data directly from celebrity respondents, thereby deepening the understanding of celebrity and how famous people permeate the various arenas of society. Answers to this research question offer insight into who these individuals are, how they view their celebrity status, including the qualities and characteristics they possess that catapulted them into fame, how they feel about the way they are represented by the media and the public, their fans and critics, and finally, their perspectives on their role as endorsers of political parties/candidates. Of particular interest are their views on whether their celebrity capital, accrued from their original fields, is useful in the field of politics.

Thus, the mixed methods approach to research is used to answer specific research questions with the aim of realizing the objective of this thesis, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. In addition to selecting different methods to answer different research questions, the methods adopted operate in a sequential manner. Thus, the content analysis of media items yields broad themes around which the questions for the focus group discussions are formulated. The analysis of the focus group discussions then forms some

of the basis for the questions asked in the in-depth interviews with party campaign managers and selected celebrities. Using the mixed methods approach in this way provides an opportunity to combine the strengths of each method, and through the cross-referencing of data, clarify emergent themes within the theoretical framework (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010; Creswell, Shope, Plano Clark, & Green, 2006; Sandelowski, 2000, 2010). In addition, the use of a mixed methods approach in this way is based on the belief that various methods can be selected on the basis of their suitability for yielding data to address specific aspects of the research problem and that a combination of methods provides a more complete understanding of the phenomena. The next section discusses the field work conducted for data collection purposes.

## **4.2 The fieldwork**

The periods chosen for this study were the 2008 and 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections. These periods were chosen for two reasons. First, they witnessed one of the fiercest political battles yet to take place in the country between the two dominant political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). These two parties have dominated elections in Ghana since the Fourth Republic, with the NDC winning power in the general elections of 1992 and 1996s, while the NPP won the 2000 and 2004 general elections (see chapter 3 for more details on the two parties and their platforms). Together, they consistently poll about 98 per cent of the total votes cast (Ghana Electoral Commission published election results, 2008 & 2012). The 2008 and 2012 elections were seen as a test to the two parties' enduring supremacy in the country. The parties' campaign strategies were also markedly more sophisticated than they had been in the past as noted by previous research on political marketing in Ghana (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009; Hinson & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010; Alabi, 2007; Mensah, 2009, 2011). The period chosen for this study also witnessed an increase in the use of celebrity political endorsers, making it particularly suitable.

The main field work was conducted between July 2013 and the first week of March 2014. The data concerning the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 elections were collected between July 2013 and October 2013. The main fieldwork, which consisted of carrying out focus group discussions with voting citizens of Ghana, interviewing campaign managers from the NDC and NPP, and interviewing

celebrities who endorsed political parties/candidates in the 2008 and 2012 elections, was undertaken between December 2013 and March 2014.

### **4.3 Sampling**

The study's sample was purposefully selected to yield material that would help answer the main questions of this research.

For the content analysis of media coverage, the period under study covers the last four months of each of the electoral years, i.e., September to December 2008 and 2012. These two periods were chosen due to the perceived competitiveness and use of active political marketing tools, including celebrity political endorsement, during these times. The term 'media' in this thesis refers to the various Ghanaian media organizations that transmit information to a dispersed public, whether through the Internet, newspapers, television, radio, and magazines. The media content used for data collection was taken from <http://www.ghanaweb.com>, which is the oldest and most well-established online news source for Ghana. It has been in existence since 1994 and partners with most media houses in Ghana to provide the daily headline news for the country. It carries news stories from newspapers, radio, television and other online news outlets, thereby providing a pool for news data on Ghana, including archives of news stories. It must be mentioned that data for this research was collected approximately six years and two years after the elections in 2008 and 2012, respectively.

Originally, data for the content analysis was going to be sampled from radio, since according to Gadzekpo (2005), radio is the number one media format consumed by Ghanaians. However, this presented a challenge in terms of collecting the data due to the limited availability of archival materials from radio media establishments for the analysis. Neither of the two radio stations under consideration had their programmes archived online, so they had to be approached personally. While one was willing to provide the data but did not have the relevant data in their archives, the other stated that they would require a fee of £2,000 for access to their archival material. Time constraints posed a further challenge because the period under review covered three months of both 2008 and 2012, and it would be impossible to sift through all of the coverage of the two radio stations during these periods within the time frame of the thesis. Consequently, sampling from the two radio programmes originally selected was rejected in favour of sampling

from the Ghana online news source. The reliance on news media as a primary source of data in this research is based on the fact that news media have often been identified as the means by which people learn about politics. News media texts reflect the kinds of information the voting public is exposed to during election campaigns and how that information shapes their perceptions of political parties/candidates (Bartels, 1993; Dalton et. al., 1998; Eveland Jr. & Scheufele, 2000; McCombs, 2013; Gattermann et. al., 2016).

As explained above, the focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted to elicit voters' perceptions on the role of celebrities in politics in general and the use of celebrity endorsement in particular as a campaign strategy. Secondly, the FGDs were used to glean voters' perceptions on the migration of entertainment and media celebrities into the political field, especially their acceptance of or resistance to the migration of celebrities from one field to another, and whether, in the process of migration, a celebrity's capital has a cross-field effect. The sample for the FGDs comprised thirty-six eligible voters who cast ballots in the 2008 and 2012 elections. These 36 were divided into six groups with each group comprising six individuals. They were purposefully selected from randomly selected constituencies in the swing region (Ephson, 2003) of Greater Accra. In addition to being a swing region, Greater Accra has the second highest voter population in Ghana and is second in terms of the number of seats allotted to the region in the country's parliament (Ghana Electoral Commission, 2012). As the capital city of the Republic of Ghana, all the tribal, religious and social groups in the country are represented (Ghana Statistical Service census results, 2010). The sample size was 36 voters. The focus groups were not designed to reflect the entire voting population but rather to allow for the collection of detailed data concerning the views of the participants on the role of celebrity political endorsement in political campaigns during general elections in Ghana.

The focus group discussions were preceded by a preliminary focus group study with the objective of formulating the discussion questions, developing contacts, learning how to build rapport with the target respondents and obtaining an estimate of the length of time needed for each discussion. The preliminary study proved valuable in shaping the recruitment of group members and generally in how to conduct the group discussions. Initially, the focus groups were going to be constituted based on the participants' voting experience, but this proved infeasible. 'Naturally occurring' groups, that is, people who would normally meet or socialize together, were found to promote better discussion flow and more free and open communication. As mentioned previously, data for this research

were collected approximately six and two years after the elections of 2008 and 2012, respectively, and therefore, it was expected that focus group participants' recollections of events during the election campaign period could affect their accounts of the time. The use of 'naturally occurring' groups meant that participants who had a good recollection of events during the election campaigns felt comfortable prompting others. In addition, certain strategies were employed, such as giving out media stories to participants and offering prompts for recollection where necessary. Participants also completed a questionnaire which encompassed their demographic details, media use and voting preferences, to provide a better understanding of the individuals within the groups.

All of the discussions were held in English for ease of transcription. It must be noted that not all the participants could express themselves fully in English language and were thus allowed using local terminology or slang within their expressions. This is because, though English is the official language, it is still a second language and has only been adopted as the official language for ease of communication among the population. There are numerous indigenous languages spoken in Ghana and choosing one indigenous language has such political and cultural implications that it is politically and culturally astute to adopt the English language as the official means of communication in Ghana. This yielded richer and more manageable data for analysis (Merton et al., 1956; Morgan, 1988).

As mentioned above, interviews were carried out with campaign managers from the 2008 and 2012 elections as well as with celebrities who endorsed political parties or candidates during those elections. A total of eight individuals were originally selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. This sample comprised two celebrity political endorsers each for the NDC and NPP political parties, and four political party and candidate campaign managers, who held the position for the 2008 and 2012 general elections for the NPP and NDC. However, the 2008 campaign manager for the NDC did not respond to numerous attempts to arrange an interview. The 2012 campaign manager was able to compensate for the other's absence by providing some insights into the 2008 election campaign, as he had been the NDC's deputy campaign manager for those elections. The celebrity endorsers were selected based on those celebrities that generated the endorsement news from the content analysis that was conducted and mentioned in the focus groups. Furthermore, the initial analysis of the media content and the focus group discussions revealed that one particular celebrity dominated both. It also came to light

that this celebrity endorser had endorsed both of the two main political parties at different times during various election campaigns, and consequently, it was deemed that she could provide valuable insight for the research. The decision was therefore taken to interview this particular celebrity endorser, in addition to the four that had already been selected. This brought the number of celebrity endorsers interviewed for the thesis to five.

#### **4.3.1 Review of the Media Items**

Qualitative and quantitative content analysis was carried out on selected media coverage of celebrity political endorsements of presidential candidates/political parties in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns sourced from the news archives on <http://www.ghanaweb.com>. The purpose was to evaluate whether the coverage of celebrity political endorsements provides an indication of the role of such endorsement in election campaigns. Another purpose was to evaluate whether such endorsements increase the visibility and media capital of the endorsed candidate or party. The archived news items that were retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com>, came from sources ranging from state-owned media outlets, which claim to follow a policy of political neutrality, to media outlets and individuals who are ideologically sympathetic to either the NPP or the NDC. The sources covered a range of media types, including radio, newspaper, television and Internet.

The quantitative and qualitative data derived from the content analysis encompass media coverage of celebrity endorsements and how these endorsements fit into the media's overall election coverage (see the appendix for a detailed coding schedule). According to Trevor Thrall et al. (2008), celebrities tend to have a considerable impact on media coverage of events about politics and politicians. The data selected covered the periods 1 September to 6 December 2008 and 2012.

The media analysis involved reviewing all of the news stories and reports on celebrities' endorsement of either the NPP or the NDC presidential candidate or political party. Thus, the sample included news items about candidate's and party functionaries' speeches about and reactions to celebrities' endorsements. In some cases, celebrities may have announced their endorsement or involvement in the various campaigns earlier than the sampling period for 2008 and 2012 and therefore might have received coverage earlier in the election years under consideration. Also, a number of endorsements may not have received coverage or notice because the news media tend to be biased toward the most

powerful and famous celebrities, and as a result, might ignore endorsements by lesser known celebrities (Gans, 1980).

Nevertheless, only media coverage from the last four months of the campaign season until the elections, which are held on 7 December of an election year, was considered. The sampling periods encompass the latter stages of the campaign season, and because Ghanaian parties generally operate on a low budget and do not have the resources for vigorous and intense campaigning for a longer period, the peak campaign season is from September to the elections (Mensah, 2011). Initially, **1,375** media stories from 2008 were selected and **3,216** from 2012. They were retrieved from the ghanaweb.com news archives based on the mention of words related to election 2008 or election 2012 in the headlines. This sample was then reduced to **665** news items for 2008 and **1,248** for 2012 with headlines focusing on the campaigns of the two political parties. This was then further reduced to a sample of **10** news stories about endorsement for 2008 and **56** for 2012, to which content analysis was then applied. Where a story’s headline mentioned endorsement but its lead was found to focus on a party other than the NPP or the NDC, the story was rejected, further reducing the sample size. Out of the final sample of 66 stories, in-depth analysis was performed on **24** stories that focused on celebrities from the entertainment and media industry, including musicians, actors, and comedians, and media presenters from radio and television, who endorsed either the NPP or the NDC party or presidential candidate during the 2008 and 2012 elections. As shown in the table below, six stories were selected for 2008 and eighteen stories for 2012.

Year	Bar	No of stories
2008		6
2012		18
Total		24

Table 4.1: Celebrity endorsement stories for 2008 and 2012

The media analysis involved reviewing all of the news stories and reports on celebrities’ endorsement of either the NPP or the NDC presidential candidate or political party. Thus,

the sample included news items about candidate's and party functionaries' speeches about and reactions to celebrities' endorsements. In some cases, celebrities may have announced their endorsement or involvement in the various campaigns earlier than the sampling period for 2008 and 2012 and therefore might have received coverage earlier in the election years under consideration. Also, a number of endorsements may not have received coverage or notice because the news media tend to be biased toward the most powerful and famous celebrities, and as a result, might ignore endorsements by lesser known celebrities (Gans, 1980).

The analysis of the news stories on celebrity endorsement during this period of the election campaigns seeks to discern what the news stories achieve through the use of rhetoric within the text and how the underlying nuances of celebrity endorsement in political campaigns are explored within the discourse.

As mentioned above, the important criteria for story selection are that the story must be about or must mention a nationally famous person from the entertainment industry or a media presenter, or words like 'celebrity', 'star' and related synonyms, in relation to either the NPP or the NDC party/candidate campaigns of 2008 or 2012. In addition, the following themes were developed as codes were then applied to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the news content (see the appendix for the full coding framework):

1. Story is about or mentions the celebrity political endorsement in terms of a disagreement, a dispute, a conflict, a scandal or there are explicit references to something as being 'controversial'. Stories that portrayed the celebrity political endorsement as negative or bad, presented in terms of being a problem, risk, threat, failure, disaster, strain, crisis, burden, negative side-effect or any devastating or negative phenomenon, were also coded under the theme of controversy.
2. The story is about or mentions celebrity political endorsement as positive or good; presented in terms of improvement, achievement, progress, winning, victory, success, or another positive phenomenon.
3. Story mentions effects of the celebrity political endorsement; on the campaign, in terms of its effect on the general public, fundraising for the campaign, or as other resources gained by the campaign through the endorsement; on the celebrity in terms of the celebrity's career, fan network or any other effect on the celebrity as

a direct result of endorsement of political party or candidate during general election campaigns

The quantitative content analysis is followed by a detailed qualitative analysis of media stories on celebrity endorsement. As Meyer and Gamson (1995) noted, celebrities tend to shift the tone of a movement's communications with the public toward a more personalised and dramatized style. For this analysis, Bell's framework of the 5Ws and an H framework of news analysis (Bell 2001:66) was adopted. This framework is a valuable analytical tool for gleaning answers to the questions: What was the story? Who was involved? When did it take place? Where did it take place? Why did it happen? How did it happen? These questions were applied to the headlines, the lead paragraphs, the main paragraphs, and the supporting quotes within the selected news stories (Bell, 2001:68). In addition, Bell's framework identifies the branches of the news story that need to be analysed, namely, attribution, abstract, and the story itself. By attribution, Bell is referring to the source of the story, the place and the time, which is usually found in the by-line and the dateline. For this research however, attribution also included sources, such as the celebrity endorser, the political candidate, the party or party functionaries, etc., to whom quotes and phrases in the analysed texts are attributed (Bell, 2001:67). The abstract refers to the headline and lead sentence and includes information on the actors involved in the event and its setting. The main story encompasses the events involved, describing the actors and their actions. This also indicates the time and place of the events (Bell, 2001:67).

In total, **24** stories that focused on celebrities from the entertainment industry or media presenters who endorsed either the NPP or the NDC party or presidential candidate during the 2008 and 2012 elections were analysed.

#### **4.3.2 The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

As mentioned above, focus group discussions were held to investigate the perceptions of ordinary citizens about candidates and/or parties that use celebrity endorsement as part of their campaign marketing strategy and about celebrities who provide such endorsements. The data generated from the focus group discussion was sorted to determine and interpret the public's perception of the use of celebrity political endorsement, and the extent of the influence, if any, such endorsements can have on potential voters' decisions on whether or not to vote for a particular candidate or political party. They also serve to indicate

voters' reactions to celebrities who associate themselves with political parties and the effects that such an association might have on the persona and career of the endorser.

For the sampling, eligible voters who cast ballots in the 2008 and/or 2012 elections were purposefully selected from six randomly selected constituencies from the swing region (Ephson, 2003; Mensah, 2011) of Greater Accra. Greater Accra has a total of thirty four constituencies, or voting districts (Ghana Electoral Commission statistics, 2012). The selected constituencies were Ashaiman, Tema Central, Okaikwei South, Okaikwei Central, Ayawaso West Wuogon and Ayawaso East. The electoral profile of the constituencies selected is not reflective of the focus groups themselves, and did not serve as the basis upon which participants were chosen. Each FGD was comprised six individuals, for a total of 36 respondents. A chain or snowballing approach was used for the sampling (Goodman, 1961). FGD participants were chosen with the help of a research assistant (research assistant is a former student of the lead researcher and volunteered to assist in recruiting participants) as well as to set up interview appointments with the selected celebrities and campaign managers of the NDC and NPP. Using a research assistant for this part of the data gathering was important for reducing the effect of the researcher's social capital on the data. It must be mentioned that the author of the thesis is married to the General Secretary of one of the political parties used as case study for this research, the NPP party. While this was an advantage in terms of good access to closed networks like celebrities and party campaign managers, it could also distorted the collection of data used for analysis of the thesis especially with the responses from the interview of campaign managers of the NPP and the NDC who were all aware of author's political capital. Also some of the celebrities who were interviewed could have been influenced in their answers due to their knowledge of the author's capital. The use of a research assistant for research participant recruitment was to minimise author's capital on the data collection. However all the FGDs and interviews were conducted solely by the researcher.

Individuals who were initially contacted were asked to recommend someone or people within their social group who would be willing to take part in a focus group discussion. As mentioned previously, the decision to sample in this way was made on the basis of the pilot FGD, which indicated that it would be preferable to recruit respondents from 'naturally occurring' groups to make the conversation flow better and to encourage open communication. Each FGD took about an average of five days to organize, from making

contact with potential group members, to arranging a suitable place and time for the discussion. Participants were not given any details about the nature of the discussion, except that it was to be about politics, till all group members had assembled at the agreed venue on the agreed date and time. This was to prevent respondents from forming preconceived opinions prior to the discussion. All group members were given refreshments and mobile phone credit vouchers for taking part in the FGD. This approach resulted in a 100 percent turnout for each FGD because those that could not attend on the agreed date, time or venue were replaced by others.

The qualifying criteria for FGD participants were that they should have been at least 18 years old (the legal minimum voting age in Ghana) during the 2012 general elections, must have either voted or observed one or both elections directly from Ghana, and could express themselves in English, which was the medium for all official communication. Participants could be of any age as long as they were eligible to vote in the 2012 general elections, which means they had to have been at least 18 at that time. However, there was a conscious effort to obtain participants from the whole range of 18 to 65 years of age. This is because this age group constitutes more than 90 percent of the voting population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012 population census). English was chosen as the means for communication because there are so many indigenous languages in Ghana, and people tend to be sensitive to being forced to speak a particular language. In order to ensure sensitivity to ethnic sentiments, English, which is the official language of the country, was used in all the focus group discussions. When a participant said something in a local language, he/she was prompted to repeat the statement in English. In all of the FGDs, gender parity was sought, though in the end, some groups had more participants of one gender than the other (chapter 6 captures the exact make-up of the groups).

FGDs were preferred for data collection from the voting public in this study because they have been described in the literature as particularly appropriate for explorative research where there exists very little secondary data for comparison, as is the case with this research. Also, FGDs provide an avenue for exploring degrees of opinions on an issue, especially a contentious issue like celebrity political endorsement, and provide further insight into the factors that influence people's opinions or/and behaviour. Thus, they can illuminate differences in perspectives on a phenomenon by allowing participants to identify and clarify their perceptions and opinions through their own accounts of events in a way that a one-to-one interview cannot (Merton et al., 1956; Morgan, 1988).

The discussions were divided into three parts. After the research was explained and information about it was provided, participants were asked to complete a consent form which informed them of their right to withdraw at any time, assurance of anonymity and assurance of their response being for academic purposes only. Each participant then completed a questionnaire covering key demographic indicators, such as age, gender and occupation, as well as political predispositions, such as whether they are members of a political party or are inclined to favour a particular party, political knowledge and sophistication, e.g. how many elections they have voted in, which political party or candidate they voted for in the 2008 and 2012 elections, and their reasons for voting for the particular party/candidate. The questionnaire also asked about participants' media consumption and their interest in and receptiveness toward celebrity political endorsement. Information about media consumption is important because the literature strongly supports the idea that attention and exposure to news leads to higher levels of political participation and community involvement (r; Norris, 1996; Newton, 1999; Pasek et al., 2006; Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000) found, for instance, that people who consume substantial quantities of news often are involved in political and civic activities. Regular news consumption has the potential to increase an individual's awareness, knowledge and understanding of politics and public affairs, and the more knowledge and understanding a person has of politics, the more likely it is that he or she will become interested and engaged with it. Therefore, the section on media consumption and media exposure asked participants to assess the frequency with which they followed news about politics and celebrities by probing their memory of the celebrities who were involved in the 2008 and 2012 elections, in particular whether they could recall the role the celebrities played. FGD participants were encouraged to fill out the questionnaires independently (see the sample questionnaire in the appendix).

Subsequently, participants were given a few media stories on celebrity endorsements, sourced from <http://www.ghanaweb.com>. These were the media stories that, as mentioned above, generated the most readers' comments. In all, participants were given six stories and were allotted about fifteen minutes to read through the stories (see media stories circulated to participants in the appendix). The discussions then began with participants being asked to comment on the media stories they have read in terms of their perceptions about the media coverage of stories of celebrities endorsing political parties, including whether the publication influences the kinds of articles written about the celebrities.

Participants were also questioned about their interest, or lack thereof, in media stories on celebrities in general and celebrity endorsement in particular. The discussion then moved to the participants' perceptions and opinions about celebrities who endorse political parties/candidates and how that affects their like or dislike of those celebrities. The participants were also asked about their opinions regarding whether celebrity status offers an advantage or a disadvantage to a political party or candidate in an election and whether the use of celebrities as endorsers can influence voting decisions. Finally, the discussion turned to the perceptions of the participants about political parties/candidates who use celebrities as part of their political campaign.

The questions posed were open-ended and formulated around the themes described above. They were adapted as and when necessary, especially with regard to particular social and age groupings. An example of this occurred in an FGD made up of participants who voted for the first time in 2012. They were asked who or what influenced their voting decision and whether they would consider voting for a party or candidate if a celebrity they like/love/adore endorsed that person or party. This question was important because a number of celebrity political endorsement studies have indicated that such endorsements have a greater effect on first time and young voters. Thus such specific questions were asked to probe this particular issue further to determine whether this seems to be true within the context of Ghana as well.

The focus groups lasted about an hour and in each discussion, I acted as the moderator, leading the discussions, keeping the conversation flowing and making note of comments that needed clarification later, as the discussion progressed. All the focus groups discussions were voice recorded and later transcribed into text.

#### **4.3.3 The Semi-structured Interviews**

In order to answer RQ2 and RQ5, in-depth interviews were conducted with campaign managers and celebrity endorsers of the NDC and NPP political parties in the 2008 and 2012 general elections. Such interviews are a way to explore the strategic intentions of the managers of political communication, though scepticism is needed, as data from such interviews sometimes include a rationalisation of how events were managed based on the outcomes of political communication and marketing strategy (Vaccari, 2008). There is also the possibility of managers either maximising or minimising their input and intentions based on the failure or success of political communication or marketing outputs

(Lilleker, 2003). With these insights in mind, this phase of data collection was aimed at exploring how party figures and celebrities perceive the role of celebrity political endorsements within the wider political marketing strategy. The interviews were also used to assess the nature of celebrity politics in Ghana in relation to the country's political and media systems, and the potential risks to a celebrity's career of aligning him- or herself with a particular political party or candidate.

Seven individuals were selected for in-depth interviews. These comprised the NPP's 2008 and 2012 campaign managers, the NDC's 2012 campaign manager, two celebrities who endorsed the NPP and two who endorsed the NDC in 2008 and/or in 2012, and one celebrity who have endorsed both the NDC and NPP party in general election campaigns. It was hoped that all four campaign managers- that is, from both parties for both elections- could participate. However, the 2008 campaign manager for the NDC could not be reached despite numerous efforts in the form of writing officially to the NDC party, phoning him at his personal number, and soliciting help from contacts who are personal friends of him. However, as mentioned previously, the party's campaign manager in 2012 had been the deputy campaign manager in 2008 and was therefore able to offer insight into that election as well. The campaign managers were selected for in-depth interviews because they are part of campaign decision-making and are charged with implementing political marketing decisions and strategies. They are in charge of both party and candidate campaigns and strategic decisions, such as selecting people for the day-to-day operational activities of the campaign, campaign rallies, campaign adverts and other media engagements, and organising constituency meetings and door-to-door campaigning at the local level. As part of soliciting their consent to participate, the campaign managers were promised anonymity and are therefore identified only as CM (party campaign manager), along with a number and name of political party to distinguish them, e.g. **CM1, NPP**. This anonymity also conforms to the University of Leicester's research ethics guidelines.

Four celebrities who endorsed political parties or candidates in the 2008 and/or 2012 general elections were also interviewed. Two of the celebrity participants had endorsed each of the parties (or a candidate from that party). The selection of celebrities was based on the analysis of media coverage, which indicated whose endorsements generated a substantial amount of coverage and widespread interest, as indicated by a large number of comments from readers, and on who was frequently mentioned in the FGDs as well as

in the participants' questionnaires. Again, as anonymity was guaranteed to the interviewees as part of soliciting their consent and to conform to the University of Leicester's research ethics guidelines, celebrity respondents are identified as **CE**, a number and the political party they endorsed, e.g. **CE -1, NPP**.

The interviews were semi-structured, with an open agenda around several key points relating to celebrity political endorsement. The main focus was on the perceptions of the interviewees about aspects of this phenomenon within the framework of Ghanaian politics in general, and the Ghanaian 2008 and 2012 general presidential elections in particular. Semi-structured interviews allow for greater flexibility by leaving room for probes and invitations (May 1997:109). In such interviews, questions can be modified or reordered, and unplanned questions can be posed to address matters that unexpectedly arise during the course of the interview. This approach also allows interviewees to expand on issues that they raise themselves in the process of answering the researcher's questions in a way that is not possible in fully structured interviews. The interviews in this research revolved around four open-ended questions based on the research question, the theoretical frame and specific questions and themes that were derived from the analysis of media content, FGDs. Beyond these four guiding questions, the further questions the respondents were asked varied, and depending on their responses, additional questions not on the list were asked when deemed necessary to clarify their comments.

In the interviews with the party campaign managers, the open-ended questions concerned the following:

1. Whether the party had developed a formal marketing strategy for the general election campaign, whether celebrity endorsement was an aspect of this marketing strategy, and what informed the decision, for example, research or previous election results;
2. Whether there were specific criteria used for choosing the celebrities that were involved in the election campaign, such as membership in the party, celebrities volunteering to endorse the party or its candidate, or paying celebrities for their endorsement or participation in the campaign.
3. Whether celebrity endorsers were given specific roles or functions to play in the campaign, and how members of the campaign team and grassroots party members reacted to celebrity endorsers as part of the campaign.

4. Whether the celebrities had a positive impact on the party/candidate campaign and marketing efforts. Campaign managers were encouraged to use specific examples to answer this particular question.

In the interviews with celebrity endorsers, the open-ended questions addressed the following:

1. Whether they were members of the political party they endorsed, volunteered their services to the campaign or were approached and paid for their involvement and/or endorsement by the political party.
2. Their relationship with the party/candidate campaign team and party members during the campaign season, the role(s) they played during the campaign, and whether in their estimation, their involvement/endorsement made any difference to the party's or candidate's campaign.
3. Whether they were satisfied and/or happy with the decision to be part of an election campaign in terms of the effects of the endorsement on their career, especially in terms of their relationship with their fans, and whether they felt that their involvement in the campaign was valued by the party/candidate.
4. Whether they are likely to endorse a candidate or political party again in the future and whether they themselves have any political ambitions or aspirations which they think have been enhanced by their endorsement of or involvement in party's or candidate's campaign.

All of the interviews in this research were conducted on a one-to-one, face-to-face basis between in February and March 2014. In all cases, the convenience and comfort of the interviewee was paramount.

#### **4.7 The Analytical Framework**

The thesis adopted a thematic analytical framework for examining how celebrity political endorsement generates 'capital' within different fields and how the generation of this capital operates and affects the political field. Thematic analysis is a good method for analysing data in primary research especially qualitative data as is the case of this thesis that collected predominately qualitative data. Thematic analysis offers a systematic

analysis that brings together and integrates the findings of especially multiple qualitative studies. It is deemed a good analytical tool for research that address questions about people's perspectives and experiences (Harden *et al.*, 2004; 2006; Thomas *et al.*, 2003; 2007) such as this thesis. Though thematic analysis is usually applied to qualitative methods, it has been noted to multitude of research methods and in an assumed range of epistemological positions. The approach used in this thesis is to draw on other established analytical techniques for the different methods used for collecting data to formalize the identification and development of themes for the thematic analysis. Thus the analytical framework for this research was selected based on its suitability for drawing on the collected data to answer the research questions and its compatibility with the theoretical framework. Each data source was intended to answer a particular research question within the theoretical framework. Therefore, a framework was needed to analyse each set of data on its own in order to answer specific research questions, but can also provide an overarching analysis of the different datasets in order to compare them. The analysis therefore focused on identifying the themes used in framing celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns in Ghana by considering which frames were used by the media in reporting celebrity endorsements, based on content analysis and from the points of view of voters, campaign managers and celebrities.

In the content analysis of news, the aim was to quantify the level of visibility capital accumulated through media exposure in terms of the number of appearances, and to discern the more qualitative, discursive framework inherent in media texts. The analysis was used to test the standard political communication assumption that endorsements lead to news coverage of the celebrities and the political parties and candidates with whom the celebrities are associated (Meyer and Gamson, 1995; West and Orman, 2003). Thus, the analysis was undertaken using Bell's (2001) framework and Van Dijk's cognitive analytical framework. Bell's (2001) framework is concerned with the form of the media text, its use in social contexts, and its construction, distribution and reception, while Van Dijk's cognitive analytical framework looks at evidence of manipulation of power in the production and retrieval of text, such as the news stories in the press (1995, 1988, 1984). These two frameworks were used to analyse media coverage of celebrity political endorsement, the contexts within which such media discourses occur, and the historical, political, social background as well as the main participating parties.

According to Bell (1995), 'News offers an ideal source of data from which we can learn about social meanings and stereotypes through its mode of language and communication' (Bell, 1995:85). Consequently, analysing news in this way yields an understanding of the power relations involved by identifying the role of celebrity political endorsement as shaped by media coverage of such endorsements in the political campaigning of the NDC and the NPP. As the principal medium through which political leaders relate to ordinary citizens, the media become the primary means by which political leaders accumulate symbolic capital in the broader political field. Through the constant management of visibility and the careful presentation of self, political leaders use the media to build up a store of symbolic capital in the eyes of the electorate. This, in turn, provides them with a popular basis of support, thereby giving them leverage in the political field. Davis (2010) also supports the view that the news media and reporters are significant intermediaries which link the political field to the wider electorate. Therefore, accruing news 'media capital' is a critical step in the accumulation of the necessary capital for furthering one's position in the political field because news media symbolically represent politics to the public.

For the quantitative content analysis, the study examined the cumulative media exposure of celebrities and political parties/candidates from the NPP and NDC political parties, gained through the endorsement process or in the campaign from 1 September to 6 December 2008 and 2012. The analysis was done through the identification of key words and phrases in the media content which supports the themes developed and answers the research question.

For the focus groups and interviews with party campaign managers and celebrity endorsers, Wetherell and Potter's (1988) interpretative repertoires framework was used for the analysis. According to Wetherell and Potter (1988), an individual's account of a phenomenon is likely to contain relatively internally consistent, bounded language units, which that individual uses to construct versions of a social phenomenon (1988:171). For this research, the focus of this analysis was on identifying the regularity of the language used by different speakers in the focus groups and interviews to describe the same person, event, or thing. The analysis therefore concentrated on terms or phrases, such as *celebrity endorsement*, *endorsement benefits*, *endorsement effects* or *political marketing*, that reflect the opinion of group members about specific issues that could correlate to the broader notion of the role of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns in

Ghana. The focus groups and interviews were all voice recorded, transcribed, and analysed by extracting and coding meaningful statements (Kvale, 1996) that could be related to the research questions and the theoretical framework.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter outlines the processes through which data for this thesis were gathered and analysed. It also details how the data collected were analysed. Thematic analysis frameworks were adopted for this, specifically those of van Dijk, Bell, and Wetherell and Potter. These analytical frameworks involved the categorization of codes into broader themes according to the research questions, the objectives, and the theoretical framework. The next chapters present the findings from the data collection using the methods described in this chapter. Chapter five analyses the findings of the media content analysis, chapter six analyses the focus group discussions, and chapter seven analyses the interviews with campaign managers and celebrity endorsers.

# CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS OF MEDIA CONTENT

## 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings in relation to **RQ1** resulting from the content analysis of media coverage of celebrity endorsements of political parties or candidates during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. This encompasses an exploration of how celebrity capital is exploited within the political field through media coverage of celebrity political endorsements.

This content analysis of the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements is intended to answer the first research question: how are celebrity endorsements of political parties or presidential candidates reported in the news media's election coverage? Thus, the purpose of this question is to ascertain how the presence of celebrities in election campaigns influences the negotiation between the media and the political field as it is manifested in the form of media coverage of celebrities' endorsements of political parties or candidates within general campaign news reporting. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this assessment is achieved by means of a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of media stories that appeared between 1 September to 6 December 2008 and 2012. The articles analysed in this study were all taken from the archives of <http://www.ghanaweb.com>, and included all stories which mention a celebrity from the entertainment industry or media who endorsed either the NPP or the NDC in the 2008 and/or 2012 elections. These celebrities include musicians, actors, comedians, and radio and television presenters. References to celebrities throughout this research are about these types of celebrities.

## 5.1 Selection of Media Stories

The first archival search resulted in 1,375 media stories about the 2008 elections and 3,216 about the elections of 2012. Out of these, 665 news stories in 2008 and 1,248 in 2012 reported on the campaign efforts of the NPP and NDC political parties. Ten of these

from 2008 and 56 from 2012 were found to mention endorsements of either of the two parties by various interest groups. Out of this pool, six articles from 2008 and eighteen articles from 2012 concerned endorsements by entertainment or media celebrities. It was upon these remaining 24 stories that intensive, detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis was carried out.

## **5.2 Media Visibility Capital**

Driessens (2013) and Davis (2010) describe celebrity capital as media visibility accumulated through recurrent media representations. Consequently, a celebrity's endorsement of a political party's or candidate's campaign will lead to greater visibility or media coverage of the endorsed party/candidate. This analysis seeks to quantify the capital as accumulated through media exposure. However, a mere 24 articles, amounting to less than 2% of the media coverage of the campaigns, focused on celebrity endorsements, which does not constitute a significant impact on visibility capital. Even considering only those articles which cover political endorsements, celebrity endorsements account for only 36.4 percent. This indicates that either political endorsements were few in number or did not receive much media coverage. Therefore, the interviewed campaign managers were asked whether their party or candidate received many celebrity endorsements and whether that resulted in little media coverage; their responses are analysed in Chapter 7. In order to understand why celebrity political endorsement received such minimal media attention within election campaign coverage, the media system in Ghana was scrutinised, especially with regard to the media's involvement in politics in the country, details of which are found in Chapter 3. The assessment offered some explanation as to what might account for the lack of coverage given to celebrity political endorsements.

The media establishment in Ghana is tied to the political history of the country. Thus, the media organisations are owned by political figures or people with strong political ties to particular political parties, and the main purpose is to use the media to drive their political agenda (see Chapter 3). As a result, media coverage tends to focus on political parties and candidates' activities, which leaves very little room for coverage of non-political actors, even when they are operating within the political field, and this includes celebrity endorsers. This theme is elaborated further in Chapters 8 regarding what the findings mean for the migration of celebrity capital into the political field.

Notably, the six stories found from 2008 were all about celebrities who endorsed the NPP party/candidate. In 2012, however, out of the **18** stories, **11** of the stories were about celebrities who endorsed the NDC party/candidate and the remaining **7** were about celebrities endorsing the NPP party/candidate. This might be a reflection of which party was incumbent at the time of the elections, as in 2008, the NPP was the party in power, while in 2012, the NDC held power. The analysis, however, did not reveal that there were more endorsements for the incumbent political party or candidate but rather, there was more coverage.

### 5.3 Coverage of Celebrity Political Endorsement in the News Media

The 24 stories on celebrity endorsement were subjected to thematic content analysis to discern the predominate themes of the media’s coverage of celebrity endorsements. The media content is used as a contextual illustration of the visible roles celebrity endorsement played in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns of the NDC and NPP. The themes chosen for the analysis are based on the research question and were useful in assessing how the theory of celebrity capital can be explored through media coverage of celebrity political endorsements. Table 1 below lists the reoccurring themes within the coverage of celebrity political endorsements. As some of the stories contain more than one theme, the same story could be coded and analysed under several themes, which is why the number of stories adds up to more than 24.

Theme	Description of stories coded under the theme	Level of analysis
Endorsement presented as controversial	The story is about or mentions disagreement, a dispute, a conflict, a scandal or there are explicit references to something as being ‘controversial’	14
Endorsement presented as good news	The story is about/mentions the endorsement as positive or good, presented in terms of improvement, achievement, progress, winning, victory, success, or another positive phenomenon	12
Effect of celebrity endorsement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effect on campaign. The story mentions the effect of the endorsement on the campaign, in terms of its effect on the general public, fund raising for the campaign or other resources gained by the campaign through the endorsement.</li> <li>2. Effect on celebrity endorser. The story mentions the effect of the endorsement on the celebrity in terms of its effect on his/her career, fan base and political aspirations.</li> </ol>	18

Table 5.1: Themes for Media Analysis

The thematic qualitative content analysis was done focusing on story attribution (source, place and time), story abstract (headline and lead), and the story (emphasising the actors, setting and action).

Analysing the source of the media stories was deemed relevant in order to determine the political leaning of the source(s), which influences the type of story that is published. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the media in Ghana are intricately linked to political figures and parties. Thus, the political orientation of the source of a story affects how an endorsement is covered in relation to the themes identified above. Therefore, the analysis took into consideration the source, publication origin and political leaning of the source. For ease of analysis, the research identified a story’s source as it was indicated on ghanaweb.com: radio, newspaper, television, online article, including opinions, submitted by individuals to the website, GNA, or press release from a political party, including from the office of a presidential candidate. See Table 2 below for the breakdown of sources.

#	Source	Number of Items
1	Radio	8
2	Newspaper	4
3	Television	0
4	Online article, including opinions, submitted by individuals to the website	6
5	Ghana News Agency (GNA)	3
7	Other (All published articles not corresponding to any of the above)	3
	Total	24

Table 5.2: Source of News Item

The table shows that, for the period under review, radio outlets contributed most of the stories on celebrity political endorsements, supports Gadzekpo’s (2005) assertion that radio is the predominant media format in Ghana for communication within social spaces. This is followed by newspapers.

For a publication’s or outlet’s political leaning, media stories were coded according to the following: article written by NPP and NDC political parties/candidates or their affiliates, article from a journalist and/or media source, and other, referring to articles written by individuals with indeterminate political affiliation.

#	Author	Number of Items
1	1 Article written by NPP and NDC political parties or affiliate	3
2	Articles from a journalist and/or media source	18
3	Other, referring to articles written by individuals with indeterminate political affiliation	3
	Total	24

Table 5.3: Political Affiliation of Sources

Though most of the stories came from journalistic reports, the alignment of that media house with a political party influence’s the topic and content of stories carried by that outlet. Some of the media houses allow political party affiliates to contribute to articles on celebrity endorsements. This adds to the evidence of the politics shaping media outlets as is discussed above.

Regarding publication style, a look at the section on the news layout of the website that showcased stories on celebrity political endorsement reveals that stories on celebrities are considered ‘soft’ news, as a result of which 50% of the stories were found in the entertainment section. Although the stories were about celebrity involvement in politics, only 13% of them were carried in the politics section, while 29% were listed under the general news section. This reinforces the finding in the literature that celebrity news is still considered ‘soft’ news or entrainment news.

### 5.3.1 Celebrity Endorsement presented as a Controversy

This analysis looked at media stories on celebrity political endorsements that are about or mention disagreements, disputes, conflicts, scandals or contain explicit references to scenarios that are described as ‘controversial’.

A total of 14 stories, more than half of all of the articles, including 4 from 2008 and 10 from 2012, were found to contain mention of some type of controversy. After the presence of this theme was identified, the language used to illustrate the controversy or disagreement was analysed. The analysis of language shows the type of media visibility given to celebrity political endorsement. The content analysis scrutinised headlines, lead paragraphs, main paragraphs, and supporting quotes in the news stories on celebrity endorsement that had the theme of controversy, dispute, conflict, scandal or disagreement.

An example of a story that was coded under the theme of controversy is a feature article dated Monday, 15 September 2008, found on [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), with the headline “The Ugly Noises Of An Actress Turn Politician”. The story began by disagreeing with the strategy of using celebrities as political endorsers on the NPP party campaign platforms. The author discourages the adoption of such campaign strategies and the use of celebrity political endorsers.

“Recent developments on the NPP campaign platform where musicians and actors follow the flag bearer and perform during campaigns has generated some debate amongst Ghanaians. One school of thought is arguing that these actors and musicians should not mount campaign platforms and campaign for the party of their choice”. (Feature article, [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), 15 September 2008).

The selection of words is intended to compel readers to take sides, through the use of phrases such as ‘debate among Ghanaians’ and ‘one school of thought’. The text seem to infer an invitation to the reader to agree with the negative opinions expressed in the text, with the possibility of their acceptance and comprehension by the target recipients of the message.

The author then singles out one particular celebrity endorser for attack, Maame Dokono<sup>3</sup> giving her as the reason celebrities should not be part of election campaigns. Grace Omaboe is known to have endorsed the NDC party in previous elections and actually stood for parliamentary elections on the ticket of the NDC party. She later switched to endorsing the NPP party in the 2008 election campaigns. The author writes a response to

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<sup>3</sup> Maame Dorkono is the stage name for the actress whose actually name is Grace Omaboe. A lot of people know her as Maame Dorkono.

the statements Omaboe made on the campaign platform in rhetoric designed to involve readers in the dispute with the celebrity endorser.

“One person who is spewing falsehood and spreading hate campaigns is Maame Dorkono. The actor turn politician. She was reported in media as urging Ghanaians not to vote for the NDC because former President Rawlings is roaring like a lion seeking to devour them. I found this statement unacceptable and unbecoming of a talk show host and an artiste”. (Feature article, ghanaweb.com, 15 September 2008).

The choice of phrases such as ‘spewing falsehood’ and ‘spreading hate campaigns’ conveys an image of a morally reprehensible person in the minds of the audience or the reader. The aim of the story in using the theme of controversy is to attack the credibility of the celebrity endorser and to vitiate any impact her endorsement might have on the voting intentions of the electorate.

“She was hobnobbing with the former first family and had the opportunity to attend conferences and programs on women empowerment. If for nothing at all she was given the opportunity to build her capacity on issues relating to women and children during the NDC area (sic) and that has made her what she is today (a so call advocate for women and children). She even had a golden opportunity to stand on an NDC ticket without a challenger. Her status in society today can be attributed to the mentoring of the former first lady. If all that the NDC did for (sic) and other women did not advance the cause of woman in this country, then she should tell us what women empowerment is all about. I recall the current NPP flag bearer campaigning against her at her constituency and telling the people that parliament is not for “concert party” people, today the “concert party woman is leading his campaign. How interesting! I am sure she is leading the NPP to elect the president of the concert party association of Ghana”. (Feature article, ghanaweb.com, 15 September 2008).

In the article, the celebrity is portrayed as untruthful, untrustworthy and as an opportunist with words such as ‘hobnobbing’ and ‘opportunity’. The author seeks thereby to either convince readers and the endorsed political party to reject the celebrity or to attach the negative attributes applied to the celebrity to the political party and candidate she is endorsing. The author concludes:

“If you are a member of a political party and you decide to resign you go your way quietly, you don’t insult and make disparaging

remarks about that party and the leaders of the party. The moment you do that then Ghanaians would see you as a shameless opportunist and that is what Maame Dorkono has proven to be”. (Feature article, [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), 15 September 2008).

Notably, most of the coverage on celebrity political endorsement in the 2008 election campaigns centred on Maame Dorkono’s (Grace Omaboe) controversial endorsement of the NPP party and presidential candidate. Reactions to the comments she made on the NPP campaign platform resulted in other media stories about this conflict. These articles include headlines such as “Maame Dokono haunts NPP”, found in the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com) and dated Thursday, 9 October 2008, from *The Enquirer* newspaper; “NDC Plot against Mame<sup>4</sup> (sic) Dokono Exposed” from the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com) and dated Friday, 28 November 2008.

The theme of controversy was observed in the 2012 media coverage of celebrity political endorsements as well. An example of such coverage is an article from the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com) from Thursday, 27 September 2012, sourced from *The Publisher* newspaper and titled “DKB’s allegiance is with John Mahama”. The language in this article expresses negative opinions of the celebrity endorser within the text and attempts to discredit the NDC party and candidate through the transference of the negative attributes of the endorser to the party and candidate. The opening paragraph of the story centres on the negative character of the endorser.

“The internationally shamed and disgraced woman ‘beater’ at the just ended Big Brother Africa reality TV show, Derrick Kobina Boateng aka DKB, has become the latest celebrity to declare support for President John Mahama in the December Polls”. (Entertainment Section, *The Publisher*, 27 September 2012)

What the story seeks to do is to associate the negative characteristics of the celebrity endorser with the candidate being endorsed. The celebrity endorser is described in the story as having committed socially unacceptable behaviour – a ‘woman beater’- and further derided with negative words such as ‘disgrace’ and ‘shamed’. By embedding such negative traits of the celebrity endorser into the story, the reader is being inveigled into seeing the same traits in the endorsed party or candidate by their association with the

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<sup>4</sup> The name spelling of Maame or Mame is accepted in Ghana.

celebrity. Thus, the intention is to subtly make the endorsed party or candidate unattractive to voters.

### **5.3.2 Celebrity Endorsement Presented as Good News**

This theme was identified in those media stories which described the celebrity political endorsement as positive or good, or presented it in terms of improvement, achievement, progress, winning, victory, success, or another positive phenomenon. Twelve stories were found to contain this theme; that is, in these 12, the analysis identified rhetoric within the article's text that conveyed news of the endorsement in a positive way. An example of this theme is from a story found in the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Wednesday, 10 October 2012, and sourced from *The Daily Guide* newspaper. It is entitled "Bob Okala Joins Prez Mahama Campaign". The focus of the story is on the endorsement of the NDC presidential candidate by a celebrity.

"A renowned Ghanaian comedian, popularly known as Bishop Bob Okala, has declared his unflinching support for the candidature of President John Dramani Mahama in the impending elections". (Entertainment Section, *The Daily Guide*, 10 October 2012)

This story portrays the endorsement as positive through the use of words such as 'unflinching support'. The story focused on the positive attributes of the comedian and his entertaining the crowd on campaign platforms of the NDC, thereby embedding the positivity of the endorsement in the text in order to transfer the public's love for the endorser to the endorsed candidate.

"...the former champion in local comedy was clad in a Ghanaian costume with his trademark wall clock turned wrist watch and bow tie made of 'tapoli' and NDC muffler. He thrilled the audience at the park with some of his jaw-breaking dance moves and strides. He also had his usual face paintings and large goggles on'. ...his resolve to support the campaign of John Mahama was because the President was a good man who loved development. According to him, President John Mahama was the only person who could maintain the peace, stability and development legacy of the late President, Atta Mills. He added that although he could not force John Mahama on anybody, he would only do all he could as an individual and a celebrity to convince others to join Mahama to victory in the December elections". (Entertainment Section, *The Daily Guide*, 10 October 2012)

By presenting positive reasons for the celebrity's endorsement of the party and candidate, the media text subtly expresses the positive attributes of the endorsed candidate within the endorsement message of the celebrity.

Examples of other stories categorised as good news carried headlines such as “Kwaku Baako Endorses Nana Addo's Free SHS Policy”, from the Politics section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Thursday, 18 October 2012, and sourced from [peacefmonline.com](http://peacefmonline.com); “Abeiku Santana campaigns for President Mahama”, from the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Friday, 2 November 2012, and sourced from GNA.

Some of the good news stories showcased the endorsement as a success or as positive in terms of the sheer number of celebrities willing to endorse a political party and candidate. These stories highlighted multiple endorsements of the political party or candidate on the part of numerous celebrities, thereby presenting admiration for the candidate from numerous celebrities into the text. An example of such stories is from the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Monday, 22 October 2012, and sourced from [radioxyzonline.com](http://radioxyzonline.com). It is entitled “Showbiz personalities support President Mahama”.

“A number of showbiz personalities have joined the campaign trail of President John Mahama as he campaigns to win the December elections. They include actress Selasi Ibrahim, Kalsum Sinare, Clement Bonney known in showbiz circles as Mr. Beautiful and DJ Willie popularly known as Chinese man. In the past, popular faces such as ace comedian Bishop Bob Okala and Hilife musician, Lucky Mensah have all supported the late President J.E.A. Mills”. (Entertainment Section, [radioxyzonline.com](http://radioxyzonline.com), 22 October 2012)

Word choices such as ‘a number of showbiz personalities’ and ‘popular faces’ followed by a list of the names of some of the celebrities, portrays the endorsed candidate as someone that is able to attract renowned people and so is worthy of votes. Similar headlines include: “More Celebrities Endorse Prez. Mahama” from the Politics section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Thursday, 25 October 2012 and sourced from *Al-Hajj* newspaper; and “Kwabena & friends throw weight behind Akufo-Addo” from the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Monday, 5 November 2012 and authored by Ernest Dela Aglanu.

### **5.3.3 Celebrity Endorsement presented in terms of Effects**

One theme was predominant in the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The theme of effect was identified in stories that mentioned the effects of a celebrity's endorsement on a campaign, such as the effect on the general public, the effect on fund-raising for the campaign, or the attainment of other resources by the campaign as a result of the endorsement. The analysis also classified under this theme stories that focused on the effect of the endorsement on the celebrity endorser in terms of the effect it had on his or her career and relationship with their fans. 18 out of the 24 stories on celebrity political endorsements mentioned one or more effects of the endorsement. The majority of these, 14, were stories from the 2012 election while 4 stories that described effects of an endorsement were from 2008.

#### **5.3.3a Effects of the endorsement on the campaign**

As mentioned previously, the majority of the media coverage on celebrity political endorsement focused on the effects of the endorsement, and one of the subthemes was the effect of the endorsement on the campaigning efforts of the NDC and the NPP party and/or candidate. Two types of effects on the campaign, positive and negative, were covered by the media. Positive effects on the campaign include celebrity endorsers using the campaign platform to encourage particular sections of the general public to vote for their preferred candidate. The positivity of the endorsement is effectively conveyed when the celebrity is seen as an expert on issues affecting the targeted voters. An example of this is Grace Omaboe's (Mame Dokono) endorsement of the NPP party's presidential candidate. An article about this endorsement was found in the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com) dated Sunday, 7 September 2008 and carrying the headline "Rawlings Roars Like a Lion -Maame Dokono".

"She urged the women to be discerning enough and reject the lies of the NDC which mismanaged the country and exhibited lack of sensitivity to the plight of Ghanaians. Maame Dokono said the NPP is the only government in history to have done so much for women and children and therefore urged women to retain the party in the December elections. She mentioned the free medical care for pregnant women, National Health Insurance Scheme, School Feeding Programme, Capitation Grant and the National Youth Employment Programme as some achievements by the NPP which [will] be enough motivation for the people to retain the party". (General News, [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), 7 September 2008)

The positive effect of the endorsement is presented in the media text, which emphasises the celebrity's philanthropic work with women and children in Ghana and thereby her credibility as an advocate for this group. A direct message from her to women, particularly mothers, as a voting group is supposed to encourage votes from this category of the electorate.

A number of similar media stories were identified wherein celebrity endorsers were used by the campaign to target specific groups of voters, such as the youth, because of the perception that the celebrity's fan base were predominately from that social grouping. In a story from the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Thursday, 27 September 2012, sourced from *The Publisher* newspaper, and entitled "DKB's allegiance is with John Mahama", the celebrity linked his reason for the endorsement to the country's youth.

"Yes I am here to endorse him that he is for the youth. Most of the leaders come out to read their speeches from A4 sheets, John Mahama uses IPAD. How youthful can u be than that". Speakers at the launch of the Group urged Ghanaians especially the Youth to rally behind President John Mahama to enable him win the December elections and pursue the Better Ghana agenda, started by the late Professor John Evans Atta Mills". (Entertainment Section, *The Publisher*, 27 September 2012)

In the excerpt above, the focus is on the celebrity endorser's encrypted message to the youth. He constructs an image of the endorsed candidate which he expects to be attractive to young people in order to encourage them to vote for his preferred candidate.

In a related story from the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Wednesday, 31 October 2012, sourced from the GNA and entitled "Abeiku Santana campaigns for President Mahama", the celebrity called on young people to vote for his candidate by listing several qualities of the candidate which he assumed young people would find attractive.

"Mr. Santana said "I want the youth to vote for John Dramani Mahama because he is young, dynamic, focused and can deliver on his promises." Draped in NDC Shirts with President Mahama's picture, the media men sang, danced and urged all the youth in the country to vote massively in the coming elections for President Mahama". (General News, GNA, 31 October 2012)

Celebrities whose endorsement efforts targeted specific publics were based on the perceived credibility of the celebrity with that particular public. Either that social category was thought to constitute the celebrity's fan base, as with Abeiku Santana and DKB, or the celebrity was directly associated with that group, as with Grace Omabo, who is a well-known advocate for women and children.

All of the stories that discussed the positive effects of a celebrity's endorsement on the campaign efforts of the NDC or the NPP emphasised the celebrity endorser's use of the campaign platform to influence voters to vote for their favoured candidate. It was observed that the celebrities' campaign efforts were focused on their fan base. Some appealed to specific sections of the voting public while others had a wider appeal across different demographic groups.

Some of the media coverage on the effects of celebrity endorsement described endorsement as having a negative effect on the campaign. Such negative effects were presented in the media stories in terms of the endorsement creating a problem, risk, threat, failure, disaster, strain, crisis, burden, devastating consequence or any negative phenomenon in relation to the campaign. An example of this is a story from the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Thursday, 9 October 2008, sourced from *The Enquirer* newspaper and entitled "Maame Dokono haunts NPP".

"Mrs. Omaboe after that began taking active role in Nana Akufo-Addo's campaign with most of her message being attacks on the former first family and the NDC. According to the party insiders, the defection of Maame Dokono from the National democratic Congress (NDC) to the NPP is welcome news, but her utterances during campaign were not in consonance with the strategies of the party. The Enquirer gathered that Mrs. Omaboe's constant attack on the former president JJ Rawlings and the former first Lady, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, has been a source of worry to the NPP. The Enquirer was told that Nana Akufo Addo's campaign plan is to put his programmes and policies across and not to attack anybody with foul language". (General News, *The Enquirer*, 9 October, 2008)

The article described the negative effect of Grace Omabo's endorsement of the NPP in terms of the conflict that her role as endorser was creating among the campaign team. Phrases like 'utterances ... not in consonance with the strategies of the party' and

‘constant attack a source of worry to the NPP’, depict a scene of conflict within the campaign team due to the role that the celebrity endorser was playing.

Another reported negative effect of celebrity endorsement on the campaign efforts of a political party or candidate that the content analysis revealed was the issue of ‘*cash for endorsement*’. Some of the media stories alluded to the fact that certain celebrities offered their endorsement of a political party or candidate in exchange for monetary compensation rather than on account of the celebrity endorser’s own political beliefs. An example of a story about this negative effect was found in the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Monday, 22 October 2012, sourced from [radioxyzonline.com](http://radioxyzonline.com) and entitled “I’ve not been bribed to campaign for Mahama - Ampofo-Ankrah”.

“Senior Sports Journalist Yaw Ampofo Ankrah says his endorsement of President Mahama in the Presidential race is not financially-induced. According to him, he has not received money from the ruling party to throw his weight behind the President. Mr. Ampofo-Ankrah is just one of several showbiz personalities to endorse President Mahama in the past few weeks. There are claims they have been enticed financially hence their support for the President”. (General News, [radioxyzonline.com](http://radioxyzonline.com), 22 October 2012)

The message in the story insinuates that the endorsements of the celebrities are not credible because the endorsement may only have been proffered because of the financial gain the celebrities attained from it. Thus, the voting public is being cautioned not to take such endorsements into consideration when making voting decisions since the endorsements are not credible. The analysis suggest that endorsements are being mediated by journalists and the reporting of celebrity political endorsements are for specific reasons. Either these reports appear to speak for a population or they are presented as negative news.

#### **5.3.3b. Effect of the endorsement on the celebrity**

Another subtheme that the analysis identified under the umbrella theme of effects of celebrity endorsement was that of the effect of the endorsement on the celebrity endorser in terms of their relationship with their fans, the effect on their career and the loss of resources they might incur as a result of endorsing a political party or candidate.

Several of the stories on the effects of an endorsement on a celebrity focused on the effects on the celebrity's career. An example of this is a story carried in the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Sunday, 9 September 2012, sourced from [myjoyonline.com](http://myjoyonline.com) and entitled "NDC Destroyed My Life – Maame Dokono". In this article, the celebrity linked problems with her career to her involvement in politics as an endorser of a political party.

"Somebody had vowed that Maame Dokonu would go to prison. They were all fabricated and that is why I say I will never ever go back to the NDC and work with Nana Konadu", she said. Grace Omaboe who had become a household name from acting, TV and radio hostess and business woman saw her world built away from politics; come tumbling down when news broke that a six month old baby had been sodomized at her "peace and love orphanage". The ensuing legal battle destroyed a career that had taken years to build – leaving her with a host of diseases; hypertension, and diabetics among others. She left Ghana for a six month thorough medical checkup when the judge absolved her of any complicity in the matter". (General News, [myjoyonline.com](http://myjoyonline.com), 9 September 2012)

Phrases such as 'her world built... come tumbling down' and 'destroyed a career that had taken years to build' in the story above, are examples of the rhetoric used to illuminate the negative effects of political endorsement on this celebrity. Such effects include irreparably tarnished of the actress career and development of serious illness. Other examples of stories that focused on the effect a political endorsement had on the career of the celebrity endorser include "Abeiku Hot Over NDC", carried in the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Friday, 2 November 2012 and sourced from News-One; and "I support Akufo-Addo – Barima Sidney Barima", found in the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Wednesday, 31 October 2012 and sourced from [totalshowbiz.com](http://totalshowbiz.com).

Another subtheme identified in the stories about the effect of the endorsement on the celebrity endorser was the effect on the celebrity's relationship with their fans, especially in terms of how their fans came to view them. An example is a story, also mentioned in the previous section, entitled "I've not been bribed to campaign for Mahama - Ampofo-Ankrah".

"Senior Sports Journalist Yaw Ampofo Ankrah says his endorsement of President Mahama in the Presidential race is not financially-induced. He however added that he has been at the

receiving end of insults ever since he endorsed President Mahama and announced his decision to campaign for the President. “If you go to my facebook, for the last two weeks I have been bombarded with insults and all manner of accusations...”(General News, radioxyzonline.com, 22 October 2012)

All of the stories that mentioned the effects of the endorsement on the celebrity endorser reported only negative effects.

#### **5.4 Influence of the Source on Coverage of Celebrity Endorsements**

Of paramount importance to the media analysis was consideration of the source of a news item. The source refers to the both the author of the story and the media organisation that carried it. The source of the stories indicates the political undertones and motivations hidden within the text. As explained in Chapter 3, due to the peculiar media system operating in Ghana, media organisations tend to be organised around political parties or political ideologies, which influences the kind of coverage and stories that particular the organisation will focus on. The source of a particular story is therefore a good indicator of the purpose and agenda, either hidden or open, being pursued through the rhetoric employed. *Scrutiny of the data* seems to suggest that articles by journalists or from media sources sympathetic to or directly affiliated with the NDC party/candidate either emphasised or publicised controversy or conflict within the NPP party or candidate campaign while downplaying any conflict or controversy generated by a celebrity endorsement of the NDC. Such sources rather opted to report positive effects of endorsements of the NDC and generally positive stories on celebrity endorsement of the NDC party/candidate. The same is true for story sources that have ties to the NPP. Thus, what the analysis revealed does not differ from the findings of other studies on media coverage of election campaigns in Ghana (Driessen, 2013; Mensah, 2011). As expected, supporting or affiliated sources talked about positive effects, while opponents emphasised negative effects. What this seems to suggest is that, in sum, celebrity political endorsements convey no special advantage to the endorsed party/candidate. The data suggest that it does not prevent the opposing political team from making negative remarks, and this reduces the viability of celebrity endorsers’ social capital serving as a

form of cover, in the hope that opposing political parties or candidates might be less inclined to criticise a popular celebrity for fear of alienating their fans.

## **5.5 The Role of Celebrity Endorsers in the Two Election Campaigns**

This thesis examines the role played by celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns in Ghana, using the concept of celebrity capital to explain what makes celebrities attractive as political endorsers. This section explores these roles as covered by the media and how the concept of celebrity capital shapes them. Previous studies on the concept of celebrity capital (see Chapter 2) take media visibility as the major indicator of celebrity capital. Thus, the most significant strength of celebrity capital is the ability to attract high media visibility to the celebrity and thereby, the endorsed brand, in this case, the political party or candidate. However, the analysis showed that celebrity political endorsements attracted very little media coverage as a percentage of all of the media coverage of the 2008 and 2012 elections. The findings demonstrate that if the primary purpose of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns is to increase media visibility for the campaign, then within the peculiar political and media system of Ghana, it is ineffective as a political marketing tool. The reasons for this are discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

The content analysis, however, uncovered other roles taken on by celebrity political endorsers in the campaigning efforts of the NDC and NPP parties/candidates. The sampled stories reveal that celebrity endorsers were assigned roles in the campaigns, according to their strengths, by the political party or candidate they had endorsed. An article from the Entertainment section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Thursday, 15 November 2012 and entitled “More Celebrities Endorse Prez John Mahama”, supports this assertion.

“Most of the personalities endorsing the president have already been assigned roles in the president’s campaign and are already pursuing their functions as the president intensifies his campaign across the country”. (Entertainment Section, [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), 15 November 2012)

The story indicates that the campaign team determined strategic roles for the celebrity endorsers to play in the campaign. One such role identified in the media coverage is the

use of celebrity endorsers as campaign message disseminators, especially on campaign platforms. An example of this is found in a story from the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Sunday, 7 September 2008 and carrying the headline “Rawlings Roars Like a Lion -Maame Dokono”. This story referred to the actress and TV hostess Grace Omaboe, popularly called Maame Dokono, mounting a campaign to defend the NPP government’s economic policies during the NPP candidate’s campaign tour of Brong-Ahafo, one of Ghana’s ten regions.

“You must be watchful and prayerful because Rawlings is roaring like a lion seeking whom to devour’, she said and led the people to bind the devil in Rawlings. She said Mr. Rawlings and his NDC are hungry for power and have resorted to spreading lies about the economy and the ruling NPP just to win the sympathy of unsuspecting Ghanaians”. (General News, [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), 7 September 2008)

The message that the celebrity endorser sought to disseminate to the electorate was that the NDC party and its leadership were, in her view, immoral people. The celebrity capitalised on the religiosity typical of Ghanaians by using religious rhetoric such as ‘watchful and prayerful’ and ‘bind the devil’, and by comparing the leader of the NDC party to a ‘roaring lion’. These religious connotations were used by the celebrity to create a negative image of the NDC candidate in the minds of members of the voting public. She seeks thereby to portray the NDC as bad and the NPP as good.

One of the stories on celebrity political endorsement considered the role of this phenomenon in a multifaceted way. This story demonstrates how journalists or media reports mediate endorsements especially in the political interests of the media organization. The story examined the impact that celebrity endorsements can have on election campaigns; its source was a member of the campaign team of the NPP. This story was analyzed because it looked at the effects of celebrity endorsement from the point of view of a party campaign member. The story was found in the Politics section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Tuesday, 23 October 2012, sourced from [radioxyzonline.com](http://radioxyzonline.com) and entitled “Celebrity endorsements do not win votes – NPP”.

“A former campaign official for the New Patriotic Party has discounted the impact of celebrities particularly musicians on the electoral fortunes of political parties. He was reacting to recent endorsements for President Mahama’s candidature by some Ghanaian celebrities. Dr. Arthur Kennedy, who was responsible

for coordinating the NPP's 2008 campaign, says musicians who join political campaigns are either co-opted by the parties or they volunteer to help promote candidates because of their political affiliations. According to Dr. Kennedy, other renowned persons may prove more useful to the parties than musicians. "I think there are actually other celebrities who can make an impact for example if you can get a cardinal or bishop to endorse your candidate it would make a lot of difference," Mr. Arthur Kennedy said". (Politics Section, radioxyzonline.com, 23 October 2012)

The story contains a number of important points. First, the credentials of the person interviewed for the story are very significant because they lend credibility to the conclusions reached by the author. The story mentioned his credentials as including being a doctor and a former campaign official, making him a reliable source of information about how members of a party's or candidate's campaign team view the impact of celebrity political endorsements – which he minimises. Second, the story talks about a particular type of celebrity political endorsers, those from the field of entertainment, which is of interest because of the focus of this thesis on celebrities from the entertainment and media fields. From the perspective of the former campaign official, the field which a celebrity is from affects the impact that they can have in the political field. He suggests that celebrities from the religious field have a much greater impact than those from entertainment, specifically musicians. This view is relevant to the application of the concept of celebrity capital in explaining the role of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns. The perception expressed by the campaign official is that the effective migration of celebrity capital to the political field, for political gain either by the celebrity migrating or by political actors, depends on the field the celebrity is migrating from. Finally, the campaign official offers reasons for why celebrities choose to endorse a political party or candidate. These include volunteering and being approached by the party or candidate, but most important is the celebrity's affiliation with the party.

The perceptions expressed in the above excerpt raise a number of pertinent issues related to the concept of celebrity capital, especially its migration into another field, within a non-Westernised political and media system. Consequently, these perceptions formed the basis of some of the questions which were posed during the focus group discussions and interviews with campaign managers and celebrities. These are analysed in Chapters 6 and 7.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter examined how the media covered celebrity political endorsements during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The analysis was based on the notion that the media can increase the value of celebrity capital through the recognition given to celebrities in news coverage (Davis, 2010; Driessen, 2013). Thus, in the political field, which is influenced by the media, recognition of celebrities can result in the exchange of celebrity capital into other forms of capital which are useful in this field. The analysis focused on specific references to celebrity political endorsements in media reports, the type of coverage that was given to celebrity political endorsers, the role such endorsers played in the campaigns of the NPP and NDC parties and candidates as well as the effects of the endorsement on either the campaign or the endorser.

What the findings show, however, is that the media in Ghana do not give much visibility to celebrities from other fields engaging in political activities. It was determined that less than **2%** of media coverage of the elections focused on celebrity endorsements. It must be mentioned that since all of the articles used for the content analysis came from a single online media source, it is likely that other celebrity endorsements and involvements may not have been publicised on this particular site but might have been given coverage by other news media outlets. Thus, it is not possible to reach a generalised assumption about the total amount of coverage that celebrity political endorsements receive during campaigns based on this analysis.

It was also noted that the media coverage contained mostly stories about endorsements that generated controversy or stories that depicted the effects of an endorsement. An in-depth analysis of the stories further showed that celebrity endorsers actually gain visibility from the media because of the visibility capital of the endorsed party/candidate. The media analysis raised some pertinent issues regarding the application of the concept of celebrity capital as it has been explored in previous research (see Chapter 2), particularly with regard to it hinging on visibility, attention and media capital. The media analysis suggest that endorsements coverage are mediated and there are certain factors that shape this mediation process such as political ownership of media organisation and the focus of election news. All these acts as factors that shapes the access of the endorsement to the

news story. Any ideas about capital must therefore be grounded in the realities of news institutions and journalists' practices and that is a parallel that can be made with western journalism. What the analysis shows is that within the Ghanaian context, the concept of celebrity capital cannot be applied as it has been developed in previous literature (Davis, 2010; Driessens et al., 2012; Driessens, 2013, and 2014), as such an application might not be useful in explaining the value of celebrity within a non-Westernised political and media system such as Ghana. This assertion is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Finally, the media analysis yielded pertinent information which was then further explored in the focus groups and interviews with celebrities and campaign managers from the NPP and NDC political parties. This is one of the reasons the methods were applied sequentially (see Chapter 4). Thus, the media analysis formed the basis for the focus group discussions, which included the topic of how the media reported celebrity political endorsements and whether the media coverage influenced the participants' perceptions about the role of celebrity endorsements in election campaigns and whether their voting preferences in the 2008 and 2012 elections were influenced by such endorsements. Regarding the interviews, three out of the five interviewed celebrity endorsers were selected for participation based on the amount and type of coverage their endorsement received, especially those whose endorsements were covered through the theme of controversy. The role of celebrity endorsement as a political marketing tool in Ghanaian election campaigns is explored more fully in the discussion chapter.

# Chapter 6 – Analysis of the Focus Group

## 6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the analysis of the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns. The findings suggest that the percentage of coverage dedicated to celebrity endorsements within these campaign seasons was not significant. This, in turn, indicates that celebrity political endorsements generated very little in terms of what has been referred to as media visibility capital (Davis, 2010). It was also found that the little coverage there was focused on the effects of the endorsement on either the endorsed political party/candidate or the celebrity endorser. Also, more than half of the articles reported celebrity endorsement stories as generating controversy or other negative consequences, suggesting that it does not convey any special advantage to the endorsed party/candidate. These findings from the media content analysis raise important issues concerning the role of celebrity endorsement in political campaigns in Ghana, especially in the application of celebrity capital within the political field, and these are further explored in this chapter from the perspectives of voters.

This chapter details the findings of the focus group discussions (FDGs), which were used to answer **RQ2** and **RQ3**. This involved assessing the voting public's perceptions of the role of celebrity political endorsement in political campaign marketing and the extent to which such endorsements influenced potential voters' decisions to vote for a particular candidate or political party in the 2008 and 2012 elections in Ghana. The FDGs helped to determine the perceptions of members of the general public about celebrities who associate themselves with political parties and the perceived effects that such an association can have on the persona and career of the celebrity endorser. Finally, the findings from the focus groups are used to assess the concept of celebrity capital and its value in the political field. The analysis in this chapter therefore provides insight into whether the celebrity capital of celebrities from the entertainment and media fields can

be migrated into the political field and whether this migration of capital can affect the political fortunes of an endorsed candidate or party.

As explained in Chapter 4, the primary analytical framework used in this study is thematic analysis, which offers a way to bring all of the data sets together in such a way that the concept of celebrity capital can be explored within each of them. Thematic analysis allows for the identification of similar themes in the media content, the FDGs and the interviews. The use of this analytical tool necessitated the transcription of the recordings of the focus group discussions (see the appendix for a sample transcript of one of the FDGs), and thereafter deriving themes from the text based on the research questions and the theoretical framework. The analysis makes use of Wetherell and Potter's (1988) "interpretative repertoires framework" and focuses on those categories and themes raised by the participants during their interactions with other members of the focus groups which were relevant to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Thus, the "interpretative repertoires analytical framework" is applied in order to group together responses under a thematic heading. In addition, Schegloff's (1997) strategy is adopted to take into account participants' orientations, such as their demographic details and political leanings, which can help shed more light on how a participant perceives a phenomenon like celebrity political endorsement. The transcripts were read on several different occasions to identify the themes in portions of the transcribed texts that were relatively consistent and meaningful in terms of the research questions and the theoretical framework.

## **6.1 Participants' Demographics**

Certain demographic details were collected from the focus group participants which could indicate their orientations and leanings. Such information provides useful contextualising information for the pattern of responses on the topic under study. These details include age, voting experience, political party allegiance, media consumption and reasons for voting for particular candidates or parties. These demographic details are treated as relevant to the interactions between participants and can be extremely revealing when considered with regard to the patterns of a participant's responses to questions (Schegloff, 1997; O'Regan, 2014).

### 6.1.1 Age and Gender

One of the factors considered in this thesis is how the age of participants shapes their perceptions and opinions about the use of celebrity political endorsements. As mentioned in chapter 4, participants had to have been at least 18 at the time of the 2012 election and the upper limit was set at 65 years. With the exception of Group 6, which was made up entirely of young, first time voters, the focus group were not age exclusive. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the methodology chapter, one of the focus groups was made entirely of first time young voters because the literature reviewed (see Chapter 2) show that young and first time voters are the most susceptible to celebrity political endorsement effect. Constituting a focus group made up of young first time voters allowed for a testing of these findings in previous studies within the Ghanaian context. However, since the focus groups were constituted from naturally occurring groups, participants within each group tended to be around the same age. The youngest participant in the focus groups was 19 years old at the time of the 2012 election while the oldest was 57 then as presented in the table below.

	Participant Age					Total
	Below 20yrs	20 - 30 yrs	31 - 40 yrs	41 - 50 yrs	Above 50 yrs	
Focus Group No FGD 1	0	5	1	0	0	6
FGD 2	0	1	4	1	0	6
FGD 3	0	0	1	3	2	6
FGD 4	0	5	1	0	0	6
FGD 5	0	1	2	3	0	6
FGD 6	1	4	0	0	0	5
Total	1	16	9	7	2	35

Table 6.1: Age distribution in Focus groups

Regarding gender, a total of 20 males and 16 females took part in the focus groups, with each group consisting of roughly equal numbers of males and females.

The analysis of the age and gender of the participants in relation to their responses revealed that neither age nor gender had a significant influence on the participants' perceptions about the role of celebrity political endorsement.

		Participant Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Focus Group No	FGD 1	3	3	6
	FGD 2	4	2	6
	FGD 3	3	3	6
	FGD 4	3	3	6
	FGD 5	3	3	6
	FGD 6	4	2	6
Total		20	16	36

Table 6.2: Gender distribution in Focus groups

### 6.1.2 Media Consumption

The media consumption habits of the focus group participants were considered in order to interpret participants' perceptions of the media, especially their coverage of political campaigns. Thus, it was deemed necessary to ascertain from participants their source(s) of political news during election periods in the country.

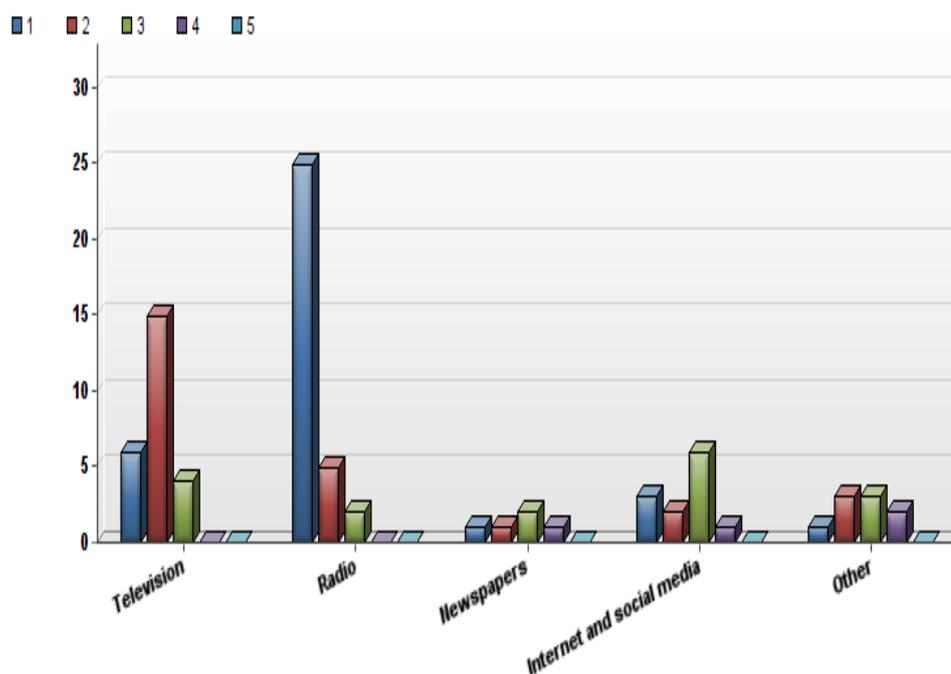


Figure 6.1: Sources of Political News amongst FGD participants

The results show that radio continues to be the dominant source of political news across all ages and political dispositions, which supports the findings of Mensah (2011) and Gadzekpo (2005). However, in FG6, made up young people who voted for the first time in 2012, internet and social media were found to be the participants' main source of political news, followed by other, as all of them mentioned either family or friends as the second source of their political information. A comparison of the participants' reported media consumption habits to their perceptions about the media coverage of celebrity political endorsement indicated that participants who were familiar with the media stories on celebrity endorsements and coverage of celebrity statements on the campaign platforms, were the ones that expressed the most scepticism of the reports.

The data however suggested that the young, first time voters demonstrated the least knowledge about political campaign news generally and celebrity political endorsements specifically, but were quick to accept the media coverage as true when they were given articles to read. This lack of knowledge about political news was also reflected in their responses to the question of influence. While FG6 members conceded the likelihood of being influenced by celebrities in their voting decision, they also admitted that they generally voted for the parties or candidates that their parents or family members told them to vote for. When questioned about the reasons for voting for a particular candidate or party in the general elections, FG6 participants mainly said they did not know why, whereas most of the participants in the other focus groups attributed their choices to the policies and likeability of a candidate. Only one participant from FG6 mentioned education as the reason for his vote. What these findings suggest is that access to political information has an impact on the voting decisions of participants though for first time young voters, family remain a bigger determinate of voting choice than campaign information which is discussed in another section of this chapter.

### **6.1.3 Political Party Allegiance**

Political party allegiance was another demographic detail collected through the questionnaires given at the beginning of the focus groups to assess how it shapes their perceptions in relation to celebrity political endorsements and their voting choices. Participants in FG6 made up of young, first-time voters with the exception of one participant in this group who identifies with a political party, the rest, although they had voted, stated that they were not aligned with, or members of, any political party. In the other focus groups, 24 out of the 30 participants reported that they were card-bearing

members of a political party. Five of the remaining 6 participants stated that while they are not members of any political party, they consistently vote for a particular party because they are sympathetic to it. Only one participant was neutral and mentioned that he/she voted for parties based solely on their positions on various issues in any given election, which was reflected in the fact that he had voted for different parties in the 2008 and 2012 general elections.

The results from the questionnaire presented below explain why nearly all of the focus group participants indicated that they did not regard themselves as being influenced by celebrity endorsements. Similarly, Downs (1957) and Schuessler (2000) both concluded that rational voters usually rely on party and candidate-specific information and are therefore unlikely to be impacted by additional cues like endorsements by celebrities. These conclusions are corroborated by the findings in this research. Based on their responses in the questionnaires, the focus group participants perceived that, as voters, they already have party and candidate specific predispositions which are unlikely to be influenced by any political messages from celebrity endorsers, regardless of how persuasive, and are therefore unlikely to shift their political stance.

		Political Affiliation			Total
		NDC	NPP	Other	
Focus Group	FGD 1	2	4	0	6
No	FGD 2	1	5	0	6
	FGD 3	1	5	0	6
	FGD 4	1	5	0	6
	FGD 5	2	4	0	6
	FGD 6	2	3	1	6
Total		9	26	1	36

Table 6.3: Political Parties FG participants voted for in 2008 and 2012 elections

This finding is also important due to the assumption of some researchers (Ephson, 2003; Essuman-Johnson, 2005) regarding voting patterns in Ghana that the electorate in the country includes a large number of swing or floating voters who are ready to change their allegiance from one political party to another. However, the findings from this research suggest that this number may have been overestimated, indicating rather that voters tend

to be loyal to either one party or the other. They also could explain why the margin between the winning party and the losing party is always so close.

#### **6.1.4 Celebrity Endorsers**

As this research is about the role of celebrity political endorsers in election campaigns, it was deemed important to ascertain whether the focus group participants understood the term celebrity and were even aware of the use of celebrity political endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. Therefore, participants were asked in the questionnaire who their favourite celebrity was and which celebrities they associated with the election campaigns of the two major political parties, the NPP and the NDC. Although the focus of the study is entertainment and media celebrities, the questionnaire did not ask about celebrities from specific fields. The purpose of this was to determine which fields were most popular with the participants. In response to the question about who their favourite celebrity was, 28 out of the 30 participants (not including FG6) mentioned the name of a politician: Nana Addo Dankwah Akuffo Addo (NPP presidential candidate), John Agyekum Kuffour (former president of Ghana), and John Mahama (NDC presidential candidate and current president of Ghana) were mentioned frequently as the participants' favourite celebrities. In FG6, only one participant named a politician, Kennedy Agyapong, as his or her favourite celebrity, with the rest listing entertainment celebrities like Kwabena, Daddy Lumba, Sydney, and Lucky Mensah. These findings seem to suggest that in Ghana, political celebrities are held in higher esteem than celebrities from other fields, except among young people below the age of 20, who have a stronger attachment to celebrities from the entertainment field.

The participants were then asked to name some celebrities that they know were involved in the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns. The names of celebrities listed by the participants were from different fields. While celebrities from the entertainment field, such as Kwabena, Daddy Lumba, Lucky Mensah, Isaiah Kwadjo Ampong (Great Ampong) and Grace Omaboe, were named, the first celebrity on the list, for 90% of the focus group participants, was a politician. These findings raises the possibility that maybe there are particular patterns of celebrity recognition and status of relevance to the role of celebrity political endorsement in election which affects the application of the concept of celebrity capital to the case of Ghana. The findings seem to suggest that in Ghana, politicians have more celebrity capital than celebrities from other fields, such as entertainment or media. This means that in the political field, the celebrity capital of

political figures might overshadow that of celebrities migrating from other fields, and might explain why entertainment and media celebrities lose their celebrity capital or it is rendered ineffective when they enter the political field. According to Bourdieu, “a capital does not exist and function except *in relation to a field*” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:101, emphasis added). This field-specificity is demonstrated by the fact that some of the focus group participants suggested that the best endorsers for a political party or candidate are celebrities who are already known in the “political field”. In other words, these participants were of the opinion that celebrities who are known to have prior political knowledge and experience, and therefore political capital, serve as more credible endorsers. One participant put it aptly when she or he said, *‘let’s leave politics for politicians’*. This is discussed further in Chapter 8 of the thesis.

## **6.2 The Role of Celebrity Political Endorsers in Campaigns**

The analysis of the participants’ responses in the focus groups is intended to yield answers to **RQ2**, about how voters view the use of celebrity endorsements during election campaigns, and **RQ3**, about how voters view celebrities who endorse political parties or presidential candidates during election campaigns. This section discusses the perceptions and attitudes of the participants regarding the use of celebrity political endorsement as a campaign tool during general election campaigns. The thematic analysis of the FGD transcriptions covered three main themes in this regard, namely media coverage, the roles played by celebrity endorsers and the effects of endorsements on campaign efforts.

### **6.2.1 Media coverage**

This theme assesses the way participants talked about the media coverage of celebrity political endorsement in terms of the way participants talked about type of stories in the media and whether the coverage influenced their perceptions about the role of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns. The demographic details of the participants show that majority of the focus group participants obtained their political information primarily from the media, and as a result, the analysis was done with the assumption that the way the media covers celebrity political endorsement might have a dominant influence on the perception of participants on the role of celebrity political endorsements on campaign efforts of political parties/candidates.

All the FG participants demonstrated an awareness of the media stories on celebrity political endorsement by being able to identify the headlines of articles on celebrity political endorsements. All of the participants could provide examples of specific headlines and media stories about endorsements of either the NDC or the NPP. The participants were then prompted in order to elicit further insight into their perceptions about the nature of the coverage, beyond the headlines, in order to encourage debate amongst them regarding the key themes of the coverage. One theme identified is that, in the view of the participants, the media coverage centred on controversies, such as disagreements, disputes, conflicts and scandals. These views are reflected in the illustrative excerpts below. In FG1, a participant observed that the media stories generated controversy about the role that celebrity endorsers play in the campaigns of political parties:

“For me, there was some level of controversies associated with some of them. Some were of the view that celebrities should not been actively engaged in party politics whiles others argued for the right of these celebrities to express their political choice”. (FGD1, R<sup>5</sup>6, Male, 27yrs, NDC)

Another participant could recall controversial stories that focused on Ghanaian actress Grace Omaboe (also known in the entertainment field as Maame Dokono), one of the celebrity political endorsers of the NPP:

“...it was Maame Dokono that I heard of, resigning or going out from NDC to NPP. I think she had some sentiments, that made her leave the party, to NPP, and I think she got it joining NPP. I see her to be too hurt, standing on NPP’s platform expressing her thoughts and going below the belt talking about NDC, I also heard insults from Maame Dokono to NDC”. (FGD2, R1, Female, 39yrs, NPP)

The views expressed by the focus group participants support the findings reported in Chapter 5, that media coverage of celebrity political endorsements tends to centre on events that generated controversy. The participants offered several possible explanations for this. Some were of the view that the polarisation of the Ghanaian media along political lines is the reason for all of the coverage of political issues. Some participants suggested that such polarisation affects how news, including celebrity political endorsements campaign, is covered by particular media houses as well as the prominence that a media

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<sup>5</sup> R is used here for respondent. See list of abbreviations.

house will dedicate to stories on such endorsements. In representative quotes, two participants commented that:

“I think our media landscape is polarized considering the fact that most media houses have aligned themselves with some political parties and are looking for opportunities to champion their cause”. (FGD1, R6, Male, 27yrs, NDC)

“The level of media bias is evident in our media houses and as such, most publication associated with celebrities lack some level of objectivity and balance”. (FGD1 R4, Female, 23yrs, NPP)

In the excerpts above, the polarisation of the media is described in two ways. In the first quote, the participant seems to suggest that media polarisation is evident in the alignment of media houses with various political parties, as a consequence of which the political news coverage is seen as an opportunity for media organisations to pursue their particular agendas and provide an advantage to the political party they support. In the second quote, the participant is suggesting that the media in Ghana are biased and that these biases affect the objectivity of their coverage of political campaigns, including elements such as celebrity political endorsements.

The perception that media bias and their political agendas are an influential factor in their coverage was expressed in all of the deliberations in the six focus group discussions. Some participants expressed the opinion that the political agenda being pursued by the Ghanaian media shifts the focus of the media from educating and informing the public to promulgating a political perspective through their coverage of controversial campaign stories, especially when it comes to celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns. These perceptions can be discerned in the illustrative quotes below:

“...these media people were trying to, at times, reveal their political side. As to where their mind is and, in that way if the celebrity was against their party, they tend to project that celebrity not to know really what he or she is about. ...for Oman FM where their support is for NPP, they play most of the music for NPP, and for those stations for NDC’s they played most of their songs and this way the media was trying to tell us why they were supporting a particular party. In a way, the media was siding with these political parties”. (FGD2, R2, Female, 24yrs, NPP)

“I think the media is disputing the fact that they need to educate the public, but because the media here belong to political parties and their fans and all that, and when a celebrity does not endorse their political party, they make the person look bad in the eyes of the public. So they create a lot of enemies for the personality, for instance”. (FGD5, R4, Female, 38yrs, NPP)

These excerpts provide useful demonstration of perceptions of the media/political system underpinning participants’ views on celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns. Though the demographic details suggest that the majority of the participants rely on the media for political information, the excerpts suggest that such information is viewed with scepticism due to the participants’ awareness of the political biases of the various media houses. This scepticism indicates that the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements shapes participants’ attitudes and perceptions about the role of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns. The little media capital (see Chapter 2) which is generated through the coverage of endorsements does not translate into political capital for the endorsed party or candidate. Sentiments expressed by the participants seem to suggest that, in their consumption of such media stories, they are aware of the political biases and agendas of the sources, which generates scepticism, thereby rendering the endorsements ineffective as a means of positive influence on voters in their decision making process. The views expressed by the focus group participants also indicate that the use of celebrity endorsers does not prevent media organisations aligned with the opposing political party from making negative remarks. This could make the endorsement counterproductive in using celebrity endorsers’ social capital as a kind of shield for the endorsed party because opposing political parties or candidates might be less inclined to criticise a popular celebrity for fear of alienating their fans.

### **6.2.2 Roles played by celebrity political endorsers in campaigns**

Another theme that was analysed was the participants’ attitudes and perceptions concerning the roles that celebrity political endorsers played as part of the campaigning efforts of the political parties or candidates. The participants identified categories of roles that they perceived celebrity political endorsers as having played in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns of the NPP and NDC parties. In particular, two main roles were mentioned, influencing voters and make the political party/candidate attractive to voters. Regarding the former, participants were of the opinion that celebrities are very influential people who have fans and followers. As a result, they are thought to have social capital in the form of their ardent fans being likely to follow whatever the celebrity does or says,

which can translate into more votes for an endorsed party or candidate. In FG1, one participant observed that the love of fans for a particular actor made him very influential in being able to convince those fans to vote for his preferred particular party/candidate.

“For me, I love the actor John Dumelo, and for someone like him, he commands a lot of support. He was actually seen declaring his support for a particular candidate during the 2012 elections and for someone like him, he can end up convincing a lot of people to vote for a particular candidate”. (FGD 1, R5, Male, 26yrs, NPP)

Another participant in FGD2 observed that:

“I think political parties use celebrities who have lots of followers, who would draw more people to their side. It’s a good idea to use celebrities in their campaigns”. (FGD2, R1, Female, 39yrs, NPP)

These sentiments are supported by further representative quotes, such as:

“...most electorates believe that once a musician has said this, or musician xyz has said this, that is all. Like adverts per say, when they see someone like Kwame Sefa-Kai advertising a product like special ice, they say ooh Sefa- Kai is even drinking special ice water then why don’t I go for it”. (FGD3, R1, Female, 38yrs, NDC)

“I think it is an advantage but since they use famous people like Funny Face<sup>6</sup>, Agya Koo, and since they bring them on stage, it may attract a lot of people to vote for them”. (FGD6, R3, Female, 20yrs, NPP)

Based on the above excerpts, participants seem to suggest that celebrities could persuade their fans to vote for particular candidates or parties through the endorsement process which is contradictory to perceptions expressed by participants in the previous section. This perception of influence on fans supports the theory of Social Comparison, Identification and Para-Social Interaction, explained in Chapter 2. Using this theory, Kuehl (2010) suggests that celebrity political endorsers can influence young and first time voters. This influential role is one of the subcategories that focus group participants identified as one of the roles of celebrity political endorsers in election campaigns. The excerpt below illustrates this.

“...if you just turn eighteen and you are being asked to just go vote, because it’s your constitutional mandate, and you are not

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<sup>6</sup> Most celebrities use stage or nicknames instead of their real names. A lot of people do not know the real names of these celebrities except their entertainment names.

well breasted in political issues. But if it happens that you see Van Vicker endorsing Mahama and you also happen to be, have affection for Mahama, it gets you”. (FGD5, R4, Female, 38yrs, NPP)

The suggestion by participants that celebrities are very good at convincing young voters to vote a particular way affirms previous studies which argue that young and first-time voters are inexperienced and have limited knowledge of their country’s political process, which makes them quite susceptible to the influence of opinion leaders like celebrities in their voting choices (Burton and Netemeyer, 1992; Omura and Talarzyk, 1983; O’Cass and Pecotich, 2005). To confirm these perceptions, expressed by participants and supported by previous literature, the question was posed to the participants in FGD6, who were all young people who voted for the first time in the 2012 general elections. They were asked whether they or any of their friends had been influenced to vote for a particular political party or candidate because of a celebrity endorser. This generated a debate, excerpts of which are presented below. All six participants reiterated that they and their friends are likely to be influenced to vote a particular way if an endorsement is made by their favourite celebrity.

“Maybe I like Maame Donkono movies that even when am sleeping, I can wake up to watch her movies. And I hear Maame Donkono is NDC, I will try to listen her and by so doing am trying to get close to the NDC and to know the NDC. So maybe the time it is voting, I may decide to vote for NDC. I don’t think about the other parties because of my celebrity there...” (R1, Male, 20yrs, NDC)

“I really think it is a merit. Let’s take it that it is time for campaign and we go in for someone like Shatta Wale to mount the platform for say NPP, and since am a fan of Shatta Wale and Shatta Wale is talking about the NPP, I think I will vote for them”. (R6, Male, 20yrs, NPP)

“...he likes everything about Funny Face so the moment you bring funny face on board he is there. Yes, since it is only Funny Face. The fact is the type of celebrity the political party chooses is important to the campaign. In other words, as young people and if the celebrity is not the type that jibes with me, then am are not likely to be influenced by that person”. (R5, Male, NPP)

“I will pick someone like Sonnie Badu. He is quite an influential figure to me”. (R4, Female, 19yrs, NDC)

Thus, the FGD6 participants confirmed that they are likely to follow the political views of their favourite celebrity, supporting previous research conducted on the effects of

celebrity endorsements. The previous research includes Jackson's (2007) and Jackson and Darrow's (2005) empirical studies that indicate that celebrities have a positive effect on the willingness of young people to support specific causes. Similarly, Austin et al. (2008) concluded that celebrities are able to influence who young people vote for.

However, while the FGD6 participants suggested that they are likely to be influenced to vote for a particular party or candidate based on an endorsement by their favourite celebrity, this influence does not translate into actual votes. Rather, the participants confessed that when it came to actually casting their ballot in the general election, their decision was based on their parents' and family's views, as demonstrated in the excerpts below:

**Interviewer: So let me be specific. Who influenced your vote in the 2012 elections?**

**Respondent 2:** Well, I liked the celebrities and what they were saying but my parents told me who to vote for and I did. (22yrs, Male, CPP)

**Respondent 3:** I will dare not go against my family's preferred party, so I voted on who they say vote for. (20yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 5:** My parents. I have to listen to what they say. They know what is going on in the country (shrug shoulders). (Male, NPP)

**Respondent 1:** Well, I like the same party my parents like so I vote for them. (20yrs, Male, NDC)

**Respondent 6:** If I vote for any other party my family will kick me out. (20yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 4:** Hmm. I had to vote for NDC even though I liked what NPP was saying and their campaign was exciting but my family always vote NDC so... Maybe when I get older I will choose to vote different. (19yrs, Female, NDC)

These comments from young, first time voters resonate with the findings of Wood and Herbst (2007), who carried out a survey on young, first time voters, which found that the majority stated that family and friends were the major influence on who they vote for. It also supports the findings of O'Regan (2014) that suggest that due to the early influence that the family has on the political orientations, values and views of young people, they are more likely to trust a family member or friend for relevant political information. These findings suggest that though there is an arguable connection between the lives of young

people and the celebrity culture (Turner 2004, Inthorn and Street 2011), celebrities may have less influence on young people's voting choices. In the case of Ghana, what the participants in FGD6 seem to suggest is that there could be repercussions if they did not vote for the candidate/party their parents told them to vote for though this finding from 6 people can be generalised as a representative sample of all young first time voters.

Participants also suggested that celebrities have greater influence on the voting preferences of inexperienced people who have limited knowledge of their country's political process, a finding which also affirms previous studies (Omura and Talarzyk, 1983; Burton and Netemeyer, 1992; O'Cass and Pecotich, 2005). Apart from first time and young voters, participants suggested that celebrities are more likely to influence people who are not literate or who are not politically mature, since such people are likely to look for simple and familiar cues in order to make their voting decisions. One such cue is the opinion of a celebrity. These perceptions are expressed in the illustrative quotes below:

“Those who vote for the political parties based on the celebrities, I see them not to know what they are about. ...illiteracy and passion...” (FGD2, R2, Female, 24Yrs, NPP)

“...in communities where the people are not informed, they lead to focus their attention on these celebrities rather than the policies.... No, because in a community where the electorates are informed, they tend to focus on policies and not on the personalities of these celebrities”. (FGD4, R2, Female, 29yrs. NDC)

“Like Ghana, a lot of people do not have a lot of education because of the illiteracy level, so they get to hear people they are familiar with, people they consider to have huge talent and once they go out there they speak. Even this person said Nana is this, even I saw this actor, I saw this actress, is what they look at...” (FGD5, R1, Male, 41yrs, NDC)

In all of the above excerpts, the participants seem to suggest that the amount of influence a celebrity political endorser has depends on his or her social capital (in terms of their influence on fans), on the age and experience of the voters, as young and first time voters are more susceptible to celebrity culture, and on literacy and political sophistication, as people who are illiterate or not politically mature look for simple and familiar cues in making their voting decisions.

As mentioned, another role that celebrity political endorsers play in election campaigns, as suggested by focus group participants, is attracting voters to the campaign of the endorsed candidate. This role can be identified with attention capital (van Krieken, 2012; Collins, 2007) where people (celebrities) who have established a name in a field receive far greater attention. The use of celebrity political endorsers in election campaigns therefore becomes a kind of attention generating phenomenon. Participants in the focus groups indicated that the use of celebrity political endorsements, especially in campaign rallies, makes the party/candidate as well as the campaign more attractive to the celebrity's fans, and can therefore serve to draw crowds to campaign rallies. These perceptions are expressed in illustrative quotes such as:

“Well, I think is their own strategy to get people to them and attract people's ear on the ground to them and all that, because if per say I like Kwabena- Kwabena and he sign up NPP, and they are having a rally here, I will probably go because it's Kwabena-Kwabena. So it's a way of getting people to come there”. (FGD5, R4, Female, 38yrs, NPP)

“If I am a fan of celebrities and I hear that celebrity will be performing on a platform of a political party, say NDC or NPP, then I will be convinced of voting for that particular political party... So I can say, it will surely be advantage if political parties engage the services of these celebrities during their campaign”. (FGD4, R5, Male, 23yrs, NPP)

“...these electorates have not had the chance of seeing / meeting these celebrities, and therefore when they hear these celebrities will be present at a particular rally ground, it encourages them to turn out in their numbers”. (FGD4, R4, Female, 29yrs, NDC)

The attention generating capabilities of celebrity political endorsers, especially at campaign rallies, as the participants suggest, makes celebrity endorsers valuable to the campaign efforts of political parties and candidates, especially when organising rallies. Their presence attracts attention and lends 'hipness' to the political party or candidate. As aptly described by Smillie (2004), celebrities and politicians offer one another something that they individually lack. Being elected officials, politicians have credibility but are often disliked, while celebrities are often well-liked and admired and can thus generate or attract attention to a political party or candidate.

### **6.2.3 Voter Perception of the Effects of Celebrity Political Endorsement**

Under this theme, the participants' views were solicited on whether the roles played by celebrity endorsers in the campaigns political parties/candidates had any effect or impact

in terms of influencing voters and attracting the electorate to the campaign. The influence of celebrity political endorsement on voters was examined in terms of how the participants felt that celebrity political endorsements influenced them directly and about the third person effect (Davison, 1983) in terms of voter decision making. The third person effect was discussed in the previous section based on the participants' suggestion that celebrity political endorsers can influence first time and young voters as well as those who are illiterate or politically immature. Participants were then asked whether, in their own opinion, any celebrity political endorsements had an effect on their voting choices in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Out of the 36 participants in the FGDs, two mentioned being influenced by their favourite celebrity in their voting decision in either election. The other participants stated that their voting decisions was due to other factors, as demonstrated in the quotes below:

“...I respect the fact that, individually, we have our core values. I would always look beyond the celebrity who mounts the podium to campaign but rather take keen interest in the policies that will benefit me”. (FGD1, R6, Male, 27yrs, NDC)

“Well my votes wouldn't depend on celebrities, but on my judgment. I was born in a family where they all support one political party, so my first time of voting was in line with that of my family. But now listening to the policies of the various parties, I now make my own choice, with those that have good policies”. (FGD2, R6, Male, 39yrs, NPP)

Participants suggested that their voting choices were based on policies because they are politically matured and well informed. Participants were then probed further on whether they can be influenced if the celebrity doing the endorsement was their favourite celebrity that they admired and trusted. Participants then offered several conditions under which a favourite celebrity might affect their voting decision.

One factor suggested by the participants as a condition is the credibility of the celebrity endorser. This resonates with the “source credibility model” (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951), which is one of the concepts developed to explain the impact of celebrity political endorsements on voting decisions within the political marketing literature. According to this model, if the celebrity political endorser is deemed credible, believable and trustworthy by the voting public, he or she can influence fans' beliefs, opinions, attitudes and/or behaviour (see Chapter 2). This view is espoused by Mishra and Mishra (2014). Participants in this study perceived credibility in terms of the

reason the celebrity chose to endorse a particular party or candidate. This indicates that they would not be influenced by celebrity endorsers who offer their endorsement in return for incentives, financial or otherwise. The issue of such incentives for endorsement generated long debates in all of the focus groups. Excerpts of the debate in FDG3 are presented below.

**Respondent 1:** I think in Ghana, honesty is missing. I wouldn't believe it that they were not paid; I remember C.K Mann supporting the NPP after their congress at Takoradi Poly, I was surprised. He said, he was doing this to support his foundation during an interview, and that he would do anything decent to have money to support his foundation, which cares for the poor and needy, because of his past. (FGD3, R1, 38yrs, Female, NDC)

**Respondent 5:** I also remember Lucky Mensah who supported the NDC during the 2008 election, later came out with a controversial song against the NDC. There were rumours that he wasn't paid.<sup>7</sup> (FGD3, R5, 57yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 3:** I remember Sidney confesses that he was paid 150 million cedis<sup>8</sup>. Some would come out to testify they were paid; others who have other reasons wouldn't come out to say they were paid. Some musicians endorse these parties to market their music. (FGD3, R3, 45yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 2:** I also know most of the celebrities were paid. Philipa Baafi came out to say her music was bought by the NPP. (FGD3, R2, 56yrs, Male, NPP)

In the above conversation from FGD3, the participants express the opinion that celebrities usually offer endorsements of political parties or candidates because of the monetary enticement rather than personal conviction. This scepticism about the motivation of celebrities who endorse political parties/candidates affects their credibility and therefore their ability to convince voters to vote for the endorsed candidate. A similar sentiment was expressed by participants in FGD5, as shown in the following excerpt:

**Respondent 6:** I believe whether he is supporting them or not-. The thing is the contract that they go in- (FGD5, R6, 34yrs, Female, NPP)

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<sup>7</sup> That is, according to a rumour, that this celebrity initially offered his endorsement based on a promise of payment, then when he was not paid, he put out a song criticising the party.

<sup>8</sup> 150 million cedis is equivalent to 3 thousand pounds.

**Respondent 1:** (interrupting) then that is not genuine, because you say its contract- (FGD5, R1, 41yrs, Male, NDC)

**Respondent 5:** (interrupting) it depends on the kind of person involved in the whole thing. Me, I don't believe they are people who will go out there and say yeah we are going to earn money. (FGS 5, R5, 30yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 1:** (interrupting) the bottom-line is, these celebrities endorse political parties for a purpose. (FGD5, R1, 41yrs, Male, NDC)

**Interviewer:** So you are concluding that the celebrities are doing the endorsement because they gain something out from it?

**Response 1:** Yes. (FGD5, R1, 41yrs, Male, NDC)

**Response 2:** Yeah, that one is a fact. (FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)

**Interviewer:** What do you think they are gaining from the endorsement?

**Response 5:** Some are gaining appointments, some are gaining money. (FGD5, R5, 30yrs, Female, NPP)

**Response 2:** It's the same thing, appointment, money, I mean. (FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)

**Interviewer:** Talking about appointment and money, quickly, do you know a celebrity that has endorsed...?

**Response 6:** They all have, prior to the elections, he resigned from TV3 as a sports journalist, he was quite sure of like having a position when Mahama comes. And right after the elections he was voted as the President of Ghana Youth Soccer and as a special assistant to the brother, Afriyie Ankrah. (FGD5, R6, 34yrs, Female, NPP)

What participants seem to suggest is that the incentives for endorsement undermine the credibility of the celebrity endorsers, thereby circumscribing their influence on the participants' voting intentions. When the issue of financial incentives for endorsements was raised, the responses of the participants reflected their political affiliation. That is, those participants who were affiliated with the NPP party accused the celebrity endorsers of the NDC of offering the endorsement because of incentives and vice versa, though they all agreed that incentives constitute one reason that celebrities engage in political endorsement. One participant compares celebrity political endorsers in the United States to those in Ghana, pointing out that in the United States, the endorsers contribute funds

to the campaign of the endorsed candidate, whereas in Ghana, it is the endorsers who are paid.

“I think in Ghana here it’s opportunistic. When you go to the US- let me give you an example of the US, Oprah Winfrey supported Obama, and she contributed heftily to Obama’s campaign. But outside, those who endorse, they give money to the candidate, but in Ghana is the other way round. That is what they think, impact is not there, the impact it’s minimal...” (FGD3, R5, 57yrs, Female, NPP)

The participant’s comparison between political endorsers in Ghana to those in the United States indicates that in the United States, celebrity political endorsers come across as more credible due to their contribution to their endorsed candidate/party, unlike in Ghana.

Another reason suggested by participants as to why celebrity endorsers have minimal influence on their voting decisions was the type of celebrities who offer endorsements. They said that some celebrities are more influential than others, especially on account of the field that the celebrity has made his or her name in. This view is evident in the quotes below:

“I will always look out the technocrat and politicians who have the basic and sound understanding of economics, rather than the musicians who comes and talks generally... But when it comes to choosing or endorsing a political leader I won’t go in for a celebrity, I will go in for either a technocrat or somebody with a political background”. (FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)

“The fact is the type of celebrity the political party chooses is important to the campaign. In other words as young people and if the celebrity is not the type that jibes with me, then I am not likely to be influenced by that person”. (FGD6, R5, Male, NPP)

What the excerpts suggest is that when it comes to influential persons within the political field, participants are more likely to be influenced by a celebrity from within the political field or by a technocrat who knows about policies that affect them, than by celebrities from the entertainment and media fields who are not seen as experts on political issues.

This finding supports Jackson’s (2007) conclusion that different celebrities have different effects. His study looked at the effects of endorsements from three celebrities, Zack de la Rocha (an American rapper, poet and activist), Tim McGraw (American country singer and actor), and Michael Jordan (an American former professional basketball player and

entrepreneur). However, the comparison was limited to celebrities from the entertainment and sports fields and offered little explanation as to the reason that different celebrities from different fields wielded a different degree of influence on voters. The findings from the focus groups in this study indicate the kind of premium that is placed on celebrities in the political field, which depends on the field the celebrity originates from. This finding is discussed further in Chapter 8.

The final reason that was offered by participants as to why celebrity political endorsers have no influence on their voting preferences is related to the effectiveness a celebrity endorser in communicating the campaign message of their endorsed candidate/party. Focus group participants were of the opinion that most celebrity endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns did not have a persuasive message, which rendered their endorsement ineffective in influencing voters. This suggestion is reflected in the illustrative quotes below:

“I mean influential by what they do for the party. Most- at times party leaders blame celebrities who come and don’t give any message. I think when you choose a celebrity and for that celebrity to yield you results, you should preach a certain message and that is the influential part am talking about...” (FGD6, R1, 20yrs, Male, NDC)

“I will always look out the technocrat and politicians who have the basic and sound understanding of economics, rather than the musicians who comes and talks generally. Cos if you listen to what most of them said during the electioneering time you couldn’t really; a typical example is Yaw Ampofo on Metro TV: Good evening Ghana, he was asked why he supported, why he was endorsing Mahama, he couldn’t even come out with any concrete point, it was just general. But when it comes to choosing or endorsing a political leader I won’t go in for a celebrity, I will go in for either a technocrat or somebody with a political background”. (FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)

The participants seem to suggest that after using their celebrity to attract people to the campaign of their endorsed party/candidate, celebrities should be able to talk about the policies and ideology of the endorsed party. Their ability to do so can then influence the voting choices of the electorate. Some participants suggested that the lack of persuasive message from the celebrities makes them effective only in drawing crowds, but that does not necessarily translate into votes for the endorsed candidate/party.

“Most of the crowd that troop to rally grounds mostly go there to see and enjoy these celebrities perform and are not necessarily influenced by the decision of the celebrities to vote for a particular political party. I have been at most rally grounds especially of my party. When we interview most people who turn up, we deduce they come to see their celebrities and not necessarily because of the political party”. (FGD4, R6, 25yrs, Female, NPP)

“...a serious political party should focus on how to convince the electorate with their policies and not how to entertain them by using these celebrities during rallies... Rally grounds should be places to discuss serious issues and not entertainment”. (FGD4, R2, 30yrs, Male, NPP)

The participants indicate that celebrity endorsers entertain the crowd and become the focus of those attending campaign rallies, instead of a serious campaign message which the electorate can use to make informed voting decisions. The participants express the view that although celebrity endorsers can attract people, through performances or their mere presence, to the campaign rallies of an endorsed candidate or party, the fans do not come to hear the campaign message but only to see the celebrity. This is problematic in that voters need to know a party’s positions in order to reach an informed voting decision, and this reduces the influence of celebrity endorsers on the voting preferences of the electorate on Election Day.

#### **6.2.4 Parties’ Use of Celebrity Political Endorsers**

The last subtheme analysed under the celebrity political endorsement of political campaigns concerned the use of celebrity political endorsements by political parties and candidates as part of their campaigning efforts. This theme was deemed relevant to find out how the participants, as voters, perceived the use of celebrity political endorsement as a campaign strategy in relation to the various sentiments they had previously expressed. The participants were found to have mixed perceptions on this campaign strategy; that is, some had a positive perception while others viewed it negatively. A mix of perceptions was recorded in all of the focus groups. In FGD1, for example, these mixed perceptions were recorded in their deliberations when they were asked about their perceptions of political parties that use celebrities in their campaigns.

**Respondent 1:** I don’t see anything wrong with political parties who use celebrities in their campaign. People normally look up to these celebrities because of their influence and, as such, political parties consider it as a way of amassing votes. (FGD1, R1, 37yrs, Female, NDC)

**Respondent 2:** I consider it as a strategy employed by political parties to gather more votes for their party. (FGD1, R2, 23yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 6:** I don't see anything wrong with it, especially considering the influence and respect these celebrities command. (FGD1, R6, 27yrs, Male, NDC)

**Respondent 4:** I consider political parties who use celebrities as being tactical. (FGD1, R4, 23yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 5:** I feel bad about political parties who use celebrities as a way of amassing votes. I think political parties should be objective with their policies rather than employing celebrities to champion their cause. (FGD1, R5, 26yrs, Male, NPP)

As seen in the representative excerpt above, participants who have a positive perception about the use of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns suggest that it is a useful campaign strategy for political parties and candidates because celebrities are seen as influential people whose endorsement can lead to an increase in votes for the endorsed candidate. On the other hand, the one participant in the focus group that expressed a negative perception of the use of celebrity political endorsers did not dispute the ability of celebrity endorsers to increase votes for the endorsed candidate, but rather suggested that the use of such a strategy affects the focus of the electorate. He felt that voters should pay attention to the important political issues, and that these should form the basis of their voting decisions. Similar sentiments were expressed by FGD5 participants:

**Respondent 4:** Well, I think is their own strategy to get people to them and attract people's ear on the ground to them and all that, because if per say I like Kwabena- Kwabena and he sign up NPP, and they are having a rally here I will probably go because, it's Kwabena-Kwabena. So it's a way of getting people to come there. (FGD5, R4, 38yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 5:** I think it is a smart way, like she said, they know the importance of using celebrities, so they go for it. Well I don't see anything wrong with it, I rather see it as a plus for them, 'cos, if they are able to use it well, they achieve it their target. (FGD5, R5, 30yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 1:** I also see it as a campaign giving and ready to buy votes. It doesn't surprise me there are campaign celebrities. (FGD5, R1, 41yrs, Male, NDC)

**Interviewer:** Who buys votes?

**Respondent 1:** The politicians. (FGD5, R1, 41yrs, Male, NDC)

**Respondent 2:** I don't feel about it because somebody who has been talking sports and one month to elections starts to talk about politics I don't feel anything about they using celebrities during election campaigns. (FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)

**Respondent 4:** Well I agree with them, the source of income, they are going to get more fans if they buy the celebrities. (FGD5, R4, 38yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 6:** I also think is the strategy of getting more votes, so I don't think there is anything wrong with it. (FGD5, R6, 34yrs, Female, NPP)

The participants who had a positive perception about the use of celebrity political endorsers in the campaign efforts of political parties stated that, in addition to increasing the number of potential voters for the endorsed candidate/party, it also makes the campaigns more attractive to potential voters. Using celebrities to attract potential voters to campaign rallies then gives the endorsed candidate/party the opportunity to inform voters about their policies and ideology. The participants who expressed a negative perception conceded that using celebrity endorsers is a good strategy, but voiced the concern that the endorsement would become a distraction from the real political issues that should be the focus of attention of both the political actors and the electorate. These views support several academic studies that have contained similar sentiments on the use of celebrities in political campaigns, such as Henneberg (2003), Street (2012) and Duvall (2007). However, this is the first study that has sought the perceptions of voters on the use of celebrity endorsement as a campaign strategy. Nevertheless, these views cannot be used to generalise the perceptions of the majority of the Ghanaian voting public. Rather, what the findings demonstrate is that in the sample selected for this research, irrespective of the age and political outlook of participants, both positive and negative views were expressed regarding the use of celebrity political endorsement as a campaign strategy.

### **6.3 Perceptions of celebrity political endorsers**

One of the key analyses entailed looking at how the participants viewed celebrity political endorsers, in order to answer **RQ3**. Two main areas are considered under this theme: the effect of making a political endorsement on the celebrity endorser, and participants' perceptions of celebrity political endorsers. These points were deemed important because previous research on celebrity political endorsement have not assessed the effects of

offering endorsements on celebrities, focusing instead on the effects on the endorsed party.

### **6.3.1 The effects of political endorsement on a celebrity**

Numerous previous studies on celebrity political endorsement have examined the effects of such endorsements on election outcomes and on the selection of the right celebrity endorser for a political campaign (e.g. Kelman, 1961; Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012). This thesis, however, goes further by also considering the effect of offering an endorsement on the celebrity. In Chapter 5, it was seen that the media coverage included stories about the effects of endorsements on the celebrity endorser, and these articles were duly analysed to ascertain how the media reported on these effects (see Chapter 5). This chapter presents the views of the focus group participants on this topic. Two types of effects on celebrity endorsers emerged from the discussions in the focus groups, the effect of the endorsement on the celebrity's fan base, which is categorised conceptually as social capital, and its effect on the income-generating capabilities of the endorsing celebrity, which is categorised conceptually as economic capital in this thesis.

Regarding social capital, the focus group participants voiced the opinion that the social capital of celebrity political endorsers decreases as a result of making an endorsement since most celebrities who endorsed various political parties were perceived to have subsequently lost a number of fans. The participants suggested that previous fans of celebrity endorsers who did not like the party that the celebrity in question endorsed lost interest in the celebrity. These perceptions are reflected in the illustrative quotes below:

“I know of a friend who really admires and loves Daddy Lumba because of his music. But his admiration and love for Daddy Lumba ended when Daddy Lumba composed for a party he did not support”. (FGD1, R2, 23yrs, Male, NPP)

“You would be very surprised that after the 2012 election, a lady I know stopped watching movies made by John Dumelo because he was supporting John Mahama. Just because of nothing bad, the person stopped liking John Dumelo, because of his affiliation with NDC”. (FGD2, R3, 40yrs, Male, NPP)

“Yaw Ampofo Ankrah, until his endorsement of John Mahama, people really liked him because of his sports program, but after he had endorsed John Mahama and was later appointed- If you tune in to radio programs, people insulting him a lot especially...” (FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)

“For me I think it’s bad for some celebrities to be acclaim to some political parties, because as a celebrity, you have been branded in a certain way that, if you go out there that this person should not see you to belong to this particular political party, you don’t expect the person to come to you”. (FGD5, R3, 50yrs, Male, NPP)

In the first three quotes, the respondents mention specific celebrities who, they had heard, had lost fans because of their endorsement of particular political parties. Quotes 1 and 2 allude to specific individuals the participants know personally who lost interest in or stopped admiring certain celebrities because of the latter’s political endorsement. The third quote referred to reactions to a celebrity’s endorsement voiced on call-in radio programs as an indication of the loss of fans and admirers of that celebrity. The last quote indicates the participant’s perception that political endorsements can have a negative effect on celebrities in the form of a decline in his or her social capital. This participant suggested that people who dislike the party/candidate that the celebrity endorsed will transfer that dislike to the celebrity. Participants were then asked whether their opinion of a celebrity would change if the latter endorsed a political party they do not like. The analysis of their responses shows the theory of third person effect (Davison, 1983), which predicts that people tend to overestimate the influence that mass communications have on the attitudes and behaviour of others than themselves is evident. Most of the participants reiterated that, as individuals, they would not stop liking, admiring or being fans of a celebrity because he or she endorsed a political party they oppose. This position is clear in the comments made by participants in FGD1:

**Interviewer: How would you feel about your favourite celebrity endorsing a political party you don’t support?**

**Respondent 2:** I would not really care about it. We share different opinions as individuals and, as such, we are entitled to our personal choice and I don’t see anything wrong with it. (FGD1, R2, 23yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 6:** I don’t really mind seeing a celebrity I love declaring support for a political party I don’t support. I have my core values as an individual and look at the policies political parties present and not what a celebrity talks of them. (FGD1, R6, 27yrs, Male, NDC)

**Respondent 5:** I am more concerned about their comments when they mount the political platforms. I would feel disappointed if a celebrity I admire passes negative comments during campaigning. I’m sure most of these celebrities provoke most

people, especially with comments they pass on the campaign platform. (FGD1, R5, 26yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 3:** I would only feel affected if the celebrity I admire mounts the campaign of a political party I don't support and passes comments that are not true. But [as long as] the celebrity passes comments that are truthful, I am not worried. (FGD1, R3, 23yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 2:** It will not change my perception or have any effects on my admiration of the celebrity. (FGD1, R2, 23yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 1:** I will feel bad if a celebrity I love passes comments that are not true about the political party I support. (FGD1, R1, 37yrs, Female, NDC)

The quotes above show that most of the participants would continue to admire and like a celebrity irrespective of their political endorsement, although some participants suggested that their continued support of the celebrity would depend on what exactly the celebrity said about their preferred party/candidate while endorsing a party/candidate they did not like.

The analysis of the perceptions and suggestions of the participants leads to a conceptual interpretation that celebrities who endorse political parties experience a decline in their social capital within their own field, which in this case is either the media or entertainment field. This seems to suggest that by the very nature of the political system of Ghana, fans of celebrities who belong to opposing political parties from the one endorsed by the celebrity are naturally more likely to stop liking the celebrity. Interestingly, none of the participants alluded to celebrities gaining social capital in the form of an increase in the number of fans because of making an endorsement.

The second sub-theme analysed under the effects of offering a political endorsement on the celebrity was the effect on the income generating capabilities of the endorsing celebrity, which is categorised conceptually as economic capital. Based on the views expressed by the participants, it was anticipated that a decline in a celebrity endorser's social capital would have a direct impact on their income generating capabilities, that is, a decline in their economic capital. Loss of fans can translate into a loss of patronage of the celebrity's product.

When asked about the possible effects of making a political endorsement on the income generating capabilities of a celebrity, the FDG participants indicated through their

responses that a decline in a celebrity's social capital does not necessarily translate into a decline in his or her economic capital. Some participants suggested that celebrities might, in fact, *gain* economic capital through the endorsement process based on their perception that most of the celebrities who endorsed political parties or candidates did so for financial gain. This view can be deduced from the illustrative quotes below:

“I see them to be going into business, thinking about the risk and gain involved. They looked at what the others who have done it before and look at where the profit lies they also go to those parties”. (FGD3, R4, 44yrs, Female, NPP)

“I see it as a contract between the celebrities and political party. The celebrities market the political parties and the political parties pay them for their services”. (FGD4, R1, 31yrs, Male, NPP)

“...the bottom line is these celebrities endorse political parties for a purpose. Some are gaining appointment, some are gaining money”. (FGD5, R1, 41yrs, Male NDC)

The excerpts above indicate that celebrity political endorsers gain financially from the political party/candidate they endorse. In the third quote, respondent 1 suggests that celebrity political endorsers obtain more than money in that some of them are subsequently appointed to political office if the endorsed party wins. Both of these are considered a gain in the celebrity's economic capital.

The general perception of most of the participants can be conceptually interpreted, that celebrities' “economic capital” usually declines following a political endorsement. For example, they might experience a decline in their career or business, which the participants perceived to be a consequence of having offered an endorsement of a particular political party or candidate. The participants expressed the view that even celebrities who gain money from the endorsement from the political party or candidate ultimately incur financial loss in their professional livelihood in their original field. This view is evident in the quotes below:

“I feel bad about the celebrities who openly declare support for political parties... the musicians who campaigned for the NPP during the 2008 elections has lost some of their fan base and it has resulted in a decline in their income. I think it is because of the way we practice our politics in this part of world as compared to the matured democracies”. (FGD4, R4, 29yrs, Female, NDC)

“...a musician like Lucky Mensah complained of low album sales following his support for the NDC. I think he has generated a lot of enemies because of his support for the NDC”. (FGD4, R2, 30yrs, Male, NPP)

“...for example if you are a musician like Kwabena- Kwabena, and you are with a such a political party, you may organize a show and then people who are not party supporters will not want to come”. (FGD5, R3, 50yrs, Male, NPP)

“Just like Mr. Beautiful, who supported Mahama, I heard after the elections he has not been starred in any movie”. (FGD2, R6, 39yrs, Male, NPP)

In the first three quotes above, the participants made a direct reference to the decline in a celebrity’s social capital resulting in a decline in his or her economic capital. Respondents 2, 3 and 6 offered examples of celebrity political endorsers who experienced a decline in their economic capital, which the participants attributed to their political endorsements, since the declines happened after the general election. On the basis of the participants’ comments on this theme, it can be posited that celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates during general elections tend to experience a decline in their social capital and economic capital. This perceived effect of political endorsement was addressed in the interviews with celebrity endorsers; their responses regarding how the endorsement of a political party or candidate affected their fan base, career and finances can be found in Chapter 7.

### **6.3.2 Participants’ perceptions of celebrity political endorsers**

The final theme analysed in this chapter is the participants’ perceptions on whether celebrities should offer political endorsements. The analysis offers insight into the participants’ opinions about celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates during general election campaigns. These opinions are considered in relation to the age, gender and political affiliation of each participant in order to assess whether these demographic details generally correlate with their views on celebrity political endorsers. The participants were asked about their perceptions of celebrities who endorse political parties. Mostly, they expressed the view that there was nothing wrong with celebrities offering in political endorsements, but their sentiments were mixed as to whether celebrities should endorse political parties and candidates during general election campaigns. In FGD2, for example, the participants deliberated on this point as follows:

**Respondent 1:** There is nothing wrong with it. I think you should be who you are, if you are fond of any political party you shouldn't be shy [about] saying it. We all belong to one country, so if a celebrity supports a political party you shouldn't stop liking them. (FGD2, R1, 39yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 4:** I think these celebrities are showing their interest in that political party. (FGD2, R4, 39, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 2:** I don't think it is wrong for anyone supporting a political party. I think they should feel free supporting a political party. (FGD2, R2, 24yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 3:** But for the utterances on the campaign platform used by the celebrities, was a bit way-ward. That is how I would put it. (FGD2, R3, 40yrs, Male, NPP)

**Respondent 5:** Well is okay, for them to support a political campaign, but my problem with them is how they tend to carry their campaign messages. You are supporting a political party, you should just go ahead to promote what they are saying, but you shouldn't go ahead to paint the other party black; but you should remember, when the person is elected or gets to become the President, how far would the person take you to. How long have you built your career? That you should tarnish the reputation of another person. I think their choice of words and the strategies they use; they should consider the good and the bad side to project the right cause. (FGD2, R5, 45ys, Male, NDC)

In the above discussion, the participants suggest that they understand why celebrities engage in political endorsement, suggesting that celebrities have the same rights as other citizens and therefore must be free to express their political affiliation and preferences in the same way that every other citizen is allowed to do. Respondents 3 and 5, however, cautioned that although there is nothing wrong with celebrities endorsing political candidates/parties, they should carefully consider what messages they communicate to potential voters as part of the campaign.

In FGD3, however, some of the participants expressed negative views about celebrity political endorsers. These participants offered various reasons for their negative attitudes towards celebrities who engage in political endorsement, as seen in the following excerpt:

**Respondent 4:** I see them to be going into business; thinking about the risk and gain involved. They looked at what the others

who have done it before and look at where the profit lies; they also go to those parties<sup>9</sup>. (FGD3, R4, 44yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 6:** I also see it as show business. I have always supported C.K. Mann since childhood because of his music; I wouldn't stop liking his music if he should support NDC or NPP. I see it that, he is doing it for money which I cannot give him; I will still support his music. I had a problem with Lucky Mensah, because he didn't strategic his plans well enough before endorsing the NDC. (FGD3, R6, 49yrs, Male, NPP)

**Interviewer: What is wrong with these celebrities supporting political parties?**

**Respondent 5:** Most of these celebrities don't really have in-depth idea about the policies of the country, so they don't think before they endorse the political parties. They are just concerned with the money, and not what these policies will do for the citizens of the country. (FGD3, R5, 57yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 4:** For these celebrities forgetting their status in society and supporting these parties because of money, I don't agree with them. (FGD3, R4, 44yrs, Female, NPP)

**Respondent 2:** I see these musicians are just concerned with the interest of making money. (FGD3, R2, 56yrs, Male, NPP)

Amongst these respondents, the prevalent belief is that celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates do so mainly as a business venture or as a way of earning money from the political party they endorse, and this creates a credibility issue. Respondent 5's negative perception of celebrity political endorsers is based mainly on her belief that celebrity political endorsers lack knowledge about political policies, which is reflected in their choosing to endorse political parties or candidates even when their proposed policies will not be beneficial to the people of the Ghana. She felt that, rather, the celebrities were concentrating on earning money from the endorsement. Respondent 4 expressed concern about celebrity endorsers not being cognizant of their status in the society. What she seems to be suggesting is that they are either unaware of the influence of their celebrity capital or they are choosing to sell that capital for money in endorsement deals with political parties. The excerpts from the two FGDs are examples of the perceptions expressed within the discussions that took place in all of the focus groups, irrespective of the age, gender and political affiliation of the participants. Whilst the respondents

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<sup>9</sup> The participant is referring to celebrities choosing to endorse particular parties because from experience celebrities endorsing such parties are paid more. This is a rumour since there was no way of confirming this perception.

perceived that there was nothing wrong with celebrities engaging in political endorsements, a majority of them indicated that they would rather celebrities refrain from making endorsements. The views they expressed suggest that the majority of the participants had a negative perception of celebrity political endorsers.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter detailed the analysis of the content of the FGDs in order to understand the perceptions of the participating voters regarding the use of celebrity political endorsement in political party's and candidate's campaign efforts during general elections. In addition to answering the research questions, the analysis was undertaken to examine the concept of celebrity capital in two ways. The first was to whether the celebrity capital of entertainment and media celebrities can be utilised in the political field through the process of endorsement to afford an advantage to the endorsed political party or candidate. The second was to examine whether the celebrity capital of celebrities from the media and entertainment fields is affected by such endorsements.

Based on the participants' responses, celebrities would seem to be excellent political endorsers because of the capital they possess, a fact which has already been established in Chapter 2. The participants' comments seem to suggest that celebrities from the entertainment and media fields have different kinds of capital which can be utilised by political parties and candidates through the endorsement process. These types of capital, as conceptualised on the basis of the statements made by participants in the focus group discussions, include visibility capital, social capital, and cultural capital. The first of these comes from their ability to attract media coverage and public attention to campaign rallies, which can increase the attention a political party's or candidate's campaign receives. The campaign can then use this additional attention to enhance its ability to promote the party's or candidate's message amongst potential voters. The second type of capital, social capital, can be deduced from the participants' suggestion that a celebrity's star power can attract their fans to a political campaign and make political candidates that have otherwise been perceived as being too conservative or outdated look attractive and cool. The last type, celebrity capital, can be derived from the respondents' comments about the image values associated with a celebrity, which can be transferred to the

endorsed political candidate or party (McCracken, 1989; Maurstad, 2004; Driessens, 2013).

However, the FGD participants were of the opinion that, in Ghana, although celebrities from the entertainment and media fields are selected for offering endorsements because of the aforementioned kinds of capital in their celebrity, they are often unable to translate their celebrity capital into political advantage for the endorsed candidate or party. The participants suggested a number of reasons for the inability of these celebrities to migrate their celebrity capital from the entertainment and media fields into the political field. One reason is that the celebrity capital of political celebrities and celebrities from other fields is seen as more credible to voters than that of celebrities from the entertainment and media fields. Thus, unlike entertainment and media celebrities in the Western world, celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields in Ghana are incapable of attracting massive media attention to a campaign, fail to benefit the campaign in terms of fundraising (rather, they often have to be paid or otherwise incentivised in exchange for their endorsement, as a result of which they take funds from the campaign), and they generally do not have a good image value that can be transferred to an endorsed political party or candidate. Nevertheless, the participants conceded that the celebrity political endorsers discussed in this study have the ability to make candidates/parties appear attractive and “cool” to potential voters, especially by performing on campaign platforms.

The participants offered some suggestions about how political parties or candidates can effectively utilise celebrity political endorsements as an aspect of their political marketing during election campaigns. In particular, the participants indicated that in order for an endorsement to be effective, political parties/candidates must select a celebrity who will be seen as credible, has a genuine passion for the party/candidate and has a powerful message that will be attractive to voters. This suggestion is summed up by Wheeler’s (2013) assertion that successful celebrity political endorsers must be able to draw a crowd, create a persuasive political narrative consistent with the political agenda of the party or candidate they are endorsing, and be able to use popular culture to communicate effectively with voters. Participants were of the opinion that these qualities are generally lacking in entertainment and media celebrities, thereby rendering them, for the most part, ineffective in influencing voters during election campaigns.

Furthermore, the use of celebrity endorsers should be specifically targeted, since endorsements do not have an effect on all voters. According to this study's participants, voters who have strong values, beliefs, partisan identification and/or preferences will not be convinced to change their vote based on a celebrity's endorsement of a particular political party or candidate. This argument is supported by the literature on voting behaviour (Popkin, 1991; Gelman and King, 1993; Holbrook, 1996; Campbell, 2000). Also, the participants expressed the view that entertainment and media celebrities may be effective in influencing young voters, a finding which also finds support in previous studies that have concluded that celebrities have become the primary role models for young people in particular (Brown, Basil, & Bocarnea, 2003) and are viewed as highly trustworthy, believable, persuasive, and likeable (Silvera & Austad, 2004; Till & Shrimp, 1998). However, the discussion in FGD6, which was comprised exclusively of young, first time voters, challenged this notion. The comments made by these participants suggested that although young people see celebrities as role models when it comes to voting, they rely on their parents and immediate family members as their trustworthy and believable source of political information. In assessing the role of celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns of the NDC and NPP parties, what all of the participants could agree on is that such endorsements were generally more useful in making a political party or candidate attractive to voters rather than in convincing the electorate to vote in favour of the endorsed candidate/party.

Finally, regarding the effects of offering political endorsements on the celebrity endorsers, most of the participants concurred that both the social and economic capital of celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates decrease as a result. The findings from the focus groups unearthed potential contradiction in participants' comments. This suggest that participants seem to have complicated often contradictory views which might represent tensions around the legitimacy and influence of celebrity endorsements.

The key issues raised in the focus groups were subsequently discussed in the in-depth interviews with political party campaign managers and celebrities who endorsed political parties or candidates in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. These interviews are analyzed in the next chapter.

# Chapter 7 – Analysis of the Interviews

## 7.0 Introduction

The previous analysis chapters assessed the role of celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 general elections election campaigns based on the media coverage of such endorsements (chapter 5) and the perceptions expressed by voters who participated in the focus group discussions (chapter 6). The results indicate that while celebrity political endorsements receive very little media coverage, conceptualised as “visibility capital”, as a percentage of overall campaign news, the focus groups see celebrity political endorsements as a valuable political campaign strategy because they make campaigns exciting and attractive to voters. The findings from the focus groups show a complex picture of perceived benefit of engagement and awareness-raising. This is balanced against the risks for parties/candidates around the scepticism over the authenticity of endorsements (such as paid endorsements) in the 2008 and 2012 general elections.

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted with NPP and NDC campaign managers and celebrity political endorsers from the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns. The aim of the analysis is to answer **RQ4** and **RQ5** which offers insights into the reasoning behind the use of celebrity political endorsements in the campaigns of the NPP and the NDC political parties as well as behind the celebrities’ choices to offer endorsements during these two elections. The analysis also looks at the perceived effects of such endorsements on endorsed political parties and candidates and on the celebrity in relation to the findings from the media content analysis and the focus groups. The in-depth interviews allowed respondents to provide their perspectives, based on their experiences (May, 1997:109), on the use of celebrity political endorsement as a strategy employed in the campaign efforts of the NDC and NPP political parties in the 2008 and 2012 Ghanaian elections.

As explained in the methodology chapter, the analysis adopts Wetherell and Potter’s (1988) interpretative repertoires framework by looking at each of the interviewee’s

accounts of the roles and effects of celebrity political endorsements in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The transcripts were read several times to discern themes that could be used to answer the research questions, react to perceptions expressed in the focus groups and examine the theoretical concept of celebrity capital. The logic behind analysing the interviews after the media content and the focus groups is to enable producers (campaign managers) and participants (celebrity endorsers) of the election campaigns to explain their intentions, which can then be compared and contrasted to the media coverage and the voters' views of the campaigns in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of the role of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns in Ghana. This analytical strategy is similar to Mazzoni and Ciaglia (2014) research on how Italian politician are managing the celebrification of politics. By comparing and contrasting the data from content analysis with that of interviews conducted with media professionals and politicians' spokesmen, their analysis was able to show the Italian specificities regarding the transformation of politicians into celebrities.

As explained previously, the two groups of interviewees were purposefully sampled. Interviews were conducted with the four campaign managers for the NDC and NPP political parties for 2008 and 2012 general elections as well as with five celebrities who endorsed either of the two political parties during the election periods under investigation<sup>10</sup>. Details on the sampling are provided in the methods chapter (Chapter 4).

This chapter is divided into two sections, with the first section analysing the interviews with the NDC and NPP campaign managers, which answer **RQ4**, about the campaign role of celebrity endorsements according to the political parties. The second section analyses the interviews with the celebrity political endorsers in order to answer **RQ5** which concerns the role of celebrities in election campaigns according to celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates.

The ideas of campaign marketing, celebrity endorsement and celebrity capital, discussed in chapter 2, were the organising themes which form the focus of the analysis in this chapter, since these are the themes that frame the analysis of all of the data.

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<sup>10</sup> Campaign Managers and Celebrity Endorsers are identified by numbers according to when they were interviewed. So CM1 refers to campaign manager 1 and so on while CE1 refers to celebrity endorser 1 and so forth. These have been explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4).

## 7.1 Campaign Marketing Strategies in Ghanaian Elections

Previous research in the field of political marketing indicates the need for a formalised campaign marketing strategy if a political party is to be effective in its campaign efforts (Newman, 1994; Nimmo, 1999; Coxall, Robins and Leach, 2003; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Smith and Hirst, 2001). Previous studies have also claimed that the use of celebrity political endorsement can be a critical part of the political marketing-mix, especially when integrated into campaign communications strategies (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2002). Since this research is situated within the wider political marketing literature, one of the key questions that was posed to the campaign managers who were interviewed was whether the 2008 and/or 2012 campaigns had developed a formalised campaign strategy, and whether the use of celebrity political endorsements was part of that strategy. On this topic, the two political parties' demonstrated different outlooks, with the NPP relying on a formal, research-based campaign strategy, according to the two campaign managers interviewed. This is expressed in the quote below:

...we drafted a campaign strategy that was approved by the entire campaign team, and like any other strategy, the focus was to identify the region, constituencies we were likely to win, the challenges that was involved, the constituencies where we could cross ups; where anybody could win, and therefore devise specific strategy that could enhance our chances. In both the parliamentary and presidential [campaigns], we had an elaborate comprehensive campaign strategy. **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

The NDC campaign manager, on the other hand, confessed that the party lacked a formalised campaign strategy for the general elections, choosing rather to develop their campaign in reaction to what the party faced on the campaign trail and what their opponents were doing. He explained:

When it comes to political campaigning, you have to be very careful about formal strategies. You meet and discuss and look at various scenarios. But to develop your strategy as you go along to respond to the environment you are operating. There were many documents and strategies. As campaign manager, if you have experience in field work, you know that some things are [theoretical]; some things will not work on the field. But you

pick and see what will work. **(CM-2, NDC Interview, February 2014)**

It is difficult to ascertain whether having a formal campaign strategy to market political parties and candidates helps the election fortunes of the parties/candidates in Ghana or not. This would require research into all the campaign strategies of the two parties since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992. In addition, there are some political marketing studies that advocate adopting a campaign strategy but do not state whether these strategies need to be formal or not (Wring, 1996; Lees-Marshment, 2001; White and de Chernatony, 2002; Mensah, 2011). The quotes above suggest that both parties had campaign strategies, but the NPP chose a formal strategy based on research while the NDC relied on a reactionary type of campaign strategy. As far as the election outcomes of 2008 and 2012, the NPP lost both elections despite its formal campaign strategy whereas the NDC, using an informal, reactionary campaign strategy, won both elections.

On the question of whether celebrity political endorsements were part of the parties' campaign strategies in 2008 and/or 2012, the campaign managers' responses reflected the kind of strategy their party had adopted. Thus, for the NPP, celebrity political endorsement was not part of the originally developed campaign strategy in 2008. According to the campaign manager from that year:

We may not have initially thought about that, but as the campaign train left the station, we realised there was lot of interest with respect to celebrities wanting to be part of the programme, so eventually, we amended it, so eventually it became deliberate. **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

The NPP campaign manager indicates that the party's campaign strategy was amended to include the use of celebrity political endorsement mainly because celebrities offered their services, and this was seen as an opportunity for the campaign to gain advantage. The NDC campaign manager, on the other hand, reported that celebrities were not needed for the 2008 campaign because the party's presidential candidate had his own celebrity status that could be utilised as capital.

Well, every election is different. In 2008, one of the things that [challenged] the campaign was the death and resurrection of Professor Mills. That in itself made him a celebrity and a sensational person. Some would ask, who is this man koraaa<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Koraa is a Ghanaian expression for emphasis.

who has died several times and has [been] resurrected<sup>12</sup>. Then at the run-off, people began to take positions... those [celebrities] had not publicly identified themselves with NPP came to our side...' (CM-4, NDC Interview, March 2014)

The interview excerpts above reflect the different strategies developed by the two parties in the 2008 elections regarding the use of celebrity political endorsers. While the NPP realised the advantage that celebrity endorsers could offer their campaign, the NDC relied on the celebrity capital of their presidential candidate and only made room for celebrity endorsers during the second round of elections, when some celebrities offered to endorse the party/candidate.

Regarding the 2012 elections, both campaign managers admitted that the use of celebrity political endorsers was part of their campaign strategy. However, the strategy was adopted differently by each party. Following their success in 2008, the NDC followed the same reactionary campaign marketing strategy, which involved opting to use celebrity political endorsers when they could offer an advantage to the campaign.

It wasn't like a formal, where we met and said let's use celebrities. When you get to a point and there is a celebrity who is sympathetic and you will think that at a particular point he would be useful, why not?' (CM-2, NDC Interview, February 2014)

The NPP campaign manager stated that celebrity political endorsements were part of the formal campaign marketing strategy in this election. He suggested that not properly integrating celebrities into the initial campaign strategy in 2008 resulted in confusion, as a result of which their endorsements did not translate into political advantage for the party.

We looked at what happened in 2008... What we realized in all our surveys is that, and in fact the current demographics is that, sixty-eight percent of all the voters are under the age of forty, and the younger ones are not barely interested the message, I mean the surveys we did in the universities [revealed that students] were tuned out; secondary school students were more tuned in to the campaign. And we also realized that, as young people they had a natural leadership intermitted musicians like Sakordie, Mzbel and all of those, and the idea was that if you had this people around you in the campaign, you could attract the audience...' (CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2013)

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<sup>12</sup> Professor Mills the NDC presidential candidate for the 2008 general elections was rumoured to be so ill that he was dying and this rumour was widely covered in the media though it was denied by his campaign team. That is what the campaign manager was referring to in the quote.

The campaign manager is suggesting that for the NPP, the adoption of celebrity political endorsement as part of the 2012 campaign strategy was based on research they had carried out on the effective utilisation of a celebrity's capital for political purposes. The responses of the campaign managers indicate that whether celebrity political endorsement is part of a formal campaign strategy or a reactionary campaign strategy, both parties recognised the value of celebrity political endorsements, conceptualised as celebrity capital, as part of the campaign marketing mix. This recognition informed the decision to use such endorsements during the respective campaigns.

## **7.2 The Selection of Celebrity Political Endorsers**

Establishing that both political parties had some kind of campaign marketing strategy for the 2008 and 2012 elections which included the use of celebrity political endorsement leads to the question of how celebrity political endorsers were selected by the political parties. This is based on the fact that previous research on celebrity endorsement has consistently focused on the selection of the right celebrity endorsers, that is, ones who will have the desired effect on the target voters (e.g. Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin et al., 2012). Thus, it is relevant to understand what qualities (which can be conceptualised as capital) political parties in Ghana considered when selecting celebrity political endorsers. The party campaign managers listed a number of qualities considered in the selection of the celebrity endorser, which are discussed thematically in the following sections.

### **7.2.1 Party Affiliation**

The first criterion mentioned by the NDC and NPP campaign managers was the celebrity's party affiliation or membership. The importance of this quality is reflected in the following excerpt:

**CM-1:** Of course, in politics one thing is that they are loyal, that they are members of our party or they have sympathy to our party. There are public perceptions about them ought to be positive, otherwise you are going to endanger yourselves. They must be seen to have large following of young people, they are popular. So those were the criteria.

**Interviewer:** So it was important the celebrity chosen is a member of the party or a sympathizer.

**CM-1: That is above all. (CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

The NPP campaign manager mentioned several qualities that the celebrity should have in order to be considered by the party as an endorser. He reiterated that the first consideration is that the celebrity should be a member or a sympathiser of the party. This view is also supported by the NDC campaign manager, who said:

I would say I didn't check their membership card, but I guess for them to have joined the campaign, they must have been sympathetic; they liked the personality of the candidate. **(CM-2, NDC Interview, February 2014)**

The campaign managers suggest that all of the celebrity endorsers for the NPP and NDC parties in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns were either card-carrying members or sympathisers of the endorsed party. Party membership or affiliation as a selection criterion for celebrity political endorsers has not been mentioned in any of the previous literature on celebrity endorsement, whether from the political marketing or celebrity studies perspective. This might be because none of these studies included party campaign managers in their samples. In the case of Ghana, the focus group participants expressed the view that a celebrity's party membership or affiliation was an indication of his or her credibility as a political endorser. The FDG participants stated that most of the celebrity political endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns were not, to their knowledge, necessarily affiliated with the party they endorsed, nor were they seen to necessarily believe in the party's campaign message. This perception is contradicted by the campaign managers' statements regarding the selection of endorsers.

The focus group participants' opinions were based on their perception that celebrities endorsed political parties or candidates because of financial incentives offered to them in exchange for their endorsement. In order to ascertain the likelihood of this being the case, the interviewed campaign managers were asked whether financial incentives were offered to attract the right celebrity endorsers to the campaign. The NPP campaign managers maintained that celebrity political endorsements were made on a purely voluntary basis. The evidence that they provided was the fact that most of the celebrity endorsers were party members. One NPP campaign manager said:

We didn't pay them for anything... well, we paid especially when it came to the studio work and not their performance, the

studio, remixes and all that, then we paid the studio work and not the artist. **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014)**

The NPP campaign managers insisted that any payment given to celebrities during the 2008 and 2012 campaigns was not an incentive or payment for the endorsement but only compensation for specific costs that the celebrities incurred in providing their endorsement, such as the hiring of a recording studio to produce campaign songs and jingles.

The NDC campaign manager similarly stated that all of the celebrity endorsements they received were entirely voluntary, and that the celebrities received no payment for their involvement in the campaign.

I don't recall approaching anybody. Most of them came. I can't say other people approached them but from my point of view, most of them came. None of them was paid. **(CM-2, NDC Interview, February 2014)**

The NDC campaign managers were of the opinion that the celebrity endorsers were the ones who benefited from making endorsements, since being part of the campaign helped the careers of some of the celebrities.

You are going on a campaign trail. You hear this one wants to come; this one wants to come on the campaign platform. I think it was also a way of they marketing themselves... some of them had the career going down. **(CM-4, NDC Interview, March 2014)**

The campaign managers from both parties state that the perception that celebrity political endorsers were given financial rewards for their endorsements, as expressed by focus group participants, is not based on any factual evidence, even though some of the participants found support for their view in media stories.

According to the NPP managers, any payments that were made to celebrity endorsers were strictly reimbursement for specific services, such as studio work, rights to music or concert performances that had nothing to do with their endorsement of the party or candidate. According to the interviewed NDC campaign managers, everything that the celebrities did for the campaign was purely voluntary; no payments were made to them, either for the endorsement or for services. However, taking the views of the focus group participants into consideration, backed by incidents reported in the media, it is difficult to believe that at least a few celebrities did not offer their endorsement because of

financial incentives. For further clarification and possible verification, the celebrity endorsers who were interviewed for this thesis were asked about financial incentives for endorsement. The interviewed celebrities included several who were named by the focus group participants and in media content as having received financial rewards for their endorsement. Their responses are in the second half of this chapter.

### **7.2.2 Celebrity Social Capital**

Previous research studies on celebrity endorsement have noted that celebrities possess a network of fans who can be influenced to behave in a certain way because of the relationship they perceive to exist between themselves and the celebrity. This network of fans has been conceptualised as a celebrity's social capital. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986:286). This means that the amount of a celebrity's social capital depends on the number of people that can be mobilized among his or her fans. The fan network commanded by a celebrity was the second most important criterion considered in the selection of celebrity political endorsers, according to the interviewed campaign managers. The NPP campaign manager stated that:

Particularly, celebrities have a following and, as you know, like anywhere in the world, celebrities have captured audience... They must be seen to have a large following of young people, they are popular. **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

Thus, he suggests that the value of a celebrity endorser to the party's campaign can be measured in terms what has been conceptualised in this thesis as the celebrity's social capital, which in this case is the size of the celebrity's fan network, as these would be the people most likely to be attracted to the campaign as a result of the endorsement. A similar view is espoused by the NDC campaign manager.

The fact they have a following and therefore people see them... that these were people who some of them were on this side, all of a sudden a lot more of those people are now on this side. It sends an unconscious message... **(CM-2, NDC Interview, March 2014)**

This campaign manager indicates that receiving endorsements from celebrities with a large fan base sends a message to the fans which can affect their voting decisions. This

‘unconscious message’ resonates with theories from previous studies (e.g. Kuehl, 2010; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008) about how a celebrity’s fans see that celebrity as part of their social group through para-social interaction and are influenced by the celebrity in their decision-making processes through social comparison. Consequently, selecting a celebrity political endorser with a large amount of social capital- i.e. a large fan network- was deemed important by the campaign managers of both parties, and this view is supported by the literature.

### **7.3 Roles played by celebrity political endorsers in election campaigns**

The literature on celebrity endorsement recommends combining the selection of the right celebrity political endorser with giving him or her the right roles and functions within campaign marketing in order to have the desired impact. Kuehl (2010) lists four functions that celebrity political endorsers can play in a political campaign in order to successfully influence their fans’ voting decisions.

1. Creating awareness and publicity for the endorsed party or candidate;
2. Influencing voters, especially undecided and first time voters;
3. Providing a uniqueness factor, for example in the form of rhetorical force;
4. Optimizing investment transfer from the celebrity to the political candidate.

Based on Kuehl’s list, the campaign managers were asked about the key roles that celebrity political endorsers played during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The analysis of these functions and roles revealed that, to a notable extent, the roles played by the celebrity in either the NPP or NDC campaign reflected the kind of campaign strategy being pursued by the party. For instance, the NDC campaign manager admitted that in both 2008 and 2012, the party did not adopt a formal strategy, either generally or regarding the use of celebrity political endorsements, which is reflected in the fact that the celebrity endorsers were not assigned clearly defined roles. Rather, they were given ad hoc functions as and when the campaign determined that their presence would make a difference. The NPP, on the other hand, assigned functions to the celebrity endorsers based on their formal campaign strategy.

Secondly, the functions assigned to celebrity political endorsers in each of the campaigns varied depending on the parties' perceptions of the imagined voting public, which were key to the formation their overall campaign strategies. The functions enumerated by Kuehl (2010), above, were adopted by this thesis to serve as comparative themes in analysing the roles played by celebrity political endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns of the NPP and NDC in relation to the campaign focus of each party.

### **7.3.1 Attracting young and first time voters to the campaign**

Prior studies on celebrity political endorsement have identified young and first time voters as one of the key demographics that celebrities can influence (e.g. Jackson, 2007; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011). For this reason, one key function assigned to the celebrities who endorsed the NPP was attracting young and first time voters to the campaign and the party's candidate. For the NPP, a key characteristic of their imagined voters, based on their research, was that they were young and would be voting for the first time. Celebrities were identified as key in the strategy of attracting such voters to the party/candidate especially in the 2008 general election campaign.

Originally, we may not have thought through the role they would play. As we did some more surveys, it became increasingly clear that Akuffo Addo will attract much more easily the youth than the adult population. His best area was the youth, the women. Celebrities have a greater attraction with younger people, so we began to focus. **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014).**

The 2012 NPP campaign manager said that a similar strategic role was adopted for celebrity endorsers that year.

...the 18 to the 22 [year olds] unfortunately was a very large number, and so to me the idea was to get to come closer as possible. The music itself was okay, the artist and so on were the source of attraction, and it allowed us to bring these people who would normally not come to hear what we actually had to say. ...if Sakordies says, "I'm coming to play today", people will come from all over, so use that criteria... **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014)**

Based on the NPP campaign managers' statements, research on how to reach younger, and first time voters was a determining factor in the role assigned to celebrity endorsers in the election campaigns of both years. Celebrities were assigned this function because the campaign managers thought this was how they would be most effective since their

fan networks were comprised mainly of young people. This was a key demographic that the NPP wanted to attract.

The NDC, on the other hand, perceived their imagined voters differently. Unlike the NPP, the focus was not on the age demographics of their imagined voters but rather on the regional demographics, and the functions assigned to celebrity political endorsers in the campaign reflected this view. The NDC campaign manager commented that:

You know celebrities are mass appealing. They appeal to people. Some you could see they are stronger in some regions than other, so I look at the situation where here, they will be more useful, so you spend more time on the stage. In another place, they are not useful, so they stay back. (CM-2, NDC Interview, March 2014)

The comments from the campaign managers reflect the views of each party regarding the characteristics of their imagined voters, i.e. the ones being targeted by their campaign efforts. Celebrity political endorsers were therefore used to attract the voters whom the parties deemed to have some attachment to the celebrities. Comparing the views of the campaign managers to those expressed in the focus groups revealed that, irrespective of the perceptions of political parties about their imagined voters, for the voters themselves, the influence and attraction of a celebrity political endorser is very much dependent on his or her social capital. Consequently, the ability of a celebrity to attract voters to a political party's campaign is mitigated by the amount of social capital he or she possesses.

### **7.3.2 Celebrity Endorsers as a rhetorical force in the campaign**

One of the functions of celebrity political endorsement in campaigns, as suggested by Kuehl (2010), is performing at campaign rallies, and thereby offering rhetorical force. This function refers to the role of celebrity political endorsers in the dissemination of a campaign's message, either at rallies or in advertisements. The analysis entailed looking at whether celebrity endorsers served as part of the campaign's rhetorical force. All of the campaign managers confirmed that celebrity political endorsers heightened the rhetorical force of their campaigns, mentioning in particular the production of jingles and voice-overs for campaign advertisements and speaking at campaign rallies. The campaign managers explained that their intention in having celebrities as part of the campaigns rhetorical force was based on their perception of the unique rhetorical qualities that celebrities, especially those from the entertainment and media fields, possess. One of the NDC campaign managers commented that:

[Celebrities] had their own way of carrying the message across in their own way. The thing is that they are able to get the message across without people realising that they were getting that message across. The people will be laughing but at the end of the day, they get the message across. **(CM-4, NDC Interview, March 2014)**

This campaign manager refers to the rhetorical skills of celebrities which allow them to deliver the campaign message of the political party or candidate to voters. In his view, this has a way of subtly influencing the voting decisions of the electorate. One of the NPP campaign managers expressed a similar view:

...you could attract the audience, you could bring them and somewhere in between you could bring the political message. The musicians were used mainly as an attraction within it to deliver short political message. ...it allowed us to bring these people who would normally not come to hear what we actually had to say. **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014)**

The two campaign managers suggest that celebrities have rhetorical skills that can offer an advantage to political parties in terms of courting voters during campaigns. This has been conceptualised in this thesis as “rhetorical capital”. There is nothing specific on the use of celebrities’ rhetorical skills in endorsements in either the political marketing or celebrity studies literature. Kuehl (2010), however, alludes to it in suggesting that celebrity endorsers can serve as part of the rhetorical force of a political campaign, and notes that celebrities bring a uniqueness factor to the rhetoric of campaign messages. This uniqueness factor encompasses the performance capacity of a celebrity endorser to act, speak and sometimes write in a way that will be recognised and perhaps heeded by their audiences. It is this unique way of communicating campaign messages to potential voters that the campaign managers seem to be describing in explaining the intention behind their campaign’s use of celebrity endorsers.

A comparison of the campaign managers’ stated intentions with the perceptions of the focus group participants and the media coverage of celebrity endorsements indicates that the endorsers’ rhetoric did not have the desired impact in any way. In the media analysis, most of the articles that were coded under the theme of controversy were about the campaign rhetoric of the celebrity political endorsers, especially at campaign rallies. The focus group participants were of the opinion that celebrity endorsers were not effective communicators of the campaign message because they lacked political knowledge and were ill-informed about the policies that voters found relevant. Given the low levels of

media coverage of celebrity endorsement discussed in Chapter 5, with the evidence of some voter scepticism about celebrities' political knowledge which emerged in the focus groups, the rhetorical value of celebrity political endorsements might not have been as valuable as campaign managers believed.

### **7.3.3 Creating awareness and publicity for the endorsed party/candidate**

The literature conceptualising celebrity as capital offers new insight into the qualities found in celebrity, theorising celebrity capital as comprising attention, visibility and media capital (van Krieken, 2012; Cronin and Shaw, 2002; Davis, 2010; Collins, 2007; Driessens, 2013). This means that when a celebrity is associated with a cause or an event, they are able to transfer their visibility, attention and media capital to that cause or event. Thus, in the case of celebrity political endorsers, their endorsement of a political candidate or party is expected to attract high visibility, attention and media coverage to the campaign of the endorsed party. This is supported by Kuehl's (2010) notion that one of the functions celebrity endorsers can play in a campaign is creating awareness and publicity for the campaign. The campaign managers interviewed for this thesis confirmed that one of the main roles assigned to celebrity endorsers in both the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns was bringing visibility to the candidate and to the campaign, as well as making the campaign attractive, especially to young voters to encourage them to come and listen to the candidate's message. One NPP campaign manager explained:

...the 18 to the 22 [year olds] unfortunately was a very large number, and so to me the idea was to get to come closer as possible. The music itself was okay, the artist and so on were the source of attraction and it allowed us to bring these people who would normally not come to hear what we actually had to say... if you total up to forty, 68% are voters, so this data should tell you the clusters by age, where they are and their proportions, so if you wanted to rely on the [50-70 age bracket], you are dealing with a very small population, they wouldn't come in the sun and listen to you, so you couldn't use that medium to attract them, because they are more discerning and they are paying school fees, spending money to raise their families, so they are tuned in. So the adverts and door to door we targeted and these kids you need to make them feel happy, you need to bring a certain environment in order to attract them, to educate them. **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014)**

The NPP campaign manager indicates that the use of celebrities to create awareness and publicity for the campaign was based on the campaign's construction of the voting public. Advertisements were used to create awareness and to publicize the campaign to older

voters, who are thought to have more political knowledge, while campaign rallies were designed to appeal to younger voters, who are expected to be attracted to them because of the presence of a celebrity. This intention is supported by the opinion expressed in the focus groups that celebrity endorsers attract a lot of young people to campaign rallies. The findings from the analysis of the campaign managers' stated intention in comparison to the opinions of the FDG participants suggest that celebrities are able to bring visibility and attention to a party's and candidate's campaign amongst potential voters. The data from the analysis of media coverage, on the other hand, demonstrate that celebrities are not similarly effective in generating media visibility and attention to a political party or candidate through endorsement. This finding is discussed further in the next chapter.

#### **7.4 Perceptions of Effects of Celebrity Political Endorsement**

The previous sections analysed the intentions behind the NPP and NDC campaigns' use of celebrity political endorsements during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The analysis also examined the process of selecting celebrity political endorsers for the campaigns and the roles that were assigned to them. These were then compared to voters' perceptions, as expressed by participants in the focus groups, and the media coverage. This section presents the effects of the strategy, the choice of celebrity endorsers and the roles assigned to the endorsers on the campaign and on voters from the perspective of the campaign managers. Their perceptions can then be compared to those of voters, namely, the focus group participants. This is significant because within the literature on celebrity political endorsement, no study to date has solicited the views of the people running election campaigns regarding the effects that celebrity endorsers have on campaign outcomes. It must be stated however that a study conducted by Mazzoni and Ciaglia (2013) interviewed spokespersons of political candidates. The focus of their research is however different from this current study since their focus was on the celebrification of political candidates and not on celebrity political endorsements of election campaigns.

##### **7.4.1 Effects on the campaign team**

When questioned about the effects of celebrity endorsements on the campaign team, in terms of campaign management and strategy, all of the campaign managers expressed negative opinions. They suggested that celebrity endorsers were often disruptive to the campaign and created conflict amongst team members. These effects can be attributed to

each party's strategy in terms of the roles given to celebrity endorsers in the campaign, as discussed in section 7.3 of this chapter.

According to the campaign managers, members of the campaign team saw the presence of celebrity endorsers and their roles as a distraction from the core campaign message that should be propagated amongst the voting public. The lack of knowledge about politics and the issues that are important to voters, evident in the rhetoric of the celebrity endorsers, was perceived by campaign team members as showing a lack of seriousness about the real issues affecting the people of Ghana, which team members felt should be the focus of the campaign. One NPP campaign manager explained how celebrity endorsers' lack of political knowledge causes disruption to the campaign:

One of the battles I lost ...these musicians who wanted to advertise themselves for now or for the future ...I want to speak for only two minutes, talk a lot of rubbish, dilute the message... People still don't understand that it is not their place to speak and that the message has to be left to the candidate... **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014)**

The NDC campaign manager expressed a similar view:

In some ways, in certain places where the people were very traditional, I have had complaints about the situation where maybe some of the jokes they said- the elderly and more conservative people felt a bit uncomfortable. I had that kind of feedback. **(CM-4, NDC Interview, March 2014)**

The campaign managers suggest that the role of celebrity endorsers in promulgating the campaign message did not always have a positive impact, as the rhetoric of the celebrities sometimes became a distraction from the core campaign message. That is to say, the celebrity's comments sometimes became the focus of discussion and attention rather than the party's message. The campaign managers also perceived that in their function of attracting attention and visibility to the campaign, celebrity endorsers could rather cause a disruption by shifting the focus of attention from the party and candidate to the persona of the celebrity. One campaign manager commented that:

...sometime people felt the concert and fun was getting too much that it was creating an impression that about our candidate because the public perception about him on this issues were synchronized with what was happening, and so we had to be very be cautious at one point and say we have had enough...' **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

This campaign manager indicates that celebrity endorsers sometimes became disruptive to the campaign because the focus on the celebrity sometimes resulted in the transfer of the wrong kind of meaning from the celebrity to the candidate or party, which might not be the kind of meaning that the campaign wanted associated with it. This view resonates with the meaning transfer model in the literature (Pease and Brewer, 2008; McCracken, 1989), wherein the symbolic meaning embodied by the celebrity can be transferred to the endorsed candidate or party. According to the campaign managers, this transference may not always be positive, as it might not be the meaning that the campaign wants to be associated with.

#### **7.4.2 Effect of celebrity political endorsement on voters**

Previous research on celebrity political endorsement has predominately focused on the effects of such endorsements in terms of their influence on voters' decision making (Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008). The results of these studies have been mixed because they have looked exclusively at the effects of endorsements from the perspectives of voters using experimental methodologies. In addition, these studies have been conducted after the elections they consider, making it difficult to ascertain whether the outcome was affected by the endorsement or not. In seeking the opinions of campaign managers as well as voters on the effects of celebrity endorsements, this study offers a dual perspective encompassing the views of both the producers of the campaign as well as the recipients of the campaign messages. Therefore, the campaign managers were asked to assess their party's strategy of using celebrity political endorsers in relation to the roles the endorsers played in the campaign and, with that assessment in mind, to describe the effects that celebrity endorsements had on potential voters from their point of view. The campaign managers expressed the opinion that measuring the impact of a celebrity political endorsement is difficult since its effects can only be estimated in terms of their perception of how target voters have received it. One of the interviewed NPP campaign managers concluded that:

Very difficult to say... with respect to the celebrities, it may not have been too useful because people may have thought we were more interested in fun, these concerts, it had some negative implication for us, and so I can't be 100 percent sure of what impact it may- well, but I'm definitely sure the youth made a positive contribution. ...these whole celebrities in our society basically are people that are in music and the drama and

entertainment. Public perceptions are still negative about many of these people. ...because of the image of entertainment celebrities. **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

The campaign manager says he does not know but concedes that the celebrity endorsers might not have had the desired effect on some of the party's target voters. This assessment was reached by his linking the perceived capital of the celebrity with the actual roles he or she played, leading him to conclude that they were effective in targeting young and first time voters. However, he also identifies several negative qualities of the celebrity endorsers, such as a bad reputation, which seemed to have transferred to the party and its candidate through the endorsement process, thereby having a negative effect.

The NDC campaign manager, on the other hand, felt that although the effect of the endorsement on the public's voting intentions is difficult to measure, the celebrity endorsers indeed had some impact on voters.

It is difficult to say... very difficult to say. ...every vote counts. I don't think it will be fair to discount their contribution. Everybody made their contribution. They made an impact. The fact they have following and therefore people see them... that these were people who, some of them were on this side, all of a sudden a lot more of those people are now on this side. It sends an unconscious message to Ghanaians. **(CM-4, NDC Interview, March 2014)**

Three relevant points can be derived from the comments of the campaign managers on the effects of celebrity political endorsements on the public's voting intentions. First, their responses clearly demonstrate the difficulty of assessing the amount of influence a celebrity's endorsement has on voters; a similar sentiment was expressed in the focus groups. This difficulty has also been noted by previous researchers (Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Wood and Herbst, 2007; Morina et al., 2012; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Kuehl, 2010; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008). The findings from this study and from previous research demonstrate that crediting celebrity endorsers with election outcomes is difficult because such assessments occur after the elections, as is the case with this research, and separating predispositions and other political cues that sway voting preferences from the influence of a celebrity endorsement is problematic.

The second point relates to the transfer of celebrity capital to the political field and whether this capital can be used there for political advantage. Responses from the campaign managers can be interpreted as suggesting that celebrities bring all of the capital

with them when they migrate to the political field, but while some of this capital can offer an advantage to the endorsed party, such as the attention and social capital, others, like reputation capital, might actually hurt the campaign. The analysis revealed that when celebrities from the media and entertainment fields endorse political campaigns, the campaign team might not have control over which of the celebrity's capital has the most effect. This is discussed further in Chapter 8.

The final point concerns the perception of the campaign managers that celebrity endorsements have the greatest influence on young voters, especially those who are voting for the first time. This perception finds credence in previous studies on celebrity political endorsement, which suggest that such endorsements are most likely to sway the political dispositions of young people (e.g. Austin et al., 2008; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011). However, this view contrasts with the comments made by participants in focus group six, who were all young people who had voted for the first time in 2012. These young voters stated that while they admired certain celebrities who had offered an endorsement in the 2012 election, their voting preferences were, in the end, influenced only by their parents and close family members. Their response reflects the findings of Wood and Herbst (2007) and O'Regan (2014) research on young adults that concluded that family members are more likely to influence first-time voters than celebrities. According to them, this is due to the fact immediate family members shape early influence on young people's political orientations, values and views. This finding was mentioned to the campaign managers during the interviews. One campaign manager commented on it thus:

In our own case it may well be something we will have to take a second look at, particularly with respect of the candidate we had at that time. He did not attract elderly voters. It was always a problem. So if indeed the elderly were advising their children, maybe it wasn't very much in our favour... if indeed they are listening to elders to make the decision, to the extent that they will be more influenced by the values, disposition of their family. Now it is going to be very selective... it is going to be based on the standard of that individual. They can be very useful but one has to be very careful in making the selection. I think because we had not planned it and it evolved as we went along.  
**(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

The above quote captures the surprise of the campaign manager at the information that celebrity endorsers affecting young people might not be true in the case of Ghana. He

stated that this new information necessitated a re-evaluation of the role that celebrity political endorsers should play in upcoming election campaigns, and the marketing strategy of using celebrity endorsers to attract young voters must be reassessed. Another campaign manager, however, expressed the opinion that this information should not cause the value of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns to be completely discounted.

That is very true, the influence of parents on first time voters is very strong. The parents, family trait, and locality... In fact one observation we made was that, for young toddlers, five, six, if you see them dancing to NPP music, for example, their parents are also NPP. We played the very catchy Lumba song and then some children will walk away, their parents are NDC because, they have seen and understood, when they dance to it their parents will not be very happy... what we do is to continue to grab them, apart from parental influence there is symbolic influence... so that they also will get exposed to what we are saying, so at a certain age they can make their own choices [away] from their parent's influence. What you have done now is to make them curious... **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014).**

This campaign manager suggests that the influence that celebrity political endorsers might have on young people might not immediately translate into votes from this demographic, especially since they are usually dependent on their parents and close family members, but that it can plant the seeds for a different political outlook in the future, when they are more independent. This view finds support in Wood and Herbst's (2007) and O'Regan (2014) finding that young people, especially first time voters, are influenced by their parents and close family members because of their dependence on them for their daily sustenance. This campaign manager also accepted that the influence of celebrity endorsers is likely to create a strong intention in a young person to vote in a certain way, but that influence is diminished when the celebrity is endorsing a different candidate than the one supported by the young person's parents or close family members, upon whom they rely for their livelihood (Wood and Herbst, 2007; O'Regan (2014). However, he was of the opinion that the influence might be evident in the person's future voting decisions, when he or she is no longer under the influence of their parents or close family members. This perception finds some support in the comments of one FGD participant, who stated that his voting preferences might change from those of his parents and relatives when he became independent (see chapter 6, section 6.3.3).

The analysis of the interviews with the campaign managers contributes to understanding the role of celebrity political endorsement in campaign marketing during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns in Ghana, especially when the intentions behind the use of such endorsements, expressed by the campaign managers, are compared to the perceptions of voters and the media coverage of the campaigns. The contribution of this study's findings to the understanding of the concept of celebrity capital in relation to the political field is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

## **7.5 Perception of Celebrities on Political Endorsement**

The second part of this analysis chapter presents the findings from the interviews with celebrity political endorsers. The focus of these interviews was gleaned the celebrities' intentions in choosing to engage in political endorsement, how they perceive their role in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns, and what they saw as the effects of their endorsement, both on the campaign of the political party/candidate they endorsed and on themselves as celebrities. As mentioned earlier, previous research on this phenomenon has focused predominately on the perspectives of voters (e.g. Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008). This thesis, in examining the role for celebrity endorsement in Ghana, sought the views of celebrities who endorsed political parties in addition to those of voters and of party campaign managers. This is the first study to consider the perspective of the celebrity endorser regarding celebrity political endorsement. The themes used for the analysis are similar to those used for the interviews with campaign managers in order to allow for comparison between the different perceptions and views expressed. The analysis of the interviews with the celebrity endorsers are then compared and contrasted with the findings from the interviews with campaign managers, the opinions expressed in the focus groups, and the media coverage of the endorsements, in order to provide a complete picture of the role that celebrity endorsement played in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns of the NPP and NDC parties.

### **7.5.1 Celebrities Decision to Endorse**

Research on celebrity political endorsement has heretofore focused on the influencing capabilities of celebrities as the reason for their selection as political endorsers. This is

founded on the belief that celebrity endorsers can help political parties and candidates to reach a target audience and gain acceptability within a particular demographic segment, which might then translate into a meaningful showing in an election (e.g. Kelman, 1961; Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012). Such studies have drawn similarities between celebrity endorsement of brands in commercial advertising and of political candidates and/or parties in political campaign communications. However, two important aspects of the latter phenomenon are disregarded through the use of commercial brand advertising concepts. First, while prior research provides insight into the persuasive qualities of celebrities within the political sphere, it does not demonstrate why and how celebrities wield such persuasive qualities within a given political and media system. Second, celebrities are always paid for brand endorsements, but the literature fails to explain why celebrities offer political endorsements and what they gain by doing so. Therefore, interviewing celebrities who endorsed political candidates or parties in the 2008 or 2012 election campaigns in Ghana afforded the opportunity to ask celebrities themselves about these points. The celebrities interviewed for this study gave various reasons for making such endorsements, which reveal certain themes. One reason given was the celebrity's membership or affiliation with the political party as a factor in their decision to endorse the party. Two of the celebrity endorsers interviewed were card-carrying members of the political party they endorsed. One of them explained:

I'm a card-bearing member. I became a member since 2007. That is not what informed my decision. My decision to join the party was because of its hierarchy- I saw the party in power was ex-president Kuffour's regime. For the 8 years he ruled, I felt very impressed with lots of changes, lot of things we had never heard of... that alone convinced me. **(CE-3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)**

Another celebrity said that although he was not a member of the party he endorsed, he consistently votes for it in every election, and that was the motivation behind his endorsement.

Another reason the celebrities gave for engaging in political endorsement was their affinity for the candidate. Four of the celebrities mentioned this as one of the reasons behind their decision to endorse. Out of these four, two said that they were neither members of the party nor committed to the party as voters, and that their endorsement was for the presidential candidate and not the party because they liked the candidate.

‘No... Am not. I supported the candidate... I knew the candidate personally... I knew him when I was a parliamentary correspondent as a journalist, and he was a young MP by then. I could relate to him and I have met him beyond politics in and out of Ghana. So I thought I could make impact or try to... I think I can associate with the ideology of the NDC but I would not have gone on the platform if for not the candidate. **(CE-2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)**

This excerpt represents the primary motivating factor in the celebrities’ decisions to engage in political endorsement. Even when the motivation is their admiration for the candidate, the celebrities still demonstrate some sympathy for the party ideology, as the above illustrative quote also mentions. This is a necessary condition because of the nature of the country’s political system wherein candidates are not independent of their party; it is the political party that selects which candidates to put forward in elections. Thus, political candidates are representatives of the party. This explanation supports the campaign managers’ assertion that party membership or affiliation was an important criterion in the selection of endorsers in the election campaigns.

Another theme that was discussed with the celebrity political endorsers regarding the reasons for their endorsements was financial incentives. The celebrities were asked whether their decision to endorse was informed by any kind of inducement, such as financial compensation from the political party or candidate, as this was a perception expressed in the focus groups and sometimes backed by media stories. All of the celebrities interviewed gave a different response to this question. Some were emphatic in their denial of receiving any kind of financial compensation. An example of this reaction is this quote from a celebrity endorser of the NPP:

Totally, I helped them a lot. I supported them wholeheartedly without charging any penny. I did it for free because I said to myself if I decided to charge anybody, then the protection of God will never cover me... **(CE4, NPP, Interviewed June 2014)**

Similarly, an NDC celebrity endorser was very offended about the suggestion that he had received any form of incentive and that this was a reason for his decision to endorse.

100%...No, ever, ever... and have been asked on many platforms and I challenged people to come out if they have ever paid me... I have said it on radio, TV and print and nobody has come out because I wasn’t paid.’ **(CE2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)**

The answer given by this celebrity was particularly relevant because he is one of the celebrities whose name was mentioned in the focus groups as someone who had endorsed the NDC party because he received some form of inducement to do so. This perception is widespread because there were media stories that claimed that this celebrity had been compensated for endorsing the NDC and helping the party to win the election.

The other celebrities interviewed admitted to having received payment, but argued that it could not be classified as an incentive for their endorsement. One celebrity referred to the money he received as reimbursement for a specific service that had nothing to do with the endorsement. According to him:

I wasn't paid; I wouldn't say I was paid... Because nobody sat with me to actually negotiate any fee with me. So I wasn't paid. What we had to do involved money... like production, we had to do a video, and we had to do songs. We had to produce duplicate CDs. We had to spread it around...yes. **(CE 3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)**

He suggests that the payment was not to him as a celebrity endorser but rather the money was given to be used to pay for services he provided that helped the campaign with their marketing.

Another celebrity stated that the campaign gave them money, food, travel expenses, and some allowances.

'No... nobody paid us. The only thing is that we were given food, and once in a while, we were given allowances because we were trekking, sometimes one month we are on the road. I remember sometimes we asked the big man for financial support but nobody paid us. Nobody paid anybody, it was voluntary. **(CE5, NPP, Interviewed Jan 2015)**

This celebrity insists that the money he received was not a financial incentive for the endorsement but was merely a campaign allowance to support his campaigning efforts. One of the celebrity endorsers, however, declined to answer the question and rather chose to refer to the controversial stories in the media about payment for his endorsement by the NDC party.

I would not have loved to answer this particular question, but in Ghana, everyone heard of the issue that transpired after the 2008 elections. As to whether I was paid or not, I don't want to answer... money was not a motivating factor. **(CE1, NDC, Interviewed April 2014)**

The responses of the celebrities, as presented above, indicate that inducement of any kind, including financial, was not a motivating factor in the celebrities' decisions to endorse political parties and candidates. At the same time, the perception expressed in the focus groups about celebrities receiving money cannot be completely discounted since both the campaign managers and celebrity endorsers acknowledged that there were sometimes financial arrangements of some sort between them, including allowances, compensation for studio work or putting on concerts and entertainment shows for the campaign, and reimbursement for expenses incurred during the campaign season, like transport, hotel and food. None of the celebrity endorsers or campaign managers mentioned that any celebrities had made financial contributions to the political campaign they endorsed, as is the norm with celebrity endorsers in most Western democracies. Neither did any of them mention celebrity involvement in fundraising efforts. Thus, the perception amongst voters that celebrity endorsers are paid for their endorsements is not entirely true, but also cannot be completely discounted since they receive some monetary rewards from the campaign. The reasonable conclusion is that celebrity endorsements were not motivated by financial arrangements but might include them. The endorsements were motivated by membership or affiliation with the endorsed political party, affinity for or a relationship with the candidate, and/or belief in the endorsed political party's policies.

### **7.5.2 Functions of Celebrity Political Endorsers in the Campaign**

The literature on celebrity political endorsement suggests that celebrity endorsers can help political parties and candidates to reach a particular target audience and to gain acceptability within a political market. The interviews with party campaign managers uncovered the roles that celebrity endorsers were assigned in the campaigns. This section describes how the celebrity endorsers perceived that their qualities (i.e. capital) were utilized by the campaigns in the roles they played. The celebrities interviewed for this study mentioned two main roles that they were assigned.

#### **7.5.2a Visibility and publicity for the party/candidate**

One key quality of celebrity is the ability to generate attention and visibility, or in other words, visibility and attention capital (van Krieken, 2012; Collins, 2007; Heinich, 2012; Driessens, 2013). The allure of celebrity is the ability to command fickle public attention, and this is one quality of the celebrity political endorsers that was utilised in the campaign efforts of the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The celebrities acknowledged this as one of their functions in the campaigning efforts of the endorsed party or candidate. The

aim was to make the party and candidate more attractive and visible to the voting public. This role included giving performances at campaign rallies and putting on concerts. One celebrity endorser commented thus on the activities this role entailed:

A lot because I remember once I was standing on the platform, there were so many people up front and they came closer and said, [celebrity's name]<sup>13</sup>, it is because of you. Many people were happy about the idea and the song too was serious. When you listen to the song you can see that there is power behind the song. **(CE4, NPP, Interviewed June 2014)**

This view is supported by another celebrity endorser, who said:

Yes... of course, I would say especially in 2008. We had hosts of concerts and they were all packed, especially the one I remember very well was the one at the Independent Square, which was so packed. I would say it really pulled people. It was one of things that I would say brought out the funky side of Nana Addo [NPP presidential candidate]. **(CE3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)**

These quotes show how the role of generating attention and visibility for the endorsed party/candidate involved various activities. Their accounts are supported by the interviews with the campaign managers, which were discussed earlier in the chapter. They maintained that through entertainment, people would be attracted to the campaign rallies, which would expose them to the campaign message of the party/candidate. The focus group participants also expressed the view that the concerts and entertainment performances given by the celebrity endorsers, especially at campaign rallies, served as a way of attracting potential voters. However, the literature on celebrity capital sees attention and visibility capital as mostly created through a sustained media presence (Collins, 2007; Heinich, 2012; Driessens, 2013). This view is not supported by the findings of this study, which suggest that celebrities are able to generate attention and visibility through their performances, especially on campaign rallies, but that their ability to generate media visibility and attention, especially positive attention, is negligible. Awareness of this quality of celebrity political endorsers in Ghana informs the activities that celebrity endorsers participate in to generate visibility and attention for the campaign.

#### **7.5.2b Celebrity endorsers as part of a campaign's rhetorical force**

The political marketing literature identifies the method of delivery for campaign communications as an important aspect of political campaigns (Collins & Butler, 2002).

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<sup>13</sup> The celebrity is referring to himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person using that to mimic conversations he had with his fans.

Lee-Mashment (2003) and Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman (2011, 2014) identified message dissemination as one of the key elements in the development of a strategic relationship between politicians and political parties on the one hand, and voters or potential voters on the other hand. The political activities of celebrity endorsers have been recognised in the literature as one of the strategies that can be integrated into campaign communications (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2002). The role of celebrities in the rhetorical force of election campaign marketing was recognised and acknowledged by the NPP and NDC party campaign managers and by voters, based on the comments of the focus group participants. . The celebrities interviewed for this study also recognised their function as part of the rhetorical force of the campaigns. This view is expressed in the illustrative quote below:

...it made a lot of difference because even if I get up and say nothing at all, the crowd will come. The crowd will go like “YEEYEE.” People will come and listen to what is going on and some were like once [celebrity’s name] is affiliated to this party, then we must join her. I told them I won’t join anything for anything’ sake. I tell them this is a good party. They will do something for the women, the children, the vulnerable, the poor, there will be rule of law... (CE5, NPP, Interviewed Jan 2015)

This celebrity endorser expresses the opinion that the message that she gave on the campaign platform made a difference to voters. This view supports the assertion of the campaign managers that having a celebrity endorser be part of the campaign’s rhetorical force benefitted the campaign because the celebrities have a way of reaching potential voters through how they communicate campaign messages. However, the views expressed in focus groups seem to suggest that celebrities in fact contributed very little to the campaign rhetoric since most of them were thought to have very little knowledge or understanding of the kind of message that would resonate with potential voters. This perception is reflected in the negative media coverage of celebrity campaign rhetoric. The campaign managers admitted that they did not know whether celebrity endorsers’ campaign rhetoric had the desired effect. However, the celebrity endorsers interviewed felt that their role as disseminators of the campaign’s message had been successfully accomplished as evident in the illustrative quotes above.

### **7.5.3 Celebrity Endorsement Effects**

As described in Chapter 2, previous research on celebrity political endorsement has concentrated on the ability of celebrities to influence voters; that is, on the effects on

political outcomes (Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs's, 2012; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008). In this thesis, however, the effects of celebrity endorsements are evaluated not only in terms of their impact on potential voters but also on the campaign and on the celebrity endorser. In this section, the effects are explained from the point of view of celebrity political endorsers.

### **7.5.3a Effect on the Campaign Teams**

The effect of a celebrity endorsement on a campaign refers to how the relationship dynamics of the campaign team are affected by the presence or activities of celebrity political endorsers. Campaign team dynamics mimic the constant struggle for positioning and dominance amongst the various actors in a social field, in this case, the political field (Bourdieu, 1991). The presence of celebrity political endorsers in the campaign team marks the migration of celebrity from the entertainment and media fields into the political field, which could distort this struggle for power and dominance. Therefore, examining the relationships between the campaign team and celebrity endorsers yields insight into how the dynamics of the political field in Ghana shape this migration, and whether celebrity capital is recognised and tolerated as a means of acquiring positioning in the political field.

The participants in the focus groups expressed the belief that celebrity political endorsers are rewarded for their endorsement, sometimes by receiving subsequent political appointments (see chapter 6). This would suggest that celebrities sometimes offer political endorsements in order to propel themselves into political recognition, which can result in being appointed to political office. The campaign managers indicated in the interviews that celebrity political endorsers were seen by the campaign team as a distraction to the campaign and that their presence sometimes created conflict. The inference can be drawn from this that campaign team members recognise that celebrities' status can change the power dynamics within the team, and their reaction is to resist this influence. On the basis of this perception, the celebrity political endorsers were asked whether, in their view, their celebrity shifted the power dynamics and whether they were aware of any resistance from campaign team members.

The celebrities all expressed their unawareness of the implications of their celebrity on the struggle for power and dominance amongst members of the campaign team. They did,

however, offer insight into the relationship dynamics between them and campaign team members. One celebrity described this relationship as cordial.

I would say the relationship was wonderful because when you are doing something genuinely, you feel like everything goes well with it. Cause people could see how we were happy and it wasn't because of anything like financial gains or whatever. There were no problems, especially in 2008, there were no problems, I would say it was wonderful... **(CE3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)**

Another celebrity saw the campaign team members as adoring fans who were happy that she had graced them with her presence.

We were very nice. I was so nice to them. I think they all admired me and what I was doing for the party. For me to leave all I was doing. But when I stopped and followed the party, I wasn't getting money because nobody paid us, and they admired me for losing all this and following them. Because they saw that I was interested and committed to the party. The policies of the party; anything about women and children hit my heart. **(CE5, NPP, Interviewed Jan 2015)**

These two excerpts illustrate the views of those celebrity endorsers who perceived their relationship with campaign team members as positive or good. Notably, the celebrities who made the statements above are card-carrying members, in good standing, of the party they endorsed. This could mean that they were accepted and recognised in the campaign team as people with authentic political credentials and not as people trying to use their celebrity to catapult themselves into the political field. Having authentic party membership credentials seems to be important in the quality of the relationship between celebrity political endorsers and the campaign team, leading to the acceptance of the celebrity as part of the equal struggle for positioning and dominance in the field and not as a threat. Consequently, the distortion to the power dynamics is minimised and there is less resistance to the celebrity. This idea is supported by the way celebrity political endorsers who were not members of the party they endorsed described their relationship with the campaign team, some of whom mentioned mistreatment. Thus, the analysis revealed that the relationship between the celebrity endorser and the campaign team depends on their affiliation with the party or candidate, which is taken as an indication of the sincerity of their commitment.

One celebrity, who was not a member of the endorsed party, alluded to ill-treatment, conflict and abuse by campaign team members:

Sometimes when you do something for someone and you decide that, out of love, you will do the thing, no matter the outcome, you don't care. A lot of things went on which I cannot explain it, but I took it in good faith. A lot on which I will never say anything about it. I just leave it to God. **(CE4, NPP, Interviewed June 2014)**

Another celebrity recognised that the covert antagonism he experienced from members of the campaign team was a result of being perceived as endorsing the candidate and not the party. This indicates that the celebrity recognised the animosity as stemming from his lack of allegiance to the party.

Cordial... at least... behind the scene, you hear things... but that politics... Nobody has officially had any misgivings, but after the elections have heard a lot about the fact that; we were opportunist, we don't know politics. We think politics is a float town. Some people will not accept that you do it in a concerned way and not their way... of course, it is their party so is either, you come we do it together or stay out... he is pro-Mahama but he is not a member of the party. I have said it a hundred of times openly and some are not happy about it. They are saying it is a bad precedent and like you were saying, if candidate changes, are we going to lose all those votes? **(CE2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)**

These excerpts indicate that the celebrity political endorsers were unaware of how their celebrity affected the power dynamics, especially in the struggle for positioning within the political field. It seems that the celebrities take their status for granted and expect their relationship with campaign members to be like their relationship with their adoring fans. As a result, they are surprised to encounter hostility from the campaign team members. Notably, animosity was only felt by the candidate-centred endorsers, and this is a reflection of the political field operating in Ghana (see chapter 3), which tends to be political party-centred rather than candidate-centred. Thus, the ability to use celebrity capital as a source of power is dependent on the structures of the field, in this case, the political party structure in Ghana's political field (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Sallaz & Zavisca, 2007). Political parties are the vehicles that political candidates use to enter into office; thus, many people feel that allegiance should be to the political party and not the candidate. This means that when celebrities endorse candidates rather than the party itself in order to gain entry into the political field, they face resistance and antagonism from

political party members. However, when celebrities are members of the party that they have endorsed, they are seen as loyal and have a better relationship with campaign team members.

### **7.5.3b Effect on Voters**

The results of previous studies looking at the effects of celebrity endorsements on voters have been mixed because, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, estimating such effects is difficult because voting decisions might be affected by other factors such as political predispositions. In addition, no previous research has sought the perceptions of celebrity endorsers on the effects of their endorsement on potential voters. The celebrity endorsers interviewed for this thesis were therefore asked about the effects that they perceived their endorsement had on potential voters. Not surprising, all of them felt that their endorsement had a positive effect on potential voters. The celebrities who had endorsed the party or candidate that won the election expressed the view that their role helped the party win.

Yes. Because in 2008, the party I did not support was in power. To oppose a party in power was a great risk to take. So I can say my contribution really helped. **(CE1, NDC, Interviewed April 2014)**

Another celebrity political endorser perceived that his endorsement contributed to the party receiving votes from young, first time voters and undecided voters.

I hope so... People say so but myself, I can't really measure that... There have not been any scientific research to come to that conclusion but if people could do that, it will help at a more accurate finding. Students... first time and floating voters. **(CE2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)**

These quotes above reflect the perception of the celebrity political endorsers that their endorsement contributed positively by influencing voting preferences. However none of the celebrities interviewed could provide evidence on the ways they believe their contributions influenced voters. This view is collaborated by the analysis of interviews with campaign managers and, to some degree, by the perceptions of voters in the focus group. They all however admit that there was a lack of a way of measuring their impact scientifically is admitted, making it impossible to evaluate the extent of the influence of a celebrity political endorsement, as noted by previous researchers as well.

### 7.5.3c Effect on the Celebrity Endorser

One area that has not received any attention in the literature is the effect of political endorsements on the celebrities who offer them. This study sought the opinions of the interviewed celebrity endorsers regarding whether the endorsement of a political party or candidate had any positive or negative consequences for them. Their responses are analysed based on the concept of capital. As explained in chapter 2, this thesis adopts Bourdieu's (1991) theoretical construct of capital as a framework for understanding the qualities found in celebrity status. It is these qualities, conceptualised as capital that a celebrity relies on when migrating into a different field, where they serve as a resource that might afford power and advantage within a particular social space. Celebrities engaging in political endorsement can be described as migrating their capital from the entertainment or media field to the political field. However, to date, no study has considered what happens to the celebrity's capital in his or her original field or in the field the celebrity migrated to, which is what this section attempts to understand.

One of the effects of the endorsement on the celebrity can be discussed in terms of social capital. For the purposes of this study, celebrity social capital or 'durable network' (Bourdieu, 1986) refers to the network of fans acquired by the celebrity endorser in his or her original field of entertainment or media. Therefore, the study looked at the effects of the political endorsement on a celebrity's fan network from his or her own perspective. The celebrities interviewed reported different perceptions about how making an endorsement affected their social capital. One celebrity expressed the view that he had gained more fans because of the endorsement, which means that it had a positive effect on his social capital in the form of an increase in the size of his fan network. Another celebrity felt that the endorsement had not affected his social capital.

My fans have been wonderful. Yes, there have been some few ones that actually express their sentiments like I shouldn't. They are like we love you so much they will side-line you; don't do it. My fans are my fans and I know they love me, they love what you do. (CE3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)

This celebrity endorser was of the opinion that his social capital did not change because he believes that his fans are loyal to him regardless of whether or not they liked his political endorsement.

The remaining three celebrity endorsers stated that they perceived a loss of fans which has been conceptualised in this thesis as a decline in their social capital, which they believed to have resulted from their political endorsement. One of them said:

Definitely... we go to stadiums, especially Kumasi<sup>14</sup>... they express misgivings; I don't think they hate... it is about education... when the black stars are playing, the supporters come and some go like Yaw, you didn't try koraaa... Rarely do I get people confronting me. They do it on social media... insults and fabrications. Yeah... absolutely lost fans. **(CE2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)**

Another celebrity noticed a similar decline in fan base, saying

Yeah, some of them... it went down because a lot of them will see you and say [celebrity's name] you didn't try... I had a lot of fans who were northerners... when I went on the political platform of the NPP, they were saying NPP is an Akan party<sup>15</sup> and so I disappointed them... **(CE5, NPP, Interviewed Jan 2015)**

These comments reveal that the political endorsement affected the celebrities' social capital, with the majority reporting a decline in the number of fans. It is difficult to explain why one celebrity endorser credited an increase in his social capital to the political endorsement or why another reported that it had no effect on his social capital. However, the focus group participants suggested that celebrity political endorsers suffer a decline in their fan base or "social capital" because fans who have strong political opinions in favour of parties or candidates competing against the one endorsed by the celebrity show their displeasure by leaving the celebrity's fan network. This view is similar to the one expressed by most of the celebrity political endorsers interviewed for this study.

Another theme in these interviews was the effect of making a political endorsement on what has been conceptualised as a celebrity's economic capital in this thesis. Bourdieu (1986) describe economic capital as capital which is immediately and directly convertible into money. Thus, the effect on economic capital in relation to a celebrity refers here to the effect of the political endorsement on the celebrity endorser's career and income-generating capabilities. In the interviews, the celebrities were asked whether their political endorsement had affected them in this way. Two of them reported that the endorsement did not have any effect on their "economic capital". One said:

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<sup>14</sup> Kumasi is one of the major cities in Ghana and the stronghold of the NPP party.

<sup>15</sup> Akan is the largest ethnic group in Ghana

Interesting... No, I don't think so... am still in the sports media... am doing my sport content on radio, TV... No, I don't think so. (CE2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)

However, the remaining four celebrities stated that the political endorsement they had made had a negative effect on their “economic capital”. One explained the impact of the endorsement on his income-generating capabilities:

Yes, I have been through certain things maybe I wouldn't have gone through if I was neutral. Yes, there have been times where I get to a point where I need to secure endorsement deals with companies; they are scared of my affiliation. I remember there has been one of such of a meeting, at the final stage a member of the board comes out saying they are scared because of my affiliation... the customers- I know it is political. You know, win some you lose some. I mean am still who I am. (CE3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)

This celebrity refers to the loss of commercial endorsement deals because he had made a political endorsement; in one instance, representatives of the company made it clear that they felt some potential customers would be alienated by his politics. Another celebrity described the effects of the political endorsement on her career in the entertainment field:

I went back to my radio work and they said No; I went to TV, they said no, and you know the TV and radio stations embarked to say no to me. Film makers will not call you, for four years, nobody called me. It is quite recently they started calling me... even that the films we are featuring in are international movies, they that are coming from outside, they have seen my past and CV and they have come for me. But those who are Ghanaians are not using me. Yes still, am suffering from that. (CE-5 Interviewed Jan 2015)

As with the effect of a political endorsement on a celebrity's social capital, no reason can be discerned from the data as to why some celebrities experienced a loss of economic capital while others did not. A comparison between the celebrities' comments and those of the focus group participants revealed that the voters who participated in the focus perceived that offering a political endorsement typically affects celebrities' “economic capital” negatively. The latter attributed this loss to a decline in the celebrity's “social capital”. However, this view contrasts with the findings from the interviews with the celebrity endorsers. These findings did not indicate any direct correlation between a decline in social capital and a decline in economic capital. In fact, the analysis of the interviews showed that one of the celebrities who perceived a decline in his social capital

as a result of the endorsement did not suffer a similar decline in economic capital. In the same vein, another celebrity who reported that the political endorsement had no impact on his social capital nevertheless admitted a loss in his economic capital. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that political endorsements affect both the economic and social capital of the celebrity endorser.

The final subtheme that was analysed under the effects of the political endorsement on the celebrity endorser has been conceptualised as political capital in this thesis. Political capital is not one of the capital forms recognized by Bourdieu in his writings. As used in this study, it is based on Dressiens' (2013) assertion that celebrity can become a valuable source of power within the political field. Political capital therefore refers to the recognition of celebrity status as a source of power through which a celebrity from the entertainment or media field can gain some form of political advantage, such as being elected or appointed to political office. Personalities from media background and celebrities from other fields using their high public recognisability and their professional communication skills to transition directly to elected office has been covered extensively in previous literature (e.g. Rafter and Hayes, 2015; Shafer, 2010; Hepburn, 2013). Based on such previous literature the celebrity political endorsers were asked whether their aim in endorsing a political party or candidate was to test their popularity in the political field in order to launch their own political careers. The majority of the celebrities, four out of five, admitted to a certain amount of political ambition, from the desire to run for elected political office him- or herself to seeking political appointments. One celebrity commented that:

This is a decision which I made. During my 45 to 50 when my musical career just been taken aside, I will stand in my area on the ticket as an MP in my hometown, Twifo Praso. I know they will help me a lot because I went to my hometown to launch my album, which was in 2010, the king of that town, immediately he mounted the platform, he said since he become a king or chief in that town, he hasn't seen such massive crowd like that before. Maybe I will [run as an] independent candidate. I want them to see that am a neutral person... **(CE4, NPP, Interviewed June 2014)**

This quote is representative of the sentiments of the majority of the celebrities interviewed. It also demonstrates an awareness of the capital that a celebrity has, such as social capital, which can be exchanged for political capital and utilised in the political field. The comments also give an indication of the celebrities' awareness of the resistance

they may face from political party structures in seeking to use their celebrity capital for to obtain political office. In order to overcome such resistance, the celebrity in the quote above says he might seek elected office as an independent candidate.

This investigation is relevant to this thesis because it offers insight into the extent to which celebrity political endorsers see their endorsement as a means of launching their own career in the political field in Ghana and whether the political endorsement could have the positive impact on the celebrity's accrual of political capital needed to launch such a career. The perceptions expressed by the celebrity endorsers suggest that while the political endorsement was initially seen as a way of accruing political capital, resistance from campaign team members meant that the endorsement would not help the celebrity in this regard. The celebrities recognized that they would, as a result, need to rely on other forms of celebrity capital, such as their social capital, in their quest to gain political capital.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the perspectives of the campaign managers and celebrity political endorsers who shared facts and opinions, based on their experiences, about the role celebrity political endorsement played in the 2008 and 2012 elections in Ghana. This role was discussed in relation to the strategies and techniques employed in the campaign efforts of the NDC and NPP political parties. The in-depth interviews enabled both producers of the campaign (campaign managers) and participants (celebrity endorsers) to explain their intentions and points of view, which were then compared and contrasted with the others and with the media coverage and the voters' reception of the campaigns. This analysis thereby yields a clearer understanding of the role of celebrity political endorsements in election campaigns in Ghana.

The analysis provides a perspective on political campaign managers' decisions to use celebrity endorsers, which is heretofore lacking in the literature on celebrity political endorsement. The campaign managers who were interviewed suggested that the use of celebrity endorsers for election campaign marketing was informed by the qualities in celebrity, that is, capital, especially the social, attention/visibility and rhetorical capital that celebrities possess. The campaign managers indicated that utilizing these capitals through the endorsement process was expected to make the endorsed candidate or party

more attractive and visible to potential voters. As one campaign manager said ‘we felt it [celebrity capital] could rub [off] on us and indeed it may have rubbed [off] on us’. This suggestion is significant for the theoretical concept being used in this thesis. It supports the concept that it is qualities wielded by celebrities, which are conceptualised as celebrity capital, that makes them attractive as political endorsers.

On the other hand, the celebrity endorsers were motivated to offer their endorsement by their membership in the party, their affinity for the party or candidate, and/or as a means of launching their own political careers. Regarding the effects of celebrity political endorsements, unlike previous literature (e.g. Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs’s, 2012; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008) which examined the effects solely from the perspectives of voters, this study considered the perspectives of campaign producers and celebrity political endorsers as well. Their views sometimes conflicted. For example, the campaign managers and celebrity endorsers were of the opinion that the endorsement had the greatest influence on young and first time voters, which resonates with the findings of previous studies, whereas the findings from the focus groups did not support this perception. In addition, the campaign managers stated that the celebrity endorsers had a negative impact on the camaraderie of the campaign team, while the celebrity endorsers were mostly unaware of this effect.

The concept of capital also facilitated the evaluation of the effects of a political endorsement on the celebrity’s capital, both in their original fields and in the political field they migrated to. Three main forms of capital seem to be affected by political endorsements. These are the celebrity’s social and economic capital from their original fields and their political capital in the political field. The findings reveal that celebrities generally suffer a decline in both social and economic capital in their original fields as a result of offering endorsements and at the same time, do not gain any political capital from them. These consequences for the celebrity political endorsers led some to state that they would not offer endorsements in future election campaigns.

In the next chapter, all of the findings from the analyses of the media coverage, the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews with political campaign managers and celebrity endorsers are discussed in relation to the research questions. The discussion uses the findings on political endorsement in election campaigns in Ghana to shed more light

the concept of celebrity capital using Bourdieu's theories of fields and capital to determine whether the concept of celebrity capital as proposed by previous researchers (e.g. Driessens, 2013; van Krieken, 2012; Hunter et al., 2009; Cronin and Shaw, 2002) is applicable in countries where the field dynamics are different from the Western countries in which those studies were carried out.

# CHAPTER 8 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## 8.0 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the role that celebrity political endorsements played in the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns in Ghana using the concept of celebrity capital. A number of research studies have looked at celebrity political endorsement in established democracies like in the United States and Europe (e.g. Kelman, 1961; Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012), and in new, evolving democracies like India, the Philippines and Latin America (e.g. Henneberg, 2007), yet no prior studies have examined this phenomenon in an African country. This study focused on Ghana, an African country in its fourth attempt at Western-style democracy. The political system in Ghana is a hybrid of the American-style executive presidency and British Westminster parliamentary systems. As a result, political parties in Ghana are affiliated with their Western counterparts in Europe and the U.S. and have imported Western campaign tactics and features, such as the use of celebrity political endorsers.

The body of research on celebrity political endorsement thus far has concentrated almost exclusively on their effects on political outcomes, using marketing theories to that end. This thesis argued that empirically estimating the effects and influence of such endorsements is difficult since the effects are measured after the election has been concluded, as is the case with previous studies, making it problematic to credit the outcomes to celebrity endorsement when other complex factors affect voting decisions. The alternative suggested in this thesis is to focus on the persuasive qualities of celebrities which make them attractive as political endorsers, using the theoretical concept of celebrity capital (van Krieken, 2012; Hunter et al., 2009; Collins, 2007; Heinich, 2012; Driessens, 2013). Furthermore, previous research studies have examined celebrity political endorsement solely from the perspective of the receivers of political campaigns, i.e. voters. This thesis examines these endorsements from multiple perspectives: from that

of the campaign managers, as producers of the campaigns, of celebrity political endorsers as an aspect of the campaigns' strategies, of voters, based on their reception of the campaigns, and of the media in terms of how the endorsements were presented to the public. In addition, the thesis explored each groups' perceptions of the effects of the endorsements, not only on voters, but also on the celebrity political endorser and on the political party or candidate's campaign team.

A robust methodology was developed to conduct the empirical study on the phenomenon of celebrity political endorsement in election campaigns in Ghana. This was presented and discussed at length in Chapter 4. The findings of the research were analysed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. This chapter discusses the findings presented in previous chapters in relation to the research questions and the concept of celebrity capital. This chapter also makes the case for a reconceptualization of celebrity capital, based on the findings of the thesis, to build on previous literature that has examined celebrity as a capital. Finally, the chapter discusses the similarities and differences in how celebrity capital functions in Ghanaian politics vis-à-vis in established democracies in the U.S. and Europe, especially with regard to harnessing this capital for political campaigning purposes.

## **8.1 Conceptualizing Celebrity in Ghana**

First, it must be explained how celebrity is conceptualized in Ghana, since this conceptualization is particularly relevant to the research findings. As explained in Chapter 1, many definitions of celebrity have been offered by different scholars (Seifert, 2010; Epstein, 2005; Holmes and Redmond, 2006; Rojek, 2012; Driessens, 2012, 2013, 2014). It was concluded that operationalizing the term celebrity generates epistemological questions concerning empirically studying celebrity due to its fleeting and unstable nature which make it difficult to ascertain the level of recognisability or visibility an individual needs to attain in order to be categorized as a celebrity. In addition, the term celebrity has become a universal generic term that does not provide sufficient cultural, regional or demographic contextualization. However, in order to understand the role of celebrity or the celebritisation of politics in a particular country, the peculiar cultural, regional, media and demographic context must be studied (Street, 2004, 2010). Dressien (2013) notes that “[b]y studying certain individuals as celebrities, we reify what is perhaps, to many people, merely ambiguous or even non-existent” (2013:15). For the purposes of this research, in

order to overcome the ambiguity of the term celebrity, Blumer's (1954) argument that concepts in social sciences should be seen as sensitizing rather than definitive, was relied on. This is because "definitive concepts provide clear specifications of attributes or benchmarks to identify social phenomena while sensitizing concepts suggest directions along which to look "by capturing the commonalities of social phenomena that can be expressed distinctively in their particular contexts" (Blumer 1954:7). Thus, celebrity can only be understood as a sensitizing concept.

The lack of previous research on celebrity culture in Ghana meant that no previous study exists that could be used to explain or capture celebrity as a social phenomenon within the context of Ghana. Understanding the peculiar context of celebrity in Ghana provides the foundation for understanding local people's reaction to celebrities, especially the role that celebrities play in political campaigns. Thus, in the context of this research, it was important to solicit opinions from the participants about how they understood celebrity, and this was done in the focus groups. Focus group participants were asked to write the name of someone they consider a celebrity and also to name their favorite celebrity. 31 focus group participants named a politician as someone they considered a celebrity, and 28 out of the 36 participants named a politician as their favorite celebrity. The findings suggest that politicians in Ghana are considered celebrities, which is not unique since the country, like other democracies, has a highly mediated political system, making politicians very visible. However, high visibility due to a mediated political system has not necessarily turned all politicians into celebrities in all countries. Though not generalizable, what the data from the focus groups suggest is that, contrary to notions of celebrity in many countries and as often conceived of in the literature (Epstein, 2005; Holmes and Redmond, 2006; Turner, 2004; Marsh et al., 2010; Wheeler, 2013) politicians in Ghana can be seen as celebrities over and above those from other sectors. As summarized by Rojek (2012), "Celebrity may be defined as the accumulation of attention capital via self-promotion and exposure management", and in the case of Ghana, the media system (see chapter 3) operates in such a way that politicians receive the most attention, visibility and promotion by the media.

According to Driessens (2013), modern celebrity is a creation of the media, which bestows celebrity status on an individual by providing them with attention, visibility and promotion. This argument is further supported by the fact that when the focus group

participants were asked to name a celebrity from the media or entertainment fields who had endorsed a political party or candidate in the 2008 and/or 2012 election, nine participants could not recall the name of any celebrity political endorser from either of these fields. However, 30 out of the 36 participants could name a politician who had endorsed either the NPP or NDC political party or candidate in one of these elections. This offers further evidence of politicians in Ghana being seen as celebrities and being more well-known than those from other sectors. This means that celebrities migrating from other fields into the political field have to compete with political celebrities in using celebrity as a form of social prestige and in making use of the celebrities' capital in the political field.

These findings have several implications for theories about celebrity political endorsement. Such theories have, to date, classified celebrity political endorsement based on the established conceptualization of celebrity, that is, as coming from the entertainment and media fields (e.g. Kelman, 1961; Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012). This conceptualization fails to make allowances for how a country's construction of celebrity might influence how celebrity is tolerated in the politics of that country. Such a construction of celebrity depends on the country's national culture, media system and political system, including party politics, and provides an indication of the role that celebrity endorsements play in the politics of the country. Without taking such differences into consideration, the theories concentrate on the endorsement of celebrities who tend to come from the fields of entertainment, media and sports to serve as endorsers of a political party/candidate. The theories do not make provision for a situation where the politician, already has more capital in the political field than the celebrity from the entertainment or media field. This is one of the reasons this thesis argues that theories about celebrity political endorsement should move away from applying marketing theories to the political field, as this practice circumscribes an understanding of the persuasive qualities of celebrity political endorsement within a given political and media system. Rather, the adaption of Bourdieu's (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) notion of capital and his Field Theory to celebrity political endorsement offers a better explanation of the influence celebrity can wield in the political arena, especially when celebrities are migrating from other fields to compete with influence already in existence in the political field.

## **8.2 Qualities that make celebrities attractive as political endorsers**

The few research studies that have focused on celebrity political endorsement have explored the premise that celebrity endorsers not only draw attention, but that the image values associated with them can also be transferred to the endorsed product, in this case, a political candidate (Englis, Solomon, and Ashmore, 1994; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997; Till and Shimp, 1998). This view has been championed by researchers who argue that using celebrities for the purpose of political endorsement is a critical part of the political marketing mix involving the co-ordination of all marketing instruments. Celebrity endorsement activities should therefore be integrated into the campaign (communications) strategy (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2002).

The findings from the data suggest that it is the qualities found in celebrities which make them attractive as political endorsers (see Chapter 5, 6 and 7). Looking at celebrities in such terms yields a better understanding of the role celebrities can play within political campaign communication and marketing, regardless of the field the celebrity political endorser comes from. The qualities that makes celebrities attractive as political endorsers, stem from the capital in celebrity, which has been referred to by Driessens (2013) as celebrity capital. However, it is further posited that celebrity capital should not be limited to the accumulation and distribution of attention, visibility or media capital, as previous research studies have maintained (Driessens, 2013; van Krieken, 2012; Davis, 2010; Collins, 2007; Heinich, 2012). What the analysis of the findings of this thesis suggests is that celebrity capital is made up of other forms of capital which also contribute to making celebrities attractive as political endorsers. Some of these conceptualised forms of capital are discussed in context of the findings regarding the role that celebrity political endorsements played in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns in Ghana.

### **8.2.1 Celebrity Visibility/Attention Capital**

Celebrity capital can be used to increase the electability of an endorsed political party or candidate in a general election. One capital which falls under this category is conceptualised as celebrity visibility (or attention) capital as one of the qualities that make celebrities attractive as political endorsers. Visibility capital (Driessens, 2013) has also been referred to by Davis (2010) as media capital and van Krieken (2012) as attention capital. Theorising that celebrity capital embodies attention, visibility and media capital

(van Krieken, 2012; Cronin and Shaw, 2002; Davis, 2010; Collins, 2007; Driessens, 2013) means that when a celebrity is attached to a cause or event, they are able to transfer their visibility, by garnering the attention of the media, to that cause or event. Thus in the case of celebrity political endorsers, the perception expressed by campaign managers, celebrity endorsers, and focus group participants alike is that their endorsement of a political candidate or party will attract attention and media coverage, leading to increased visibility, for the campaign of the endorsed party or candidate. This quality makes Ghanaian celebrities attractive as political endorsers. However, visibility/attention capital as presented in the literature differs from the findings on the visibility capital of entertainment and media celebrities. The key means of the production and distribution of visibility capital within the literature is the media, based on the media's power as the gatekeepers of the public sphere, which have a near monopoly on public attention. This lends credence to the idea that the phrase "the media did not cover it" is synonymous with "there was no broad public attention to this topic" (Tufekci, 2013:2). The literature therefore advocates that the media provide the vehicle through which a political party or candidate gains or is denied public attention and visibility during election campaigns. Thus, the ability of a political party/candidate to sustain and manipulate public attention is key to campaigning efforts, and this is a resource that only the media can provide.

Using previous literature as a guide, celebrity visibility capital was assessed by analysing the media coverage of the two election campaigns as a means of assessing the production, acquisition, and distribution of attention/visibility to the voting public at this time. Therefore, the visibility/attention capital of celebrities from the entertainment and media fields migrating into the political field was examined in terms of the amount and type of media coverage of celebrity political endorsements during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns. The findings indicate that although celebrity political endorsements did attract some media coverage, in comparison with other campaign-related news, especially that showcasing other political actors, the coverage was negligible. This findings suggest that the visibility capital of celebrity endorsers from the entertainment and media fields, in terms of media visibility, contributed very little in terms of attracting media attention to the campaign through the endorsement. What this finding suggest is that as mentioned in Chapter 3, media visibility/attention is monopolised by politicians since media outlets in Ghana are all associated with one political party or the other. This means that the media visibility/attention capital of political actors is greater than that of celebrities from other

fields. In the context of Ghana, the visibility/attention capital that is bestowed on a celebrity by the media therefore depends on the type of celebrity and the field within which they operate.

The interviews with campaign managers, celebrity endorsers and voters who participated in the focus group discussions offered a different view of the visibility capital of celebrity political endorsers in Ghana. Visibility or attention here was found to relate to the attention that celebrity endorsers from the media and entertainment fields can generate for campaign rallies. This means that unlike the literature on visibility/attention capital, which maintains that it is endowed by the media, in Ghana it can be manifested in the form of physical visibility at campaign rallies or by generating public interest in and attendance at them. This is illustrated by the comments of one focus group participant:

Well, I think [it] is their own strategy to get people to them and attract people's ear on the ground to them and all that, because if per say I like Kwabena- Kwabena and he sign up CPP, and they are having a rally here I will probably go because, it's Kwabena-Kwabena. So it's a way of getting people to come there. **(FGD5, R4, Female, 38yrs, NPP)**

As this quote indicates, the attention generation capabilities of celebrity political endorsers makes them valuable to the campaign efforts of political parties and candidates when it comes to organising campaign rallies. The findings support Tufekci (2013) argument that the means of attention acquisition do not start with, or remain limited to, traditional mass media. Therefore, visibility/attention can also be measured by the ability of celebrity endorsers to bring “hipness” and fun to what would otherwise be perceived as boring political campaign rallies, and this can attract more people to attend them.

What the findings demonstrate is that celebrities in Ghana have visibility/attention capital but not necessarily the type endowed by the media, as suggested by previous literature. The findings further suggest that in Ghana, political celebrities occupy a higher celebrity status than celebrities from other fields. As a result, when celebrities migrate from the entertainment and media fields to the political field, their visibility/attention celebrity capital in terms of media visibility/attention becomes negligible because they have to compete with political celebrities for media attention.

Representations of politicians in the media, as is the case in Ghana, have implications for theories of celebrity politicians. This phenomenon has been explored extensively by Davis (2010), who theorises that celebrity politics is a product of mediated media capital, which is linked to media-oriented performances, and to the media-filtered consumption and evaluation of such performances (see Chapter 2). The argument being presented here based on the findings of the thesis on visibility/attention capital is that while the media visibility/attention capital of celebrity political endorsers from the media and entertainment fields is insignificant in comparison with campaign media coverage, such celebrities are very effective in giving political campaign rallies visibility/attention capital. The findings suggest that visibility/attention capital should be assessed beyond media coverage to include an assessment of how the physical presence of celebrities can generate visibility, as within the Ghanaian context, where the visibility/attention capital of celebrity political endorsers is most effective on campaign rally grounds, which might not be reported by the media. This is because visibility is linked to recognisability in social spaces, and during political campaign marketing, a campaign rally serves as a social space where the presence of such celebrity endorsers draws attention.

Though a lack of visibility/attention to a political party's or candidate's campaign is likely to smother any campaigning efforts, the findings from this study also showed that attracting visibility or attention to a political party/candidate's campaign through the use of celebrity political endorsement may not necessarily guarantee the desired outcome of making the candidate or party more attractive to potential voters. This is because visibility and attention capital from the endorsement, especially media visibility, can introduce other threats to a political campaign, as evident from the media coverage of celebrity Grace Omaboe's endorsement of the NPP party in the 2008 election campaign. The coverage was predominately negative and controversial. Consequently, although the endorsement received attention, it did not translate into political advantage for the political party she endorsed. This was further proven by the comments about her endorsement made by the focus group participants and the campaign managers (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

### **8.2.2 Celebrity Social Capital**

Celebrity capital comprises social capital, or what has been conceptualised as celebrity social capital, and this is one of the qualities identified by the thesis as a reason that

celebrities are deemed attractive as political endorsers. Social capital has been defined as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986:286). With regard to a celebrity, it refers to the number of people that can be mobilized within his or her network of fans. The social capital of a celebrity therefore indicates his or her ability to influence their fan network, as part of their social group, in their choice of brands, in this case, a political party or candidate, through their endorsement. This is important because politics is a field that relies on social networks, and celebrities are known to have some of the largest and most influential networks, comprising their fans. This quality of celebrity political endorsers is suggested in an illustrative quote from a focus group participant:

I saw it as a strategy employed by political party for more votes, considering the large following these celebrities have. For example, a musician like Kwao Kesse has a lot of followers, and for Kwao Kesse to declare his support for a particular candidate, it may tempt numerous of his followers to do the same. **(FGD1, R5, 26yrs, Male, NPP)**

This excerpt confirms the perception that using celebrities as political endorsers is a way of looking for votes from among his or her fan base. This view is supported by the campaign managers, who affirmed that one of the reasons for their use of celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields is their fan network. This strategy was shared by one of the campaign managers interviewed thus:

The fact they have following and therefore people see them... that these were people who some of them were on this side, all of a sudden a lot more of those people are now on this side. It sends an unconscious message... **(CM-2, NDC Interview, March 2013)**

The findings suggest that the intention behind the use of celebrity endorsers in political campaigns is based on the hope that the celebrity’s social capital will be transferred to the political field. The influence that the celebrity wields over their fans will then, the thinking goes, translate into political advantage in the form of more votes for the endorsed party/candidate from amongst the celebrity’s fans. However, the findings of this research suggest that celebrities might not have the same influence on their fan network in the political field as in their original fields. Thus, whilst celebrity endorsers brought people

to rallies and their involvement in political campaigns is often entertaining, their influence on voting decisions is not seen as significant. This finding is similar to that of previous research studies (Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Jackson, 2007; Inthorn and Street, 2011) that fans who do not share the same political views as the celebrity either ignore the message from the celebrity or stop being fans. This is supported by the view of a focus group participant:

Most of the crowd that troop to rally grounds mostly go there to see and enjoy these celebrities perform and are not necessarily influenced by the decision of the celebrities to vote for a particular political party. I have been at most rally grounds, especially of my party. When we interview most people who turn up, we deduce they come to see their celebrities and not necessarily because of the political party. Most of them make their mind up and are not influenced to vote for another party. So, I think these celebrities do not really have any effect. **(FGD4, R6, 25yrs, Female, NPP)**

The findings from the thesis suggest a conclusion that one of the key reasons for using celebrity political endorsers in the election campaigns was to attract the celebrity's fans, conceptualised as the celebrity's social capital. However in the case of entertainment and media celebrities who offered political endorsements, their "social capital" did not translate into changing voting preferences of their fans.

### **8.2.3 Celebrity Rhetoric Capital**

One of the roles that celebrity political endorsers were identified to have played, as suggested by the findings from the analysis of the media coverage of the endorsements (chapter 5), the focus group discussions (chapter 6) and the interviews (chapter 7), is being part of the rhetorical force of the campaign, especially on rally grounds and in campaign advertisements. The intention behind using celebrity political endorsers as part of the campaign's rhetorical force, according to the interviewed campaign managers, was based on the perception that celebrities from the entertainment and media fields possess unique rhetorical qualities. As one campaign manager stated:

[Celebrities] had their own way of carrying the message across in their own way. The thing is that they are able to get the message across without people realising that they were getting that message across. The people will be laughing but at the end

of the day, they get the message across. (CM-4, NDC Interview, March 2013)

This performance ability that celebrities from the entertainment and media fields can bring to the political field contributes to their popular appeal as political endorsers because eloquence and the ability to address the public have been identified as a factor in political success (Ribke, 2015). Celebrities from the entertainment and media fields might be skilled in using story-telling and dramatic performance to create an emotional impact, and this skill is useful in the political field. This rhetorical appeal of celebrities is conceptualised in this thesis as rhetoric capital in this thesis. “Rhetoric Capital” can be defined as the practical competence of a speaker “to be able to produce expressions which are highly valued on the markets concerned” (Thompson, 1991:18) because the ability to use language effectively is a powerful communication instrument.

The findings indicate, however, that celebrity rhetoric capital did not appear to have the desired outcome of communicating campaign messages to voters. The primary reason for the failure of celebrity political endorsers to utilise their rhetoric capital in the political field is their lack of expertise in communicating political messages to potential voters due to their perceived lack of political knowledge. The analysis of the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements (chapter 5) showed that media articles that were coded under the theme of controversy were usually about celebrity political endorsers’ campaign rhetoric, especially at campaign rallies. An example of this was a feature article dated Monday, 15 September 2008, found on [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), with the headline “**The Ugly Noises Of An Actress Turn Politician**” (see chapter 5). The findings from this analysis are supported by perceptions expressed in focus groups. Commenting on how the lack of political expertise rendered celebrity political endorsers’ campaign messages ineffective, one participant said:

I will always look out the technocrat and politicians who have the basic and sound understanding of economics, rather than the musicians who comes and talks generally. ‘Cos if you listen to what most of them said during the electioneering time you couldn’t really; a typical example is Yaw Ampofo on Metro TV: Good evening Ghana, he was asked why he supported, why he was endorsing Mahama, he couldn’t even come out with any concrete point, it was just general. But when it comes to choosing or endorsing a political leader, I won’t [go] in for a

celebrity, I will go in for either a technocrat or somebody with a political background. **(FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)**

The campaign managers offered confirmation that the use of celebrities' rhetoric capital in campaign communications did not have the desired outcome, especially with regard to their conveying campaign messages during campaign rallies. One campaign manager said:

One of the battles I lost... these musicians who wanted to advertise themselves for now or for the future... [say] 'I want to speak for only two minutes', [then they] talk a lot of rubbish, dilute the message... People still don't understand that it is not their place to speak and that the message has to be left to the candidate... **(CM-3, NPP Interview, March 2014)**

The findings of this thesis on celebrity rhetoric capital have been observed by previous researchers, although they did not conceptualise it as such. Using the source credibility model, some studies on celebrity political endorsement contend that the effectiveness of an endorsers' message depends on the perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of the endorser (e.g. Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Jackson, 2007; Inthorn and Street, 2011). The findings of this thesis indicate that the skill of celebrities from the entertainment fields in using story-telling and dramatic performance to create an emotional impact, conceptualised as rhetorical capital, did not appear useful in these elections in Ghana because some voters perceived the celebrities as lacking in expert political knowledge.

The need for combining expert political knowledge with celebrity rhetoric capital for effective political campaigning is showcased by Kuehl (2005), who examined Bono's (of U2 fame) political rhetoric to determine what made it effective. The study suggested that Bono used rhetorical opportunity to influence politicians because he did not rely solely on his celebrity rhetorical capital but became an expert in debt relief and poverty through studying with leading economists and debt relief experts. Thus, his thorough knowledge of debt relief and economic affairs showed his dedication and commitment to solving this political issue, which was reflected in his political rhetoric. Celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields in Ghana lack such thorough knowledge about political issues which impacted on their campaign.

### **8.3 Celebrity Political Endorsements Effects**

In the review of previous research studies on celebrity political endorsement in chapter 2, it was concluded that the application of marketing concepts to the political field has meant that the body of research has focused on measuring the effects of celebrity political endorsements on election outcomes (e.g. Garthwaite and Moore, 2008; Zwarun and Torrey, 2011; Inthorn and Street, 2011; Morin, Ivory, and Tubbs, 2012; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Henneberg, 2007). The weakness of such studies lies in the difficulty of empirically estimating the effect and influence of celebrity endorsements. This thesis, conducted years after the 2008 and 2012 elections, faced the same challenge of estimating the extent to which celebrity endorsements influenced the outcome of the two elections. Therefore, it considered the perceptions of various actors of the effects of such endorsements on political outcomes. Second, previous studies on celebrity political endorsements have sought to measure the effects of the endorsement on voters. This thesis proposes that such endorsements have an effect not only on voters but on other players in political campaign marketing as well. It also considered the actors' perceptions of endorsements' effects on political campaigns and on the celebrity, both in their original field and the political field.

#### **8.3.1 The Effects of Endorsement on Voters**

In examining the effects of celebrity political endorsements on voters, the thesis looked at the specific activities the celebrity endorsers undertook in the campaigns, and used media coverage, focus groups and the interviews to assess whether those roles were perceived as effective in influencing voters' intentions. The specific roles that celebrities played during the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns, as identified in the thesis, included appearing in media such as the political parties' campaign advertisements on television and radio, providing voice-overs or composing campaign songs and jingles and appearing at campaign rallies, usually as entertainment to energise the public, and sometimes as speakers. The findings suggest that the intentions behind using celebrity political endorsers for such activities were to take advantage of celebrity visibility/attention capital, celebrity social capital and celebrity rhetorical capital.

The findings from the data analysis (see chapters 5, 6 and 7) provide support for the fact that the effect of celebrity political endorsement on voter preferences is not perceived as high. This is because, as stated earlier in the chapter, celebrity political endorsers did not

bring any significant increase in media attention but only participation in rallies. In addition, there is no evidence that they were able to influence the voting preferences of their fan network, and their rhetoric lacked an influential edge because of their perceived lack of political knowledge, which rendered their campaign rhetoric ineffective.

The findings of the thesis further indicate that the ability of celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields to be influential in the political field is hindered by what can be termed celebrity reputational capital. Celebrity reputational capital is defined by Hunter et al. (2009:140) as celebrities' "public awareness, their favourability, their personality, reputation, and the public's knowledge of past behaviours." This specific kind of capital can be used as a strategic asset to increase their perceived trustworthiness, credibility and reliability when celebrities are employed as endorsers. However, in the specific context of political endorsement in election campaigns in Ghana, the reputational capital of entertainment and media celebrities is undermined by the widespread perception of paid patronage. That is, the analysis of media coverage as well as the focus group discussions revealed the prevalent view that celebrities were being paid for their political endorsement, and this subverts their credibility and trustworthiness amongst voters, thereby negatively affecting their ability to influence potential voters. One focus group participant compared the reputational capital of entertainment and media celebrities in Ghana to that of American celebrities, saying:

I think in Ghana here it's opportunistic. When you go to the U.S... let me give you an example of U.S., Oprah Winfrey supported Obama, and she contributed heavily to Obama's campaign; but outside, those who endorse, they give money to the candidate, but in Ghana is the other way round. That is what they think, impact is not there, the impact it's minimal... (FGD3, R5, 57yrs, Female, NPP)

Such perceptions are supported by similar sentiments found in the analysis of media articles (chapter 5), such as a story from the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Monday, 22 October 2012, sourced from [radioxyzone.com](http://radioxyzone.com) and entitled "**I've not been bribed to campaign for Mahama - Ampofo-Ankrah**". The accuracy of this view is questionable, however, as it is not based on real knowledge of how endorsements are gathered, as suggested in the interviews with campaign managers and celebrity endorsers. Nevertheless, such perceptions undermine the reputation capital of celebrity political endorsers and render null their ability to influence voters through such endorsements.

### **8.3.2 The Effects of Endorsements on Campaigns**

This section discusses the perceived effects of celebrity political endorsements on the political campaigns, specifically in how celebrity political endorsers affected the cooperation of the campaign team members. The rationale for considering this effect is to expand the study of celebrity political endorsement effects to include its effects on other players in political campaign marketing, which constitutes a contribution to knowledge. This thesis has proposed that the qualities embedded in celebrity status, i.e. celebrity capital, make celebrities attractive as political endorsers (Driessens, 2013). A body of research exists that clarifies that celebrity endorsement activities should be integrated into a campaign's communications strategy (Newman, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Henneberg, 2002). This makes celebrity political endorsers' part of an election campaign's marketing team. Because celebrity political endorsers bring their capital to the team, which according to Bourdieu (1991) gives the holder power and advantage within a particular social space, their presence can distort the power dynamics within the campaign team. Therefore, the thesis looked at how the presence of celebrity endorsers affected power dynamics in the team and the reaction of other team members to this distortion.

The findings suggest that celebrity political endorsers faced resistance in using their celebrity capital to gain power advantage in the political field, especially from campaign team members. Such resistance was manifested in the form of conflict with team members and disruptions to campaign. An example of this is found in an article from the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Thursday, 9 October 2008, sourced from *The Enquirer* newspaper and entitled "Maame Dokono haunts NPP". This article depicted a scene of conflict in the campaign team due to the role that the celebrity endorser was playing.

Mrs. Omaboe after that began taking active role in Nana Akufo-Addo's campaign with most of her message being attacks on the former first family and the NDC. According to the party insiders, the defection of Maame Dokono from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to the NPP is welcome news, but her utterances during campaign were not in consonance with the strategies of the party.

The content of this news article is supported by comments made by one of the campaign managers:

...sometimes people felt the concert and fun was getting too much that it was creating an impression that ... about our candidate, because the public perception about him on this issues were synchronized with what was happening, and so we had to be very be cautious at one point and say we have had enough...  
**(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

The antagonism shown to celebrity political endorsers from campaign team members was also noted by a celebrity political endorser:

Nobody has officially had any misgivings, but after the elections [I] have heard a lot about the fact that ‘we were opportunist, we don’t know politics, we think politics is a float town<sup>16</sup>’. Some people will not accept that you do it in a concern way and not their way... of course, it is their party so is either you come we do it together or stay out... he is [celebrity endorser] pro-Mahama but he is not a member of the party. **(CE2, NDC, Interviewed May 2014)**

The data indicate that the animosity felt by campaign team members towards celebrity endorsers stems from the perception that celebrities use political endorsement as a means of acquiring status in the political field. The focus group participants expressed the view that celebrity political endorsers are rewarded for their endorsement, sometimes in the form of political appointment (see chapter 6). Such perceptions fuel the belief that, by offering an endorsement, the celebrities are attempting to use their status to propel themselves into political recognition, which can result in gaining political appointment. This perception of political ambitions on the part of the celebrities creates conflict and antagonism with campaign team members.

### **8.3.3 Effect of the endorsement on the celebrity**

The thesis also examined the effects of a political endorsement on the celebrity endorser. This is one area that has not been considered in either the literature on celebrity political endorsement or that on celebrity capital. These effects could be on their celebrity capital both within the political field they have migrated to and their original field. In the latter, that is, in the entertainment and media fields, the findings seem to suggest an effect on the celebrity’s social and economic capital.

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<sup>16</sup> Float town is referring to towns in Ghana that are considered not to be aligned to a particular political party but are known to swing their votes to different parties during general elections.

First, the analysis of the data seem to indicate that celebrity political endorsers lose social capital in their original field because of the political endorsement. As mentioned earlier, social capital in the case of a celebrity refers to actual or potential resources which are linked to their possession of a durable network comprising their fans. Thus, a decrease in the number of fans the celebrity has accrued in their original field is interpreted as a loss of social capital. All of the different datasets collected for this thesis support the inference that the celebrities' fan networks are affected negatively when they endorse political parties or candidates (see chapters 5, 6 and 7). For example, the media coverage of celebrity political endorsements includes references to the loss of a celebrity's fans as a result of an endorsement, such as **"I've not been bribed to campaign for Mahama - Ampofo-Ankrah"**.

Senior Sports Journalist Yaw Ampofo Ankrah... however added that he has been at the receiving end of insults ever since he endorsed President Mahama and announced his decision to campaign for the President. "If you go to my Facebook, for the last two weeks I have been bombarded with insults and all manner of accusations..."

Similarly, the focus group participants perceived that celebrities who endorse political parties or candidates lose some of their fans from their original field. One participant commented that:

Yaw Ampofo Ankrah, until his endorsement of John Mahama, people really liked him because of his sports programme, but after he had endorsed John Mahama and was later appointed- If you tune into radio programmes, people insulting him a lot...  
**(FGD5, R2, 42yrs, Male, NDC)**

The views expressed by the focus group participants, as in the illustrative quote above, suggest that fans that a celebrity has from their work in the field of entertainment or media who did not like the party the celebrity endorsed, are likely to start disliking the celebrity. This will then result in a decrease in the number of people in the celebrity's fan network, which suggest a decline in the celebrity endorser's social capital. Most of the celebrity endorsers interviewed for this thesis confirmed that this was the case, although one claimed to have gained more fans as a result of his political endorsement. The celebrities linked the decrease in the size of their fan network directly to the political endorsement. One celebrity stated:

Yeah, some of them... it went down because a lot of them will see you and say [celebrity's name], you didn't try... I had a lot of fans who were northerners... when I went on the political platform of the NPP, they were saying NPP is an Akan party and so I disappointed them... **(CE5, NPP, Interviewed January 2015).**

The excerpt above suggests that the celebrity endorser perceived a decrease in the number of her fans because many of them came from a part of the country that predominately supported a political party other than the one she had endorsed.

Closely linked to the effect of political endorsement on a celebrity's social capital are the effects on what is conceptualised as celebrity economic capital. Bourdieu (1986) has defined economic capital as a type of capital which is immediately and directly convertible into money (1986:242). Thus, celebrity economic capital refers to the ability of an individual to use their celebrity status to generate income or money. Previous research studies have noted the ability of celebrity political endorsers, particularly in developed Western democracies, to use their celebrity capital to attract funding and money to a political party's or candidate's campaign through fundraising activities or through the celebrity's own contributions (Pease and Brewer, 2008; Kuehl, 2010; Garthwaite and Moore, 2008). Such studies suggest that celebrity economic capital is one of the qualities that make celebrities attractive as political endorsers, the idea being that celebrities are able to convert their celebrity capital into economic capital in terms of attracting funds, which is crucial to the success of every election campaign.

However, the findings from this thesis suggest a different scenario in the context of Ghana. Celebrity political endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 election campaigns were not selected because of their ability to convert their celebrity into economic capital because celebrities from the entertainment and media fields in Ghana lack the convertible economic capital that attracts funding to the endorsed political party or candidate. There are two main reasons for this. First, as mentioned in Chapter 3, the political field in Ghana is controlled by two large parties who provide the structures that act as mediators between citizens and the state (Norris, 2001), such as recruiting political actors who can then exercise symbolic power for the purposes of governing (Strom & Muller, 1999). Funding for these political parties comes from 'political entrepreneurs' (Ninsin, 2006:15) who use their wealth to assume leadership positions in the party in order to further their own and

their supporters' interests. As financial and material incentives during election campaigns are provided and controlled by these political entrepreneurs, the possibility of celebrities raising funds for the campaign is not explored by the campaign team. Second, celebrities from the entertainment and media fields in Ghana do not have the kind of financial resources typical of celebrities from Western democracies. Thus, not only are these celebrities unable to contribute to the campaign of their endorsed candidate, they sometimes rely on financial support from the campaigns, as noted in chapter 7 in the analysis of the interviews with celebrity endorsers. It is this lack of financial resources which fuels the perception that celebrities receive financial incentives in return for their political endorsement (see chapter 6).

Concerning the way in which celebrity political endorsement affected a celebrity's economic capital, refers to the ability to convert celebrity capital into income generation in the celebrity's original fields. The findings suggest that celebrities suffer a decline in their income generating capabilities in their original field as a result of offering an endorsement. This decline corresponds to a negative impact on the career of the celebrity in their original field, as reflected in a story carried in the General News section of [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com), dated Sunday, 9 September 2012, sourced from [myjoyonline.com](http://myjoyonline.com) and entitled "**NDC Destroyed My Life – Maame Dokono**".

"Somebody had vowed that Maame Dokonu would go to prison. They were all fabricated and that is why I say I will never ever go back to the NDC and work with Nana Konadu", she said. Grace Omaboe, who had become a household name from acting, TV and radio hostess and business woman, saw her world built away from politics come tumbling down when news broke that a six month old baby had been sodomized at her "peace and love orphanage". The ensuing legal battle destroyed a career that had taken years to build.

The above excerpt from the article links problems with the celebrity's career directly to her political endorsement. The inference, supported by perceptions expressed in the focus groups, is that celebrity political endorsements result in a decline in the career and income generating capabilities of the celebrity in their original field. One focus group participant stated:

I feel bad about the celebrities who openly declare support for political parties... the musicians who campaigned for the NPP during the 2008 elections has lost some of their fan base, and it has resulted in a decline in their income. I think it is because of the way we practice our politics in this part of world as compared to the matured democracies. **(FGD4, R4, 29yrs, Female, NDC)**

The participant connects the decline in the celebrity's social capital in their original field to a loss in their economic capital as a result of their political endorsement. This perception is confirmed by celebrity endorsers interviewed for this thesis. One of them said:

I have been through certain things maybe I wouldn't have gone through if I was neutral. Yes, there have been times where I get to a point where I need to secure endorsement deals with companies; they are scared of my affiliation. I remember there has been one of such of a meeting; at the final stage a member of the board comes out saying they are scared because of my affiliation... the customers- I know it is political. **(CE3, NPP, Interviewed May 2014)**

The data indicate that celebrity economic capital in relation to the field of politics is different in the context of Ghana when compared to Western democracies such as the United States. Celebrity political endorsers in Ghana cannot convert their celebrity capital into economic capital in the political field. This is because political party funding, including the funding of election campaigns, is controlled by political entrepreneurs who do not encourage the involvement of celebrities from the entertainment and media fields. In addition, celebrities from these fields do not command the financial resources at their disposal to contribute to political campaigns, as is the practice in Western democracies. Consequently, the use of celebrity political endorsers does not generate any economic advantage to the endorsed party or candidate. The findings suggest, however, that celebrity political endorsers suffer a decline in their economic capital in their original fields; for example, their careers lapse and their income generating capabilities decrease as a result of the political endorsement.

#### **8.4 Celebrity Political Capital**

The thesis also examined whether the migration of celebrity capital into the political field can generate political capital for the celebrities, with specific reference to the role of

political endorsement, especially for celebrities seeking to launch a career in politics. This evaluation was deemed necessary due to the fact that some of the celebrity endorsers interviewed for this research expressed the intention to migrate to the political field and take on some form of political role. Three of the celebrities interviewed voiced their intention of seeking political office or had attempted to use their celebrity to be elected to political office.

It was noted in Chapter 1 that there is a visible interconnection between the media, the entertainment industry and politics which has resulted in the phenomenon referred to as 'celebrity politics'. The phenomenon has witnessed celebrities who gained fame in fields outside of politics run for office or become associated with political activism. Previous research studies on celebrity politics have looked at how celebrities aspiring to be politicians can use their celebrity status as an advantage going into an election since it provides them with basic name recall and familiarity among a broad spectrum of voters (Zwarun and Torey, 2011; West and Orman, 2003; Street, 2004). This phenomenon is more established amongst actors in the United States, for example with Ronald Reagan (president), Clint Eastwood (mayor), Jesse Ventura (governor), Fred Thompson (senator), John Glenn (senator) and Arnold Schwarzenegger (governor) being widely publicised, applauded, condemned and analysed, as noted in the literature (West and Orman, 2003; Indiana, 2005; Drake and Higgins, 2006). Recent studies, however, point to global examples of celebrities from other fields shifting into politics through their ability to use their identities as "political outsiders" to market themselves as the better, cleaner, newer alternative to often entrenched politicians (Marsh et al., 2010; Mukherjee, 2004). In India, for example, hundreds of celebrities and socialites have become political office holders (Mukherjee, 2004). The phenomenon has also been noted in Brazil (Ribke, 2014), China (Jeffreys, 2015), the Philippines (Centeno, 2015), and many other developing nations where some celebrities have embarked on full-time political careers, and a few have succeeded in being elected to legislative or executive office.

Nevertheless, celebrity status does not guarantee electoral success, as shown by the failure of chess champion Gary Kasparov and soccer superstar George Weah, who lost their high-profile bids for public office in Russia and Liberia, respectively. This is because, according to Ribke (2015), the conditions that enable celebrities to migrate from other fields to the political field are specific to the national and historical contexts of a country.

Street (2012) supports this assertion, pointing to variations in the success celebrities have had migrating into the political field to seek political office in different countries as a reflection of the country's media and political system. This thesis argues that celebrities from the entertainment and media fields wishing to convert their celebrity capital into political capital in order to gain political office in Ghana face a number of challenges.

The findings (see chapters 5, 6 and 7) suggest that gaining political capital within Ghana's specific political and media context requires qualities beyond what migrating celebrity capital might be able to generate. This is because although celebrities seeking political office can capitalise on their popularity with the public, the dynamics of the political and media fields impede their ability to utilise their celebrity capital. Since the two large political parties control the political scene in Ghana, any successful political capital must be bestowed by one of the two parties (see chapter 3). The ability to convert celebrity capital into the symbolic power needed to accrue political capital in Ghana depends on winning public recognition from those with established power in the field. As suggested by the data, any attempt to use celebrity capital to obtain power and dominance is resisted by the party system. This is demonstrated by the statements that the presence of celebrity political endorsers in the campaign resulted in conflicts with campaign team members (see chapters 5 and 7).

Another impediment to celebrities from the entertainment and media fields using their celebrity capital to accumulate political capital relates to funding, i.e. the economic capital needed to bankroll such political ambitions. As established earlier in the chapter, celebrities in Ghana are known (visibility/attention capital), liked (social capital) but are neither rich nor able, necessarily, to raise funds (economic capital). Because the political field is controlled by political parties, fundraising for political activities is also controlled by the political parties, specifically by the political entrepreneurs (Ninsin, 2006). The preoccupation of these people is to use their wealth to assume leadership positions in the party in pursuit of their own agendas, and they might not always agree to fund celebrities wanting to transition into politics. Thus, a lack of funding could circumscribe an outsider celebrity's success in the political field.

In the literature, celebrity capital has been described as the accumulation of attention and visibility through recurrent media representations (Driessens, 2013; Davis, 2010). This

means that one form of capital that celebrity has in abundance is attention, or visibility, capital. It is the influence and visibility that celebrities are thought to bring to causes that makes them attractive as political endorsers. The data presented in Chapter 5, however, suggest that celebrities in Ghana do not attract much media attention when they are linked to political causes, such as election campaigns. The findings suggest that in the political field, celebrities migrating from other fields have to compete with established politicians for visibility and media attention. Chapter 3 offers an understanding as to why celebrities migrating from other fields have less visibility/attention capital than political celebrities. Media ownership in Ghana is usually aligned with a particular party and some of the media organisations are owned directly by political parties or by ranking party members. This means that these media organisations promote particular agendas that are deemed beneficial to the political interests of the owners, resulting in a lot of attention and visibility being given to political actors. Thus, while celebrities in Ghana are known (visibility/attention capital) in their original fields, this capital does not translate into political capital when they migrate into the political field.

Finally, the migration of celebrities into politics in the form of seeking elected political office or a political appointment is seem to be met with scepticism or even contempt by the public, including committed fans from the celebrity's original field, upon whom the celebrity's success in the political field may depend. To some extent, this can be attributed to the perception, expressed in the focus groups, that celebrities from other fields lack political knowledge, which is a prerequisite for seeking political office. This view is clear in the illustrative quote below:

I mean influential by what they do for the party. Most, at times, party leaders blame celebrities who come and don't give any message. I think when you choose a celebrity and for that celebrity to yield you results, you should preach a certain message and that is the influential part [I] am talking about...  
**(FGD6, R1, 20yrs, Male, NDC)**

The lack of political knowledge is perceived by voters to be a result of celebrities not educating themselves about the policies that are of concern and relevance to voters. This indifference or ignorance, as the case may be, can render any linguistic capital a celebrity might have ineffectual in the political field.

Nevertheless, it is argued that the party system in operation in Ghana is the underlying reason that celebrities wishing to put their celebrity capital to use face considerable resistance. Still, there are some celebrities in Ghana who have succeeded in gaining political office, including elected office, such as Fritz Baffour, an actor who was elected as an NDC Member of Parliament. Commenting on the success of this actor in the political field, an NDC campaign manager commented that:

I didn't handle Fritz Baffour. But Fritz Baffour was already a political activist. He has been a political activist for a long time ... (CM-2, NDC Interview, March 2013)

What the campaign manager seems to suggest is that political activism decreases resistance to the use of celebrity capital to accrue political capital. However, further investigation revealed that an actress, Grace Omaboe, despite being well-known for her political activism, was unsuccessful in seeking elected office (see chapter 5 and 7). It seems that the level of resistance faced by a celebrity seeking to convert their celebrity capital into political capital varies depending on the historical context, the party and the political party structure. For example, the NPP has historical ties to old, established political traditions and is conservative in nature; consequently, celebrities wishing to use their celebrity capital to seek political office as members of this party face stiffer resistance than members of the NDC. This is because the NDC party is a relatively younger party formed out of the remnants of the former military dictatorship, the PNDC government. In addition, it is more liberal in outlook and attracts more unemployed, under-employed, semiliterate and illiterate people. Celebrities stand a much better chance of being elected to political positions with this party, and this is evident from the number of celebrities that obtained political appointments or been elected to political offices in the two main political parties in Ghana.

## **8.5 Reconceptualizing Celebrity Capital**

Previous studies relying on Bourdieu's fields' theory have defined celebrity capital as the accumulation of visibility and attention capital gained through recurrent media representations (Driessens, 2013; Van Krieken, 2012; Cronin and Shaw, 2002; Heinich, 2012; Gamson, 1994). The strengths of using this theory to explain celebrity capital include the following:

1. Capital refers to a resource that gives the holder power and advantage within a particular social space.
2. Social spaces are divided into various fields and within any given field, there is a constant struggle for positioning amongst the various actors.
3. It is recognized that different rules govern different fields and that power struggles take place in those fields.
4. Capital, according to Bourdieu, “does not exist and function except *in relation to a field*” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:101, emphasis added). Each field recognizes different types of capital as important and as a source of symbolic power within that field.

Relating this to the concept of celebrity capital illuminates the fact that celebrity capital behaves differently in the different fields that it is introduced to. Thus, Driessens (2014) proposes that while celebrity capital refers to the accumulation of attention/visibility capital, it can be converted into other forms of capital in other social fields. Specifically, he posits that celebrity capital can be converted into economic capital in the form of actual money, through merchandising, social capital in the form of valuable contacts which can lead to increased access to previously closed networks, symbolic capital in the form of recognition within a particular social field, and political capital in the form of political power through being elected to public office. It is proposed here, however, that celebrity capital can usefully be reconceptualised from what has been presented in previous literature based on the following:

Previous researchers have sought to define celebrity capital solely as a type of media visibility/attention capital which can afford the bearer influence in many social fields. Based on the findings in this thesis, however, it is argued that celebrity is not only a form of capital but can arguably be conceptualised as a social field, where the requirement for entry into that social field is the accumulation of visibility/attention capital. This is achieved through a combination of self-promotion and exposure management using the media (Rojek, 2012). Driessens (2013) calls this process ‘celebrification’, a term which captures the moment an individual is separated and legitimatised by the media as extraordinary, or a celebrity, and thus enters the celebrity field (Couldry, 2003). This meta-process explains why the celebrity field is made up of individuals from many different fields such as media, entertainment and

politics, as suggested in this thesis. Once a field is mediatised, it is likely that certain individuals within that field will be distinguished and legitimatised by the media, thereby becoming celebrities. The importance of attention/visibility capital to celebrity is that it propels an individual into celebrity status and is therefore a requirement for entry into the celebrity field. Because it is bestowed by the media, the distribution of this capital amongst individual celebrities is uneven. The more attention/visibility capital an individual has, the more that individual is able to attain power and dominance in the celebrity field. Applying this concept to Ghana explains why the findings of the thesis indicate that politicians in Ghana are seen as celebrities over and above those from other fields.

Previous studies on celebrity capital identified celebrity capital as one form of capital (Driessens, 2013, Hunter et. al., 2009; Heinich, 2012; van Krieken, 2012). Driessens (2014) further argues that celebrity capital can be converted into other forms of capital in any social field, which can then be used to dominate or distort that social field. The findings of this thesis, however, provide empirical evidence that celebrity capital is not one form of capital but rather a representative term for the many forms of capital that a celebrity accrues in their social field. The thesis identified social capital, economic capital, cultural capital, reputational capital and visibility (sometimes referred to as media or attention) capital as being other forms of capital found in celebrity capital. The variety of capital present in celebrity capital is what makes celebrities attractive as political endorsers and not the convertibility of attention capital into other forms of capital. The thesis argues that celebrities use attention/visibility capital in the celebrity field to accumulate and acquire other forms of capital, which can then be used to dominate or distort their original field and the different social fields they wish to migrate to. The idea that celebrities migrate and then convert their celebrity capital into other forms of capital is not supported by the findings of this thesis. Rather, the findings suggest that celebrities migrate with all of the capital accrued in their original field, and the different forms of capital the celebrity brings to the new field then compete with that field's capital for dominance. As demonstrated in the findings of this thesis, while some of the forms of capital in celebrity, namely social capital, linguistic capital and visibility/attention capital, made them desirable as political endorsers, other forms of capital, such as reputational capital and economic capital, found in the same celebrity resulted in the celebrities'

limited electoral influence. The thesis therefore proffers that celebrity capital should be conceptualised as a representational term for the different forms of capital accrued to an individual as a result of being separated and legitimatised by the media as extraordinary or a celebrity.

The thesis supports the concept of celebrity capital having capabilities across social fields (Driessens, 2013) with the introduction of the concept of the migration of celebrity capital from one field to another. As proposed by Driessens (2013, 2014), this concept encompasses the way migrating celebrity capital into other social fields can distort the power dynamics of that field. However, the risk of this migration have not been examined, nor how it can affect celebrity capital in the original field. The findings of this thesis suggest that non-political celebrities, such as entertainment and media celebrities, who endorse political parties or candidates risk losing some of their celebrity capital in their original field.

## **8.6 Contribution to Knowledge**

This thesis makes several contributions to knowledge. The first of these is the contribution to the literature on political marketing in Ghana. As mentioned in Chapter 2, political marketing studies on Ghana have been few and have generally focused on its importance (Hinson & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2010), its influence on voting behaviour (Alabi, 2007), and the clear use of branding in political marketing in the country (Mensah, 2009 and 2011). Investigations on the role of celebrity political endorsement are heretofore non-existent despite the fact that media reports clearly show the use of this as a strategy. This thesis, therefore, initiates the debate on the role of celebrity political endorsement in political campaign marketing. While the focus of the research was on celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields, conceptualising celebrity as a form of capital opens the door for further research on role of celebrity political endorsers from other fields in political marketing, even beyond election campaigns. The thesis further presents the perceptions of all of the various actors in this type of political marketing strategy: the media, voters, political parties and celebrity endorsers. What the results suggest is that using celebrity endorsers from the entertainment and media fields has a specific role and effect on political election campaign marketing strategies in Ghana.

Second, the thesis makes a case for the reconceptualization of celebrity capital based on the findings to reflect the forms of capital in celebrity capital, how celebrity capital behaves when migrating to other social fields, such as the political field, and how such migrations affect celebrity capital in the original field. The thesis therefore puts forward a new conceptualisation of celebrity capital as encompassing all of the different forms of capital accrued to an individual as a result of being endowed with celebrity status by the media. This reconceptualization has implications for theories about celebrity political endorsement. Previous research studies on the phenomenon have relied on marketing theories about product endorsement (Jackson and Darrow, 2005; Pease and Brewer, 2008; Wood and Herbst, 2007; Morina et al., 2012). This thesis provides empirical evidence to support the argument that celebrity political endorsement theories will benefit from conceptualising celebrity as a form of capital which, when utilized in political endorsements, can become part of a viable political marketing strategy and a political communications tool.

The aforementioned studies on celebrity political endorsement have mostly been carried out in the USA and European countries, although recent studies have also been undertaken in emerging democracies in Latin America and Asia (e.g. Centeno, 2010; Henneberg, 2007; McCann and Lawson, 2003). The African context has largely been neglected, and as a result, there exists little information about the use of celebrities in political campaigns, especially as part of a political marketing strategy, in Africa as a whole and in Ghana specifically. This investigation on the role of celebrity political endorsement in Ghana's 2008 and 2012 election campaigns fills this gap within the literature.

## **8.7 Limitations of the Research and Suggestions for Further Research**

This thesis has several limitations. As noted in the methodology chapter, being married to the General Secretary of one of the main political parties in Ghana could have had an impact on respondents in the focus groups and the interviews with campaign managers and celebrity political endorsers. This knowledge of the author's political connection could have impacted on the degree to which party campaign managers for example answered all questions honestly or politically. Another limitation of the thesis stems from

the scale and composition of the voter sample. The sample size of 36 is very small compared with a voting population of almost 12 million (Ghana Electoral Commission data). In addition the sample was taken from only the capital city of Ghana and this means that the data cannot be used as a representative indication of voters' attitude and perception on celebrity political endorsements among all the voting population of Ghana. Another limitation of this study stems from not including media attitudes on celebrity endorsements since this might have given an understanding of why the media did not cover such endorsements more, and why they covered the ones they did mention the way they did. Finally, although perception of effect was inferred to in the discussion of the findings, the thesis did not directly measure influences of endorsement on voting behavior and this can be done in future research such as developing a quantitative measurement scale that can be circulated to a larger voting public.

The possibilities for future research celebrity political endorsement and celebrity politics in Ghana are endless and could include examining celebrities from other fields who have roles in political marketing or investigating the specific roles that celebrities can excel in within the political field in Ghana. Future researchers could also delve into how celebrity capital influences the power dynamics of other social fields in Ghana, such as the academic field, where the field dynamics make the penetration of celebrity difficult. There could also be some comparative studies with other African countries that share similar systems with Ghana and this could share more light on the role of celebrity within the politics in Africa.

## **8.8 Conclusion**

The primary aim of this thesis was to investigate the role of celebrity political endorsement in the political marketing of the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns, drawing on emerging theories about celebrity capital. The study looked at the perspectives of the Ghanaian media, voters, election campaign managers from the two main political parties in Ghana, and celebrity political endorsers in the 2008 and 2012 general election campaigns. The findings indicate that the most successful role played by celebrity endorsers was generating excitement for political parties'/candidates' campaigns, especially in terms of attracting potential voters to rallies. However, their success in influencing voters' choices, even of their fans, is seen

as minimal, as the voting public, including fans of these celebrities, hold stereotypical views of celebrity political endorsers which affect their credibility. These stereotypical views and negative credibility assessments of celebrity political endorsement were most salient in the way focus group participants narrated the motives, intentions and content of celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields. It is possible that celebrities from other fields who offered endorsements might have generated different reactions. One campaign manager interviewed for the thesis made this observation about the political endorsement of celebrities from the entertainment and media fields:

...I have to be very careful to the degree that they participate because these whole celebrities in our society basically are people that are in music and the drama and entertainment. Public perceptions are still negative about many of these people. The celebrities that are more acclaimed and respected... are the footballers because of the image of entertainment celebrities. It... could have adverse effect... increasingly we will be seeing celebrities go into politics because now it is the trend... once they have a platform, the following, the next step is to maximise the value of those followers, the value of those interest; the supporters they have channel those political force and I can see that trend in Ghana too. There are a lot of people who may not have been politically inclined but they may have succeeded in their various fields and feel they have earned national stage and therefore use it. **(CM-1, NPP Interview, February 2014)**

In relation to celebrity political endorsers from the entertainment and media fields, therefore, it was found that their specific role in the 2008 and 2012 election campaign of the NDC and NPP parties was to entertain and attract people to the campaign. The findings further suggest that the influence of celebrity political endorsements on voting preferences is minimal. However, in a country where the difference between winning and losing a general election is as small as less than one percent of total votes cast, this influence cannot be ignored, and for this reason, celebrity political endorsers will continue to feature in Ghana election campaigns. This supports Wheeler's (2011) argument that the impact that celebrities have on politics should not be frivolously 'dismissed as an erosion of politics, but must be viewed within the framework of a

change in political aesthetics in which there will be positive and negative outcomes'(2011:16).

The results of the study suggest that celebrities wishing to endorse political parties or candidates must be aware of the risks involved in making such endorsements. Making a political endorsement poses risks to the conservation and maintenance of celebrity capital within a celebrity political endorser's field of origin. Also, celebrities who would want to capitalise on their celebrity status to convert their capital into political capital are likely to face resistance from actors already in the political field, and most ultimately fail in their political quest.

Finally, it must be stated that while this research sheds some light on how the concept of celebrity capital can be used to glean insight into the phenomenon of celebrity political endorsement in a non-Western democracy, many unanswered questions remain. A thorough examination of the meta-process of celebrification, celebrity culture and the status system, along with its relationship to other systems in Ghana, may shed more light on the validity of the findings of this research and yield more insight into how the smaller, more localised celebrity culture of Ghana differs from Western and Anglo-American culture. This will also account for the value of celebrity within the Ghanaian political field. There is ample evidence to suggest that celebrities, especially from the entertainment and media fields, will continue to migrate to the political field in Ghana with varying degree of success, seeking dominance in the political field by capitalising on the different forms of capital in their celebrity capital and transforming it into other forms of capital. As suggested by Rafter and Hayes (2015), "with the heightened mediatisation of politics and the increased role of celebrity in public life, we might reasonably anticipate significant career crossover ... into electoral politics" (2015:220). In the 2016 general election, five celebrities from the entertainment and media fields are running for parliament representing the NDC and NPP political parties. Other celebrities from these fields currently hold various political offices in the current NDC political administration. Therefore, 2016 will see the largest number of celebrities from the entertainment and media fields competing for political office since the inception of the Fourth Republic. This means that the migration of celebrity capital into other social fields, especially the political field, cannot be ignored in future academic research. The concept

of celebrity capital provides an avenue for refocusing the value of celebrity within social fields such as the political field.

# APPENDICES

## Coding Book for Breakdown of news coverage for 2008 and 2012 Election in Ghana

The purpose of this coding frame is to provide quantifiable measure of the accrument of media visibility capital based on Davis (2010) explanation of media capital accumulation by looking at the number stories on celebrity endorsement during the campaign period of 1<sup>st</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and 2012. This captures endorsement stories within the last 3 months of political campaigning during the two election periods.

Total number of stories on the election –

Total number of stories on the campaign –

Total number of endorsement stories

Total number of celebrity endorsement stories

**Article Title:** \_\_

Copy and paste the article title.

**Year (Year):** \_\_

Code the number corresponding to the year of publication.

1 for 2008      2 for 2012 3

**Month (Month)**

Code for the number corresponding to the month of publication

1 for September      2 for October 3 for November      4 for December

**Publication Origin (Publication):** \_\_

Code the number corresponding to the publication origin.

1 Radio

2 Newspaper

3 Television

4 online article including opinions submitted by individuals to the website

5 Ghana news agency

6 Press release from political parties or office of presidential candidates

7 Other (All published articles not corresponding to the above)

**Publication Political Leaning: \_\_**

Code the number corresponding to the political leaning of the article.

1 Article written by political parties or affiliated to political candidate or party

2 Articles from a journalist and/or media source

3 Other referring to articles written by individuals with indeterminate political affiliation

**Publication Style (Style): \_\_**

Code using the publication style provided by ghanaweb.com such as

1 Feature Article

2 Entertainment

3 General News

4 Politics

5 Other (referring to other news categories from ghanaweb.com)

**There are Readers' Comments (Comments): \_\_**

If there are readers' comments answer 'yes'.

1 yes

2 no

Answer the following questions, which relate to common understandings about factors that make a story worthy of publication as celebrity endorsement or involvement in a political campaign, based on the headline, subheading (the introductory or summary line or brief paragraph located immediately above or below the headline and typographically distinct from the article body and the headline) and article body

**Celebrity (Celebrity):** \_\_

The story is about/mentions a nationally famous person from entertainment or Media presenter or words like ‘celebrity’, ‘star’ and related synonyms are used this criterion is satisfied.

Examples: “The Ugly Noises Of An Actress Turn Politician” “Showbiz personalities support President Mahama”

**Controversial (Controversial):** \_\_

Code if the story is about or mentions disagreement, a dispute, a conflict, a scandal or there are explicit references to something as being ‘controversial’ this criterion is satisfied.

Examples: “NDC Destroyed My Life – Maame Dokono”, “I’ve not been bribed to campaign for Mahama - Ampofo-Ankrah”

**Good News (Good News):** \_\_

Code if the story is about/mentions the endorsement as positive or good, presented in terms of improvement, achievement, progress, winning, victory, success, or another positive phenomenon.

Examples: “A renowned Ghanaian comedian, popularly known as Bishop Bob Okala has declared his unflinching support for the candidature of President John Dramani Mahama in the impending elections”. “Kwaku Baako Endorses Nana Addo's Free SHS Policy”

**Magnitude (Magnitude):** \_\_

Code as positive magnitude if the story mentions effect of endorsement on the campaign in terms of effect on general public, fund raising for the campaign or other resources gained by the campaign through the endorsement.

Examples: “A number of showbiz personalities have joined the campaign trail of President John Mahama as he campaigns to win the December elections”. “It will be recalled that musicians such as Daddy Lumba, Wutah and Kwabena have thrown their weight behind the opposition NPP’s Nana Akufo-Addo. Musician Adani Best has also been seen on platforms performing for the NPP in the capital”.

Code as negative magnitude if the story is about/mentions an event, issue or fact which is negative or bad, presented in terms of being a problem, risk, threat, failure, disaster, strain, crisis, burden, negative side-effects or any devastating or negative phenomenon.

Examples: “Former Ghana rep to the Big Brother Star game in South Africa, DKB has denied ever endorsing John Dramani Mahama who became the president of Ghana as the result of the demise of Prof. John Evans Atta Mills”. “The internationally shamed and disgraced woman ‘beater’ at the just ended Big Brother Africa reality TV show, Derrick Kobina Boateng aka DKB, has become the latest celebrity to declare support for President John Mahama in the December Polls”.

**There is a Photograph (Photo):** \_\_

This question is interested only in the presence of photographs with the article.

Answer ‘yes’ if the article contained a photograph (s).

1 yes 2 no

If answer is ‘yes’ to the above question, answer the following three questions about the picture

1 picture of celebrity

2 picture of presidential candidate

3 Political party logo or paraphernalia

# Screen capture of media stories on celebrity political endorsement in 2008



# Screen Capture Of Media Stories On Celebrity Political Endorsement In 2012



http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/entertainment/Abeiku-Hot-Over-NDC-2... Staff - University of Leicester Abeiku Hot Over NDC Ent...

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### Abeiku Hot Over NDC

« Prev | Next » | Comments (35)



Acc radio presenter and all-round entertainer Gilbert Abeiku Aggrey, popularly known as Abeiku Santana of 'Ekwanso Dwoedoo' on Okay 107.1 FM, is in hot waters over his recent public declaration of support for President John Mahama's 2012 presidential ambition.

NEWS-ONE has information that Abeiku Santana's declaration for the National Democratic Congress (NDC's) presidential candidate has not only cost him an award at the recently organized Radio & Television (RTP) Awards but also caused trouble for him at his station.

Though Abeiku Santana's 'Ekwanso Dwoedoo' had won the Evening Drive Time show at the RTP Awards, information said an eleventh hour decision was taken by the organizers not to present the award to him because it would be lending credence to his drive time show which has been largely tagged 'political' because of the political stance of the host.

Organizers of the event mentioned and awarded all winners on the night except Abeiku Santana and NEWS-ONE's checks have revealed that it was purely because of the recent political stance taken by the ace presenter.

The organizers however explained that they forgot to mention Abeiku as a winner on the night and that they called him behind closed doors and told him he won the award.

The organizers have since not found it necessary to inform the public that Abeiku's show had won such an award.

Meanwhile, NEWS-ONE has also gathered that some key persons within the Desple Group of Companies, owners of Okay FM, have expressed misgivings about Abeiku Santana's public declaration of support for John Mahama and have even called for his dismissal.

Abeiku Santana recently announced that he had founded a group, Youth For Mahama (YFM), to galvanize the support of Ghanaian youth for President Mahama's candidature.

Abeiku founded YFM with another journalist Bolan Aggrey, founder of the Public Accounts

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### Kwabena Kwabena & friends throw weight behind Akufu-Addo

« Prev | Next » | Comments (27)



A group, calling itself Creative Arts for Change, has pledged its unflinching support for the Presidential candidate of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), Nana Akufu-Addo.

The group, made up of musicians, producers, actors, writers and other professionals in the creative arts industry declared their support for the opposition leader during a courtesy call on him at his Nima residence Monday.

The meeting was attended by several personalities from the creative industry including renowned hi-life musician Kwabena Kwabena, movie producer and Public Relations Officer of the Film Producers Association of Ghana (FPAG), Socrates Sarfo, and music producer, Mark Okraku Mantey.

Nana Addo, who revealed his love for music and the creative arts industry as a whole, said as Attorney General, he worked closely with the Musicians Union of Ghana (MUSIGIA) to formulate ways to help musicians reap the fruits of their labour.

He added that, just as musicians live comfortably from their work elsewhere, Ghanaians should be able to do same and his party is committed to ensuring that.

Kwabena Kwabena, who is an avid supporter of Akufu-Addo, after the interaction told Joy News their meeting was aimed at pledging their support for the NPP Presidential candidate.

"The message is simple, four years ago people from the creative industry we went on a campaign trail (with Nana Akufu-Addo), we did so many concerts - 'Believe in Ghana' - but this time around I think [things have] slightly changed so we didn't do concerts but we had to make him feel that you are still behind him," he said.

The Aor singer added that, "What we did last four years, none of us have regrets for... we are still rooting for him."

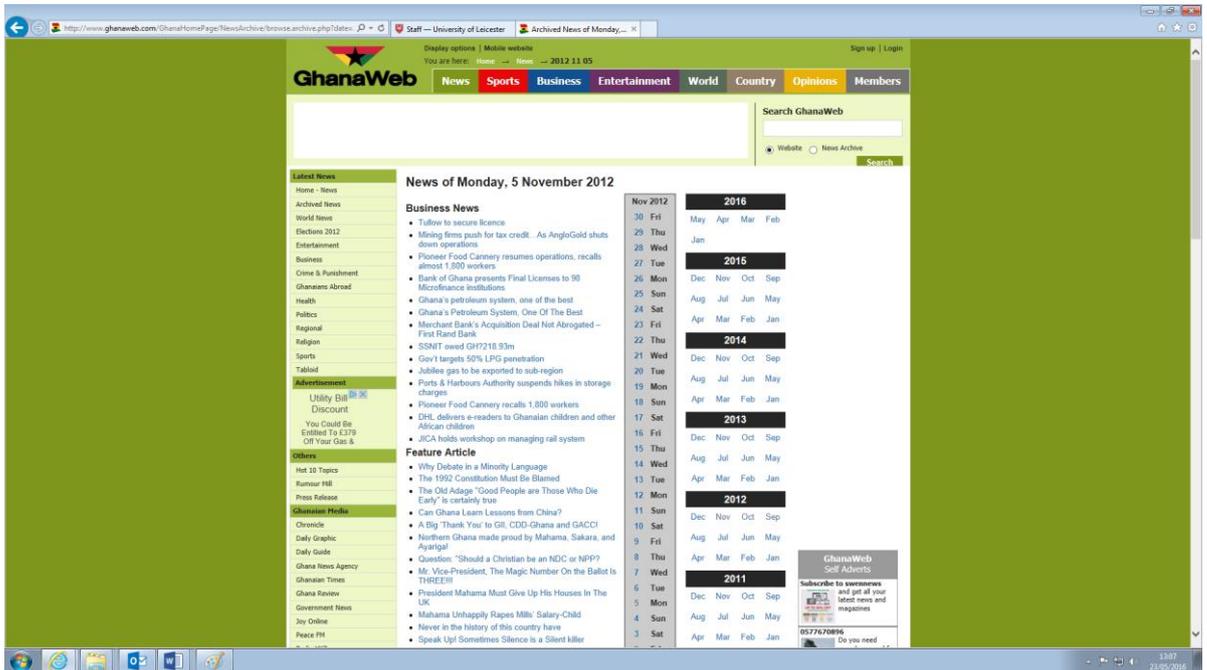
He explained further that, "If every Ghanaian is listening, we all want improvement in our lives, we all want something great to happen to this nation and when you have a leader who has presented himself to actually make that happen, then it is so obvious nobody will say no to development."

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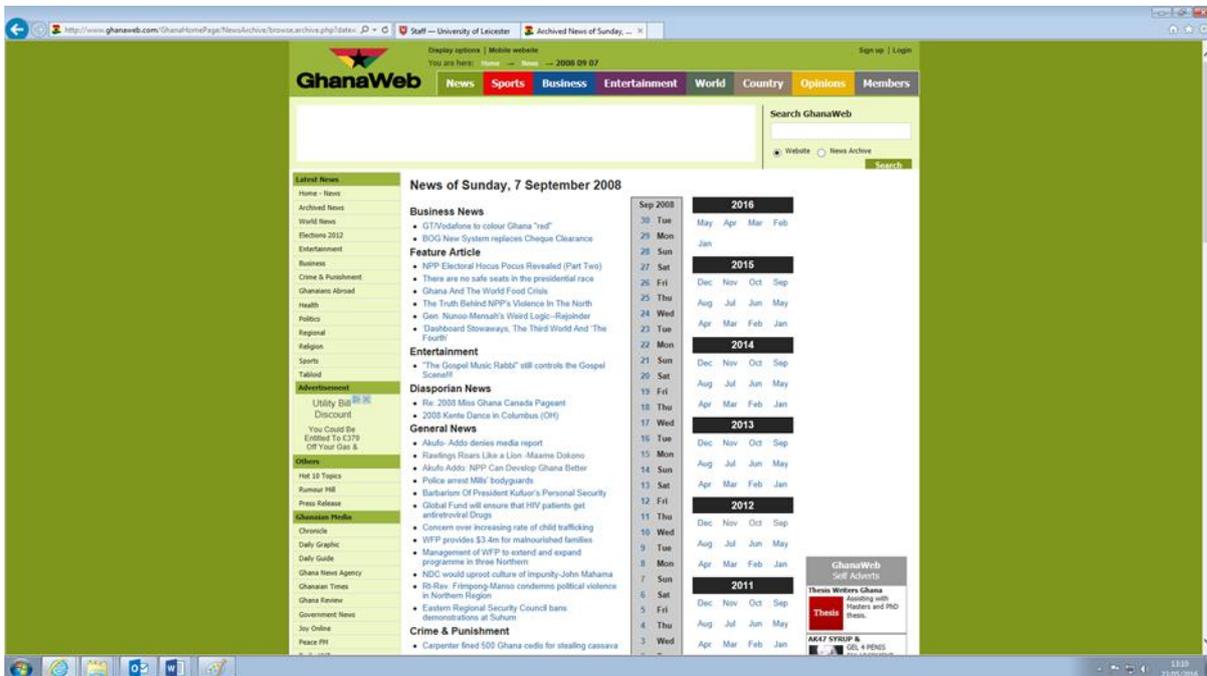
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## Screen Capture Of Ghanaweb.Com Page For 2012



## Screen Capture Of Ghanaweb.Com Page For 2008



**TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH NPP Party Campaign Manager, 2008  
General Election (CM, NPP-2008)**

**Interviewer:** Good evening Dr, and thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research.

**CM, NPP-2008:** Good evening and it is a pleasure to assist anyway I can with this research. So what is your research about?

**Interviewer:** I am looking at the role of celebrity political endorsement in general election campaign marketing in Ghana.

**CM, NPP-2008:** Oh I see. That is a very interesting research topic.

**Interviewer:** I have explained the research in more details in the letter and the consent form. Please look at it and if you're happy with the information, kindly sign the consent form.

**CM, NPP-2008:** (signing) very thorough work. Very serious business. Ok. Done. So shall we begin?

**Interviewer:** Yes please. As campaign manager did the NPP develop any formal campaign strategy for the 2008 general election campaign?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Very well...we drafted a campaign strategy that was approved by the entire campaign team and like any other strategy, the focus was to identify the region, constituencies we were likely to win, the challenges that was involved, the constituencies where we could cross ups; where anybody could win and therefore devise specific strategy that could enhance our chances. In both the parliamentary and presidential, we had an elaborate comprehensive campaign strategy.

**Interviewer:** Was using celebrity endorsers in the campaigning efforts part of this strategy?

**CM, NPP-2008:** We may not have initially thought about that, but as the campaign train left the station, we realised there was lot of interest with respect to celebrities wanting to be part of the program so eventually, we amended it, so eventually it became deliberate. Originally, we may not have thought through the role they would play. As we did some more surveys, it became increasingly clear that Akuffo Addo will attract much more easily the youth than the adult population. The polls showed that our opponents were leading us when it came to the adult community. His best area was the youth, the women. Celebrities have a greater attraction with younger people so we began to focus. So we had all kind of concerts, beach programs where he went to beach to get involved...He attracted a lot of celebrities... the musicians even made songs for Akuffo-Addo . He went on to attract those in drama from the universities, he attracted political scientists; well-known

and well respected academicians, chiefs that are acknowledged and respected... They were celebrities in their own rights...there was a definite plan to get them.

**Interviewer:** So in this case the strategy was to use these celebrities to target specific audience that you thought should be drawn to the candidate?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Particularly, celebrities have following and as u know like anywhere in the world, celebrities have captured audience basically the young people; be it in the movie or the music industry, the chunk of the followers are younger people and we felt it could rob on us and indeed it may have rob on us.

**Interviewer:** For the endorsement, was there a formal agreement as to the role these celebrities would play on the campaign?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Some were... for example, those who played music for us. As campaign manager, I signed agreement and we paid them for the role they played. But with respect to the academicians and chiefs, there was no formal agreement but we bought the rights to certain music that were very popular in Ghana at that time to use them at our discretion and at our programs.

**Interviewer:** So the celebrities used had different agreements depending on the role they were to play?

**CM, NPP-2008:** That is right

**Interviewer:** What about those celebrities on the campaign trail who mounted the campaign platform and talked on the behalf of the party?

**CM, NPP-2008:** There was no formal monetary and contractual agreement that we did sign but they felt interested in showing up at our political platforms, some wanted to speak and yes indeed, they did speak but there was no formal agreement to that effect. It was more voluntary.

**Interviewer:** Was there a specific criteria that the campaign used for the selection of the celebrity endorsers?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Of course, in politics one thing is that they are loyal, that they are members of our party or they have sympathy to our party. There are public perceptions about them ought to be positive otherwise you are going to endanger your selves. They must be seen to have large following of young people, they are popular. So those were the criteria.

**Interviewer:** So it was important the celebrity chosen was a member of the party or a sympathizer?

**CM, NPP-2008:** That is above all

**Interviewer:** How were the celebrity endorsers recruited for the campaign?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Some of them we approached them... those that had the music we wanted to use. We called them and told them we wanted to buy the rights to your music. This woman, Christiania Love's "go high" and eventually Nana is a winner. Some we had to commission them to do the song for us and some we had to listen to them and embraced it.

**Interviewer:** So you were there others that voluntarily joined the campaign?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Yeah...we had many of them than those we signed agreements with.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, do you think using celebrity endorsers as part of your election campaign had an impact?

**CM, NPP-2008:** Very difficult to say but all that I can say is that when we started the campaign, the survey, the polls that we did and where we finished, we will need greater appreciation in our support base and while I have not really done the segmentation of the population to ascertain whether we received more youthful votes than the elderly votes, it is seen to me that the youth were very useful to us. Am not too sure because it is difficult to measure. But the campaign was driven by the youth and eventually we could see it, feel it...it was obvious. But with respects to the celebrities, it may not have been too useful because people may have thought we were more interested in fun, these concerts, it had some negative implication for us, and so I can't be 100 percent sure of what impact it may well but am definitely sure the youth made a positive contribution.

**Interviewer:** During my interactions with first time voters, they informed me that as first time voters, they mostly relied on their parents and not necessarily on celebrity endorsers to help them reach their voting decisions. What is your reaction to this information in relation to the effect that celebrity political endorsers can have on young and first time voters?

**CM, NPP-2008:** I think this is very important point. In our own case it may well be something we will have to take a second look at particularly with respect of the candidate we had at that time. He did not attract elderly voters. It was always a problem. So if indeed the elderly were advising their children, maybe it wasn't very much in our favour. Perhaps in that respect if you had an elderly celebrity countering that, it may well have worked for us. It is something we have to take a second look at. Because if indeed they are listening to elders to make the decision, to the extent that they will be more influenced by the values, deposition of their family, an elderly person who is a celebrity through them may have equal influence. So it is something to explore.

**Interviewer:** It is isn't it? Do you have any other observations about the role of celebrities in campaigns and involvement in politics because now we have seen a few of them get involved in mainstream politics not just as endorsers of political parties/candidates? Maame Donkono did stand as an MP; Fritz Baffour is a member of parliament and now a minister; we have Yaw Ampofo Ankraah who is now a part of government. Do you have any observation about celebrities' involvement in politics?

**CM, NPP-2008:** One has to be very careful and I have to be very careful to the degree that they participate because these whole celebrities in our society basically are people that are in music and the drama and entertainment. Public perceptions are still negative about many of these people. The celebrities that are more acclaimed and respected with all respect are the footballers because of the image of entertainment celebrities. It may be something we have to be very careful because it could have adverse effect. Now I think increasingly we will be seeing celebrities go into politics because now it is the trend. Because once they have a platform; the following, the next step is to maximise the value of those followers, the value of those interest; the supporters they have channel those political force and I can see that trend in Ghana too. There are a lot of people who may not have been politically inclined but they may be succeeded in their various fields and feel they have earned national stage and therefore use it. I can see a trend in that direction. Particularly those that are not in the entertainment field in terms of music, movies, that can have some sort of negative impressions within society.

**Interviewer:** So you think you don't see it as a positive addition to the political field?

**CM, NPP-2008:** It is going to be very selective...it is going to be based on the standard of that individual. They can be very useful but one has to be very careful in making the selection. I think because we had not planned it and it evolved as we went along. There are a few things we may have changed...The lady you are talking about, people have some negative things about her. It may well have imparted...Am not saying I have any evidence but what we picked up, her utterances may have had a negative effect.

**Interviewer:** Finally, how did these celebrity endorsers relate with members of the campaign team especially grassroots members during the campaign?

**CM, NPP-2008:** I think it is a very important question. You know they came into the campaign because of their relationship with people up there. In the top hierarchy of the party; some came because they were friends with the flag bearer; some came because their music at that particular time was good that we thought it will help us so basically it is a decision that is made at the highest level of the party. I wouldn't even say the party but the campaign. Perhaps if the party sat and analyse, we may have prove a different result. Some of them even by accident. Sometimes a candidate is coming to a function; we have celebrities following him, nobody knows about that...They come and come to the political stage and are introduced. Some without much planning and without much reflection about what the impact will be. So I think if we are going to be using them, we have to be a bit meticulous about how we select them and the role they will play because obviously, there is a disconnect in the decision making process. Whether or not they connect at the lowest level, it will be based on their own popularity. They are connecting own their own and not connecting to the party because of their stature, personality, people may be accepting them not as a party person but as a celebrity standing out there and showing interest in our course. We wanted to win an election and we believed anybody that could help us in that course was acceptable. In that extent our people were eager to

win, so they were accepting them because they had confidence in the leadership; that the leadership may have done a lot more.

**Interviewer:** Were there any expressions of concerns about these celebrities?

**CM, NPP-2008:** A lot...sometime people felt the concert and fun was getting too much that it was creating an impression that about our candidate because the public perception about him on this issues were synchronized with what was happening and so we had to be very be cautious at one point and say we have had enough and in fact after the campaign, some of us were accused that the campaign was more fun than serious. I think that was a bit unfair, you have to look at the candidate you are marketing and you have to look at the strength, the weakness, and I think if we had not gotten the youth involved, it could have been complete disastrous. So we had to find the boost that elevated the campaign. Maybe where to quit I don't know. It was a boost to the campaign.

**Interviewer:** Coming back to what you said about being accused about turning the campaign into more fun in 2008 because of the celebrities used for the campaign, what are your comments about the 2012 campaign which say even more celebrity involvement? Can that be classified as more fun then?

**CM, NPP-2008:** oh, I don't think so... I wasn't the campaign manager; I was with the campaign team all the time. I can't say we had more fun...no, we did not have half as much because there was a great deal of consciousness about what had happened in the past...No, we didn't. What we had was the reverse. We had all these prayer session. We went to Takoradi for prayers; we went to Kumasi for prayers. The first wasn't prayers as much as concert. It was a switch though it may appear like fun, the focus was different. We were doing this to entice the Christians and charismatic into our fold...The other one we were playing for young people to feel this is their home, so it wasn't the same objective.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much Dr for your responses. You have been very helpful.

**CM, NPP-2008:** Anytime my dear. Can't wait to read your research. All the best.

**Interviewer:** Thank you sir.

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH NDC 2012 CAMPAIGN MANAGER  
(CM, NDC-2012)**

**Interviewer:** Good afternoon Elvis or should I refer to you as Honourable Minister?

**CM, NDC-2012:** Good afternoon Lawrence. (Laughing) we go too far back for you to be so formal. Good to see you. How have you been?

**Interviewer:** I have been good. Thanks for asking.

**CM, NDC-2012:** Doing a PhD? Wow! That is big. Am really proud of you.

**Interviewer:** Thanks Elvis. I don't want to take too much of your time knowing that you're busy. I saw a lot of people waiting and they were giving me the evil eye.

**CM, NDC-2012:** Yeah. They are wondering what this NPP woman want. (Laughing) so from your letter you want to talk about election campaigns? Are you here to spy for your party so that you will come up with strategies to counter ours?

**Interviewer:** Really Elvis? First, this is for purely academic exercise so it will be unethical to divulge any of the content of this interview for any other purpose but only in relation to my doctoral thesis. Second, I am not a member of NPP. I am only a sympathizer.

**CM, NDC-2012:** Well your husband will benefit from the information. But don't worry. We have more strategies that I will not be telling you.

**Interviewer:** Could we please do the interview and stop talking politics and my husband. I assure you that this research is purely academic.

**CM, NDC-2012:** (Laughing) if you say so. Let's get on with it.

**Interviewer:** Please read the details in the information brief and if you're happy with it can you kindly sign the consent form.

**CM, NDC-2012:** (Signing) done so let's start.

**Interviewer:** As campaign manager did you have any formal campaign strategy for the 2012 elections?

**CM, NDC-2012:** When it comes to political campaigning, you have to be very careful about formal strategies. You meet and discuss and look at various scenarios. But to develop your strategy as you go along to respond to the environment you are operating

**Interviewer:** So you did not formalise or document a campaign strategy for the 2012 elections?

**CM, NDC-2012:** There were many documents and strategies. As campaign manager if you have experience in field work, u know that some things are theorist; some things will not work on the field. But you pick and see what will work.

**Interviewer:** Was using celebrities as political endorser's part of your campaigning strategy?

**CM, NDC-2012:** It wasn't like a formal where we met and said let's use celebrities. When you get to a point and there is a celebrity who is sympathetic and you will think that at a particular point he would be useful, why not?

**Interviewer:** So the celebrities that were eventually used in the campaign, were they all members or sympathizers of the NDC party?

**CM, NDC-2012:** I would say I didn't check their membership card but I guess for them to have joined the campaign, they must have been sympathetic; they liked the personality of the candidate.

**Interviewer:** Celebrities who endorsed the NDC that I have spoken to informed me that they joined the campaign because they liked President Mahama and some saw him as a personal friend. So what roles were given to the celebrity endorsers to play in the campaign?

**CM, NDC-2012:** We did not define any formal role but sometimes when they are present and they are being introduced and people get excited. Sometimes they spoke briefly. They were not part of the core message. We had our message. We had people who were delivering our message and because they were known, they were part of it. Campaign was to generate happy feeling so we had celebrities there so it adds to the excitement.

**Interviewer:** Were the celebrities away of the role they were going to play in the campaign even though there was no formal agreement of their role?

**CM, NDC-2012:** I determine that

**Interviewer:** How did you determine their roles?

**CM, NDC-2012:** Like I told you, you get to an environment where celebrity are popular and people like them. You get to another environment where there is a sit down. You get to another environment where there is no time... so it depends.

**Interviewer:** So they were used in targeting specific publics or specific voters.

**CM, NDC-2012:** You know celebrities are mass appealing. They appeal to people. Some you could see they are stronger in some regions than other, so I look at the situation where here, they will be more useful so you spend more time on the stage. In another place, they are not useful, so they stay back.

**Interviewer:** How were the celebrities recruited for the campaign, did you approach them or they came forward to offer their services?

**CM, NDC-2012:** I don't recall approaching anybody. Most of them came. I can't say other people approached them but from my point of view, most of them came.

**Interviewer:** Were these celebrities paid or given any other form of inducement for their endorsements?

**CM, NDC-2012:** No

**Interviewer:** None of them?

**CM, NDC-2012:** No

**Interviewer:** In your estimated opinion, do you think using celebrity endorsers helped in your campaign?

**CM, NDC-2012:** It did. In some ways, in certain places where the people were very traditional, I have had complains about the situation where maybe some of the jokes they said. The elderly and more conservative people felt a bit uncomfortable. I had that kind of feedback. We will look at that and next time around tell them; don't say this or pull them back. Because they were not message carriers it really didn't affect us.

**Interviewer:** What you're implying is that for the NDC campaign, celebrity endorsers were not used as part of carrying the campaign message?

**CM, NDC-2012:** They had their own way of carrying the message across in their own way. The thing is that they are able to get the message across without people realising that they were getting that message across. The people will be laughing but at the end of the day, they get the message across.

**Interviewer:** Can you offer any examples?

**CM, NDC-2012:** I don't want to mention names.

**Interviewer:** How was the relationship between the celebrity endorsers and member of the campaign team?

**CM, NDC-2012:** Generally positive, but few were concerned like I said. Conservative, the elderly. These guys sometimes the jokes, people will think you are not serious, you are joking around. But generally, I think they were accepted.

**Interviewer:** Did you perceived that some of them had their own political agenda and wanted to use the endorsement as a platform to promote themselves within the political arena?

**CM, NDC-2012:** I couldn't decide promoting the political agenda but rather say promoting their career.

**Interviewer:** Have any of these endorsers been given political position?

**CM, NDC-2012:** I wouldn't say so

**Interviewer:** Mr. Fritz Baffour is one good example

**CM, NDC-2012:** I didn't handle Fritz Baffour. But Fritz Baffour was already a political activist. He has been a political activist for a long time so I don't think he is very good example.

**Interviewer:** Thank you Elvis for agreeing to this interview and being so helpful with your responses. Really appreciated.

**CM, NDC-2012:** No problem. Anytime and I will be looking forward to reading your complete thesis.

**Interviewer:** Sure. I will send you a copy when it is all done. Thanks.

## Focus Group Participant Questionnaire

Q1 Group Number

Q2 Are you a member of a political party?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q3 Do you listen to the radio?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Do you listen to the radio? Yes Is Selected

Q4 If yes, how many hours a day do you listen to radio?

Q5 Do you watch television?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Do you watch television? Yes Is Selected

Q6 If yes, how many hours a day do you watch TV

Q7 Do you use the internet?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Do you use the internet? Yes Is Selected

Q8 If yes, how many hours a day do spend on the internet?

Q9 Rank in order of importance your source of political news especially during elections.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Television (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Radio (2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newspapers (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Internet and social media (4)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (5)

Q10 Are you interested in celebrity news?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q11 Name someone you consider as a celebrity

Q12 Name your favourite celebrity

Q13 Can you name any celebrity/celebrities who were involved in the 2008 election campaign?

Q14 What role did he/she/they play?

Q15 Can you name any celebrity/celebrities who were involved in the 2012 election campaign?

Q16 What role did he/she/they play?

Q17 Which political party did you vote for in the 2008 elections?

Q18 Can you give reasons for your voting choice?

Q19 Which political party did you vote for in the 2012 elections?

Q20 Can you give reasons for your voting choice?

Q21 Your age?

## **QUESTION GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS WITH CAMPAIGN MANAGERS AND CELEBRITY ENDORSERS**

### **Question guide for focus group discussion**

1. Perception of media coverage of celebrity political endorsement during election campaigns?
2. Perception(s) of celebrities who endorse political candidates and parties during election campaigns?
3. Perception of celebrities who get involved in politics either as endorsers or running for political position on a political party's ticket.
4. Opinion of political parties that use celebrities in election campaigns
5. Effect of celebrity political endorsement on the celebrity endorser.
6. Effect on the use of celebrity endorsement on voting preference.

### **Question guide for interviews with political party election campaign managers**

5. Use of formalized marketing strategy for the general election campaign and whether using celebrity endorsers formed part of this marketing strategy.
6. Was there specific criteria used for selecting the celebrity political endorsers for the election campaign?
7. What roles were assigned the celebrity endorsers in the party/candidate campaigning efforts?
8. Were the celebrity endorsers paid or given any kind of inducement for their endorsement or participation in the campaign?
9. Your perceived evaluation of the effect that celebrity endorsers had on the campaign such as on members of the campaign team and potential voters?
10. Any other observations on the role celebrities played in the 2008 or 2012 election campaign and the involvement of celebrities in politics generally?

### **Interview question guide for celebrities**

1. What informed your decision to endorse a political party/candidate in the election campaign?
2. Were you paid or given any other form of inducement for your endorsement of the party and/or candidate during the campaign?
3. What role (s) did you play within the campaign?
4. In your estimation did your involvement make any difference to the campaign in terms of influencing potential voting decision?
5. How was your relationship with the rest of the campaign team and other party members during the period of the campaign?
6. Has your endorsement or involvement with political party/candidate affected your career and or your relationship with your fans?
7. Are you satisfied and/or happy with the decision endorse a party/candidate during the general election campaign?

8. How likely are you to endorse a candidate or political party again in the future?
9. Do you have any political ambitions or aspirations to play any political role (s) in the country?

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH NPP CELEBRITY POLITICAL ENDORSER (CE-5, NPP) Interviewed Jan 2015**

**Interviewer:** Good evening mum and thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. I know you're a very busy person.

**CE-5, NPP:** Good evening my dear. How's your husband? Am so happy he's the General Secretary now. Am sure he will make the party more vibrant. Am happy to be of help anytime.

**Interviewer:** Could you please look at the consent form and if you agree with the content, kindly sign it before we start.

**CE-5, NPP:** (signing) interesting research you're conducting. Done. OK we can start. You'll be recording?

**Interviewer:** Yes mum. Hope you're ok with me recording? I have to capture everything you say that's why I am recording.

**CE-5, NPP:** That's fine (laughing)

**Interviewer:** What made you decide to endorse the NPP in the election campaign?

**CE-5, NPP:** Well, am a member of the political party. I think a whole of those celebrities; I think everybody belongs to a party. I know pastors and things belong to political parties you know. Everybody does politics, so am a member of a particular political party and that is the NPP. Because I was a member and because I have been a member of a political party, previously people saw me with the NDC. I got into that political party because the First lady at that time was so much interested in the emancipation of women and I was so much interested in children and women and the vulnerable, so when I saw her doing that I thought I could help her to bring about the freedom of women; to bring about the empowerment of women. So this project I was doing with her drew me to her party so there was a time I went round my village; where my mother comes from. I am half Ga and half Akim. My mother comes from Eastern region, the constituency then was Abbirim North. I went there and I saw how deprived they were, so I thought of a political party that was in power that could sought of bring about or do something about poverty in that area. So the DCE at that time, the DCE we had at that time was in that political party and he was so unpopular so people appealed to me and they approached that party to let somebody who had a lot of followers, outspoken, very popular to come and stand there as the MP so I was approached by the party, the first lady I was following doing things for women and I was telling stories on TV and that program was sponsored by the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement and so when they told me, in fact I thought about it for a long time because I was not a member of that party. I thought about it for a long time, I remember when I went to my people in the Eastern region; my brother the one that I come after was then the chief in my village. He had gone abroad, done his masters and things. He was such a vibrant chief. He gathered the elders and almost all of them were in NPP. I think they were all fed with the regime of Rawlings because there was no development taking place; the roads were bad. If you see the amount of poverty in the area at that time, everybody didn't like the government then. So my brother told the elders that their elder sister had a political ambition of becoming an MP for the NDC. As if they were all been told to bow down their heads. For some minutes, they did not raise their heads because they didn't like it at all then the krontihene got up said, Yaa; you have worried us. ' why

the NDC...We thought you were going to stand on the ticket of the NPP so we could all support you for you to do something for our community...what is NDC? . I responded by saying that I think am free with the first lady and I think it will help if I become an MP. I told them am not thinking about the party, I told them I was rather thinking about going to parliament to do something better for my community, I was thinking about women and children. In Ghana at that time, there was no rule of law, things that were happening in the country I wanted to go and talk about. I convinced and they finally agreed to vote skirt and blouse and that is what they did. So when I went and lost narrowly, because over there, NPP will get 80% all the time and when I went, there was a split and I went and I think I used about 6 months to campaign because they were telling to go and I said I don't want to be in active politics because of the acting work I am doing so I want to be in the middle and because of the television work I was doing, then I have to comfort everybody so I will go independent. I saw that if I go independent, it will be difficult for me; the support will not be there and I want that financial support so I decided to go around 6 months to time and it was really difficult but I was able to go and the guy that won; the NPP guy that won got 20,000 plus and I got 18,000 plus and for the first time on the NDC ticket. If I had gone earlier, I would have won. It is just like an NPP man winning in the Volta region. Over there, all the consistencies, Akim Oda and the Kede area is strongly NPP but I was able to pull up some votes. So when I didn't win, I decided to sit back and watch, so I started having problems with the party so I decided to go back to my original party. At that time NPP had won and so I went to the DCE and said even I was doing projects; NGO projects, HIV projects and things but the DCE was so hostile to me. The NPP DCE was so hostile to me and he understands that I cut blood with Rawlings and that I can never leave NDC. I said No, am originally a member of the NPP and this is the reason why I came and that what the first lady of NDC was doing was in line with the things I wanted to talk about so I decided to follow her but right now things are not good between us so I have decided to go back to my party, that is why I have come here; the man will never accept it so I just waited for one whole term which is four years. Whenever the NPP was doing a political rally and I was around, I will just go there and give a speech and leave but the thing that pushed me to come to fore the front was when Nana was going to be the presidential candidate after Kuffour's term. Nana comes from the Eastern Region and I said to myself that this is the first time somebody from the eastern region was going to stand for president so I campaigned for him.

**Interviewer:** Did you volunteer your services to the campaign or you were approached by the political party?

**CE-5, NPP:** I volunteered...I remember whenever Nana wants to meet the press I also go. I listen to him and I said, why don't I follow you? Because Nana saw that whenever we went and I was in, the crowd was large. I will talk to the women and they will listen, even children came to listen. I was so popular so after one or two rounds I decided to leave my work and follow Nana. I said I wanted to be his follower. I want him to become the president. The first time someone from the eastern region. Akyem in particular and I am an Akyem. My mother is an Akyem. Where I stood is Akyem. Am a half Ga. You know because of a broken home the Akyem took me so I call myself an Akyem even though am a Ga. I grew up there, I schooled there and all that so I brand myself as an Akyem so somebody from Kyebi, my mother's side will be the presidential candidate so I will do everything I can do to let him win so initially I approached him and he said ooh we are glad to have. I remember the Takoradi declaration that I went to stand on stage, I was backstage and I said I don't feel like talking on stage because am in the media. I remember Madam Osonayo said'' Grace. We want people to see that people like you are

coming to us and because I had gone to NDC and openly I had not said that I had stopped, I decide to go and talk so that finally people will see that I have crossed carpets.

**Interviewer:** Were there any other reasons that informed your decision to be part of the NPP election campaign?

**CE-5, NPP:** Because I had wanted Nana to win. I wanted somebody from Akim to win. Apart from that the policies: Free education. Whenever we travelled, Nana felt so bad about the bad roads, when he sees people suffering, I could see that the man had people at heart. He was so kind; He was so sympathetic with a whole of things. So I said this is man I want him to become president. He had women at heart; he wanted to do so many things for women and all that and at that to Kuffour had started free education, free school feeding, women going to have babies; free healthcare and a whole lot of things they campaigned about was good for women. So I followed Nana Konadu because women and children and if NPP has a lot of policies for women they want to come out with, then why don't I follow them. You understand, am so interested with anything about women, children and the needy. I hate to see people suffer. I thought they were going to do the same thing so apart from Nana who was so kind, I could see the policies of the NPP when we were campaigning. The policies before Nana was Kuffour and they had free maternal care, free school feeding and free hospital and most of them was for women. So you understand what am saying, I realised that NPP had something good for women; the needy. So you know this LEEP project, it started with the NPP and not with the NDC. I remember that when I go on the political platform, I talk about these things. I was telling people about the things the NPP plans to do in the aftermath of Kuffour and Nana will even do better. I remember that when we went round and I spoke and how the crowd cheered on, they also thought that I was a good speaker. We had the crowd and knew that were going to win.

**Interviewer:** Were you paid for your involvement and/or endorsement of the party and/or candidate?

**CE-5, NPP:** No... nobody paid us. The only thing is that we were given food and once in a while, we were given allowances because we were trekking, sometimes one month we are on the road. I remember sometimes we asked the big man for financial support but nobody paid us. Nobody paid anybody, it was voluntary because I remember I left my work at Asempa and then I left my school, I left my children. I remember one of them had admission at ACHIMOTA School so I had leave to come and pay his fees. So everything was back and forth. I was part of the campaign team full time.

**Interviewer:** What role or roles did you play in the campaign?

**CE-5, NPP:** I was a speaker on the platform. Wherever we go, we had people that spoke and I was one of the main speakers. I remember Arthur Kennedy when he wrote his book "chasing the elephant into the bush", he mentioned my name because I was one of the main speakers because I appealed to the women and the crowd loved me because of my celebrity status and the way I speak.

**Interviewer:** In your estimation did your involvement make any difference to the campaigning efforts of the NPP?

**CE-5, NPP:** Yes I think so, it made a lot of difference because even if I get and nothing at all, the crowd will come. The crowd will go like “YEEYEE. People will come and listen to what is going on and some were like once Maame Dokono is affiliated to this party, then we must join her. I told them I won’t join anything for anything sake. I tell them this is a good party. They will do something for the women; the children; the vulnerable; the poor; there will be rule of law; people won’t cheat people when you go to court. If you don’t have money they rule against you. There will be adjournment. I remember we got to Sefwi Area and the roads were so bad; rivers not potholes. Sometimes the rivers will be flowing on the main road and Nana will say as soon as we get down. When we finish with our campaign and are taken to our hotel, Nana will go like “Oh God let me get money to do these roads for my people. He is always thinking about so many things. So honestly we need go on a campaign trail to see how people are suffering and I remember Nana once said if parliament does not approve of a budget for the roads of Sefwi, he will find his own money or go to a place where he can secure the money to come and do the road for them.

**Interviewer:** Has your endorsement of the NPP affected your career in anyway and your relationship with your fans?

**CE-5, NPP:** Yeah, some of them...it went down because a lot of them will see you and say Maame Dokono you didn’t try by joining the NDC especially when I was at choice FM, I had a lot of fans who were northerners because I was talking about defilement, rape and all these things and when anybody gets angry and come and attack me, you will see the Nima guys in 1000’s storm them and they will lynch you. So but when I went on the political platform of the NPP. They were saying NPP is an Akan party and so I disappointed them but still if you are beating me, they will come and protect me but it wasn’t like first. I went back to my radio work and they said No; I went to TV, they said No and you know the TV and Radio stations embarked to say no to me. Film makers will not call you, for four years, nobody called me. It is quite recently they started calling me. Even that I had go on radio and TV to talk about that because in the US, celebrities like Oprah openly declare their support for political parties but here if u support a political party, then the other political party becomes an enemy. And I always say it is bad so recently I came on air to say it is bad because all don’t love the same food I mean if a husband and wife can live together; I in this party and you in other party, that one will be nice. We don’t have to be enemies. As soon as the elections are over, we should all come together and live as Ghanaians. It is quite recent and even that the films we are featuring in are international movies, they that are coming from outside, they have seen my past and CV and they have come for me. But those who are Ghanaians are not using me. Yes still, am suffering from that. When my party lost, I think if my party had won, things wouldn’t have been bad. When my party lost, there was lot of political hunting. You remember the case of my orphanage where I think the government wanted a means to close it down. They said a whole of things about my orphanage. They took me to court and all that. I remember when we lost I had to before the end of the election I had to go Europe because there was a list of people they were targeting and my name was in so I remember after the first round, when they were going to vote at Tain, even at the airport it was announced on radio gold that I was running away. You become a target. There was a lot of threatening messages on my phone and then film makers, producers would not use you again. It is all political because you have identified yourself with one political party.

**Interviewer:** Are you satisfied or happy with the decision to be part of the NPP election campaign?

**CE-5, NPP:** Am satisfied. I don't regret. Right now in the NPP they are trying to select the presidential candidate, the primaries so I have lain cool. Sometimes I go to the office. For me, am with Nana. Sometimes I go there and say hello to him but am waiting until he wins and if they are interested in me to go out with them, I will go out with them. Otherwise I will go to my constituency and campaign for him and the NPP. I will go and campaign for him.

**Interviewer:** How was your relationship with the rest of the campaign team and party members during the period of the campaign?

**CE-5, NPP:** We were very nice. I was so nice to them. I think they are admired me and what I was doing for the party. For me to leave all I was doing. Honestly my work was giving me a lot of money. I was doing radio, TV, film, I had my drinking bar and chop bar and all that. All this were bringing me money. But when I stopped and followed the party, I wasn't getting money because nobody paid us and they admired me for losing all this and following them. Because they saw that I was interested and committed to the party. The policies of the party; anything about women and children hit my heart.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel your involvement in the campaign was valued?

**CE-5, NPP:** The candidate, Nana, he valued it. He valued it because I remember when one day the police came. There were about 10 policemen coming to arrest me for doing what? And I struggle with them, took my bag and went to hid in one of the classrooms. They said they were going to arrest me with handcuffs. And I said how dare you arrest me for doing what? It was a Friday and they were going to lock me at WAJU till Monday for doing what? They said I didn't have a license for the orphanage and this is the charge. That, a six month old baby has been sodomised by somebody. What? The mother who left the child out there is left free. I took the child when he was a day old and that one we took him to the police. Normally the police will say take them here or take them there and they bring the children to me and you are coming to arrest me. Even when all these things you are saying, I wasn't in the country because as I said, before the Brong Ahafo one I had already gone to Holland. As soon I came, I reported myself too so when they came here trying to arrest me and I didn't go with them, I went straight to Nana's office and he told me that I know because you followed me that is why they are doing this to you. So straight away, he called some top lawyers of NPP. Please come, tomorrow they are going to court. Go and bail her. And some of them came and gave me the bail and they gave a strong NPP lawyer. Lawyer Kolumbe and Kolumbe also gave me a strong female lawyer. They were disgraced. And most often after the court I will go to the party head office or Nana's office and the way they treated me, otherwise, I would have been death. Nana will tell me, my sister don't worry, we will come to power. You will win this case. Ever where that I go, u know nana and his people will ask how I was doing. They really appreciated me including your husband Kwabena Agyepong because we were on the same campaign trail with Kwabena because everybody was sooo nice to me. I remember when it was almost time for the election Kwabena was always doing analysis. When I think we went to our regional office in Koforidua and we were having lunch, we then campaigned and we were there, I said, Kwabena do you think we will win?...he will say don't worry and he will start conducting some analysis and we were all nice to each other. They respected me so I don't know why that guy, Dr Arthur Kennedy wrote that thing and included my name. I remember when he came and wanted to be a presidential candidate, you

remember the 19 guys at Legon. I called him on my program and asked that where are you from that you want to become president because nobody knows you. That day I remember I drilled him on my program so I don't know why he is doing that. Look at what he is doing to Nana and his team. So that guy he is like that but they all liked me. A few places we went and had some of these artistes like Kwabena, some musicians and some artistes. We will normally come together and bring some vibrancy to the campaign team. A whole lot of them were with us. And also Nana was saying he was going to create a policy for the arts and that was also another good thing.

**Interviewer:** Given your experiences, do you still have political ambitions or aspirations?

**CE-5, NPP:** My dear am sorry that am growing old because apart from that when we lost, I was going to stand as a parliamentary candidate again in my constituency but this time in the name of NPP. The NPP had accepted me and they all liked me but the MP was loaded with money. The primaries, he bought people fridges; he bought them TVs. The last minute ooo... He put them in his and said if you vote for me, come and take it. The guy has a lot of money. I was hoping that I had people who will vote for me, they ended disappointing me. So I didn't win the primaries. Even me kraaa, I had to give out some money but they took the woman's TV and what she bought for them. I remember when he was campaigning after the primaries; Nana was going round to see what was going on that is before the 2012 elections. He saw that once I met him in our district capital, our people were saying they don't want Esther Adapah because Esther Adapah had won the primaries. They were saying that it was me they wanted. So Nana called me after his rounds and said I should help Esther in my district that was in 2012. So I went to my district with her. We were going from town to town. I remember there were places I had go on my knees to beg them to vote for the woman and everybody knew that I was Nana's person. Recently they were doing these constituency elections, the delegates, I was willing to go. I remember there were a few complaints from one or two people who were planning to come but because I had become so popular, everyone was willing to vote for me then I left. When we finished I came home. After a week, I heard that Esther that same lady who has stood 3 times and who earlier said this was my turn, has gone round to tell the people that she will be going again. She said I will be coming for the 4<sup>th</sup> time because Maame Dokono that not have money. This upcoming campaign, one needs 3 billion else one can't campaign because Maame Dokono does not have money so am coming again. I hear she gave them a bag of rice so my people started calling saying that aunty Esther said she will be running again ooo. I asked her but there was a little bit of rudeness in her voice so my financier called me and said leave her to go. Like I said in my district when I stood I was able to make 18000 but Esther makes 11000. The difference between her votes and that of the NDC woman's votes is 2000. The last time, it was less than 2000. This time around she will be contesting again and this time she has been made the Deputy Eastern Regional Minister. I don't know whether you heard her story this week that she was going to greet Kwabena Adjei and ended saying KUKRUDU. Mavis is the one going to contest with Esther. When Mavis heard that I was not going again, she was happy. She even called me to thank me because she was afraid of me because if they had allowed me to go I would had won and gotten for votes for Nana. Now everybody is saying they will not vote for her, they will collect her things but will not vote for her but am afraid of the delegates. They said the same thing to me the last time because there is so much poverty that if you give somebody 10gh, the person will vote for you. Somebody collected roofing sheets; somebody collected gas cooker; somebody collected TV. Theses petty things and our votes are dropping. From 18000 to 11000. The difference now is less than 2000. Am growing old if I don't go this time, the

next 4 years I will be hitting 70 years so I don't know whether I can go or not go but I haven't stopped. The reason why I want to go is because of the way they treated me.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any comments on the way the media covered your endorsement of the NPP?

**CE-5, NPP:** You see the media, some of them were surprised that I should go into politics. But the thing is in me. The sought of program I was doing was a little bit political but not entitled to one political party. I had wanted the freedom for everybody. The well-being of everyone. When somebody defiles a child, I will make sure that person is tried and put to prison. And on social media I was so bold in talking about how some people were abused and I thought that I need to go parliament to speak about it. Maybe I have used the media enough and now it has become ordinary so let me go higher up because I feel there of things going on. Look at the bribery going on. I see women on TV lying on the floor with their new born babies. We don't even have beds. Look at Korle bu where sometimes I had to beg for money to take the women whereas the government is giving monies to people to spend anyhow. So you need to go somewhere you can talk. Look at GYEEDA, look at the people they flew to Brazil to go and spend our money when women are sleeping on the floor; when we have oil and we are still sleeping in the dark. So anything I get the chance I will go into serious politics. I pray to God to keep me strong and vibrant so I can move and talk

**Interviewer:** Thank you mum so much for your frank and insightful comments. I really appreciate you taking time off your busy schedule to indulge me.

**CE-5, NPP:** You're welcome my dear. Please give my regards and love to your husband and tell him that I'll be coming to visit him very soon.

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH NDC CELEBRITY POLITICAL ENDORSER (CE-2, NDC) Interviewed May 2014**

**Interviewer:** Good evening Yaw.

**CE-2, NDC:** Good evening GSW. How are you?

**Interviewer:** GSW? What is that?

**CE-2, NDC:** (laughing) General Secretary's Wife.

**Interviewer:** Really? Is that how am being called now? Lord have mercy.

**CE-2, NDC:** It's my pet name for you. Am sure it'll soon catch on.

**Interviewer:** That makes me shudder. But thank you so much for making yourself available for this interview. It means so much to me that you took time off your busy schedule to do this.

**CE-2, NDC:** Oh, you're welcome. Anything for the GSW (laughing)

**Interviewer:** Oh you. Please can you look at the consent form and if you're happy, could you kindly sign for me?

**CE-2, NDC:** Of course (signing)

**Interviewer:** Thanks. Can we start then? So what informed your decision to endorse the NDC? Are you a member of the party?

**CE-2, NDC:** No... Am not

**Interviewer:** So why did you endorse the NDC?

**CE-2, NDC:** Because I supported the candidate

**Interviewer:** And not the party?

**CE-2, NDC:** Nope

**Interviewer:** Did you volunteer your services or were approached by the candidate/party?

**CE-2, NDC:** Purely voluntary...It was my own initiative with a number of people...But it was mine own initiative

**Interviewer:** So what made you decide to volunteer to endorse the NDC?

**CE-2, NDC:** Previously, I have been complaining and making noise and not getting involved. Because I knew the candidate personally. I knew him when I was a parliamentary correspondent as a journalist and he was a young MP by then. I could relate to him and I have met him beyond politics in and out of Ghana. So I thought I could make impact or try to. I would not have excuse of complaining rather than participating it is basically getting involved or shut up and vote when it is time to vote. So I decided to get involved.

**Interviewer:** So basically, your endorsement was based on your relationship with the candidate, and the fact that you know him and know what he represents.

**CE-2, NDC:** The third reason was also because am a critic...Am a bit harsh...So I thought ok, instead of complaining, why don't you get involved in the process and I did.

**Interviewer:** So were you paid or given any kind of inducement for your endorsement?

**CE-2, NDC:** 100%...No, ever, ever...and have been asked on many platforms and I challenged people to come out of they have ever paid me...I have said it on radio, TV and print and nobody has come out because I wasn't paid.

**Interviewer:** I see. So what role or roles did you play in the NDC campaigning efforts?

**CE-2, NDC:** I formed a group called 'Movement for Mahama'. Some of them were young students, professionals, and basically I was telling them to get involved and stop complaining or it could have been a movement for Nana Addo if my affiliation and experience has been associated. Especially after the death of Mills and we were all affected...I thought...Why you don't get involved.

**Interviewer:** So what you did mostly was to put together the movement. Were you on the campaign trail or speak on campaign platform?

**CE-2, NDC:** Absolutely...Relatively because, mine was to gather people like this and tell them to go out and campaign and explain to them why they should go and do it. Because when you are 20 now, you will be 24 or 28 ...So why are you waiting? Cos they will tell...Am too young for politics and politics are for certain people...And I tell them naah, politics is for you and me. But you will find that, it gets to a point you have to stick your head out and if you believe in something, you shouldn't hide. I know of journalist and media people and celebrity who go behind and tell you we are mobilizing people. Why would you mobilize people quietly or underground if you believe in it? I believed in it and so I don't have a problem at all.

**Interviewer:** In your estimation, do you think your involvement in the campaign made any difference?

**CE-2, NDC:** I hope so... People say so but myself I can't really measure that ...There have not been any scientific research to come that conclusion but if people could do that it will help at a more accurate finding.

**Interviewer:** Which category of people do you think you made the most impact on?

**CE-2, NDC:** Students...first time and floating voters. Because on campuses use to get two reactions. You don't seem to be an NDC, you are an NPP person, you are branded NPP, you don't know why people have the perception as to who an NPP person should be. I use to get that from students a lot. We thought you are an NPP person which I don't understand. The second reaction was how much have you been paid? I stand with them and say nobody needs to pay me. I believe what am doing... am driven....some believe, others don't...If I was paid won't be able to...Now am a vocal critic not on the airwaves because there are platforms that exit because am not a party person. So when am going out, they tell you are going out as an independent person or you are going to speak as movement for Mahama and if you are going to speak for Movement for

Mahama and there is a problem, why don't you go to the president. So you need to balance it and be sensitive.

**Interviewer:** So your main campaign focus was on the candidate and not the party. So does this mean that if the candidature changes, you are likely not to endorse?

**CE-2, NDC:** 100 percent...yep...I think I can associate with the ideology of the NDC but I would not have gone on the platform if for not the candidate. Right or not if he will win in 2016... That not the issue... Looking at the environment at that time...he was the best option for Ghana.

**Interviewer:** Has your endorsement of Mahama had any effect on your career?

**CE-2, NDC:** Interesting...No, I don't think so...am still in the sports media... am doing my sport content on radio, TV... no I don't think so.

**Interviewer:** What about your relationship with your fans?

**CE-2, NDC:** Definitely...we go to stadiums especially Kumasi...they express misgivings; I don't think they hate...it is about education...when the black stars are playing, the supporters come and some go like Yaw, you didn't try kraaa  
Rarely do I get people confronting me. They  
do it on social media...insults and fabrications.

**Interviewer:** Do you think you lost fans because of that?

**CE-2, NDC:** Yeah...absolutely lost fans.

**Interviewer:** Thinking back about all these effects, are you happy with your decision to endorse the NDC candidate?

**CE-2, NDC:** Am happy with my decision but am not happy about the way things are right now. Am happy with my decision but you see ...that the challenge....you take a decision, you don't take it only for the good and better...there will be challenges... that is where people like me will have to reevaluate and reassess how our decisions. We can use it to educate people and tell people if that was the agenda or the candidate is still on track. So for now that the challenge am facing.

**Interviewer:** How did you relate to other members of the campaign team and party members on the campaign trail?

**CE-2, NDC:** Cordial...at least....I was on campaign trail with Hannah Tetteh. In Tema with Ofori Ampofo, Angloga with Humado. We went to places. But of course behind the scene, you hear things...but that's politics... Nobody has officially had any misgivings, but after the elections I have heard a lot about the fact that; we were opportunist, we don't know politics. We think politics is a float town. Some people will not accept that you do it in a concern way and not their way...of course it is their party so is either you come we do it together or stay out.

**Interviewer:** So the misgivings of the party and campaign people were more on the fact that you were not a party member?

**CE-2, NDC:** Yeah. Some of them were saying He said he is pro Mahama but he is not a member of the party. I have said it a hundred of times openly and some are not happy

about it. They are saying it is a bad precedent and like you were saying, if candidate changes are we going to lose all those votes? No... Don't think so. I think it is for people to be strategically aware that if you don't work hard to keep those new voters, then you could be in trouble if the candidate is no more there.

**Interviewer:** Do you think your involvement in the campaign was valued?

**CE-2, NDC:** I can't talk for the party because they have not written to me officially ...But I can talk for the individuals and the candidate. For the candidate, he is very accessible and I have known him many years before so it is difficult to separate. Yes he is the president and we give him that respect. But he is somebody you can tell him your point of view and he would listen to you. Whether he takes it or not is different matter. He is that easy to relate to So I can tell him things...What I saw or what I heard is bad so please try and do something about it. In a different way and not to be seen as crossing the line. He is still the president and I give him that respect, but am just privileged I have access to him which others may not have so I get to tell him things. Of course he has his advisers who are doing their job and he appreciates everyone's effort.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any political ambitions?

**CE-2, NDC:** No... Not really...Not now

**Interviewer:** So you're not looking at playing any political role in the future?

**CE-2, NDC:** Am already playing that role. Trying to mobilise the young people. Am quite radical so am quite careful how I do things in public because my approach. I will not hold back... But now, no.

**Interviewer:** What about in the future?

**CE-2, NDC:** Maybe if I think that is what I need to do to make impart. I don't need to be a minister, deputy minister, MP to make a contribution.

**Interviewer:** How likely are you to offer political endorsements again in future?

**CE-2, NDC:** Very likely. Like I said then, it is not a four year endorsement, it is ideological, and also for me, it could happen with the NPP. They may also find a candidate who will attract non-traditional NPP people and people will go towards that side. They still have the traditional NPP who are predominantly Akan. But the candidate might attract people who don't support the NPP.

**Interviewer:** So are you likely to support a candidate from another party based on your belief or relationship with that person?

**CE-2, NDC:** If am going to honest with myself, Yes... because I was not paid so I can do that freely without anybody coming to blackmail me. So I tell people, put them under pressure; let them know that your voice counts. So in2016, if I vouch for another person, so are they going to say I was paid? It does not work like that and I think democracy changes and in Africa, our democracy is young and evolving. If you voted for Obama because he had certain principles and Obama is not there and the principles are there and somebody can carry them; why not?

**Interviewer:** Thank you Yaw for your candid views. Really appreciated.

**CE-2, NDC:** You're welcome. Give me regards to GS. I will invite him to one of my sports program one of these days. Do you know he gave me my first break in sports presenting?

**Interviewer:** Yes. I remember. You were so young and handsome then.

**CE-2, NDC:** Hey! I still am. Give him my best.

**Interviewer:** I will and thanks for your time.

## **TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION HELD AT NIMA, ACCRA (FG5)**

**Interviewer:** Thank you for coming and agreeing to be part of this study. What I want you to do is, quickly go through the information, there is a consent form which you need to fill, consenting that you are happy to take part in this research. And then, remember also that, if you have any questions feel free to ask. Now, I don't want you to be communicating with anyone, read it for yourself; if you are happy then, fill the consent form and then, I will collect it.

(Noise from respondents). Please I have finished, yes please, give me the other one.

**Interviewer:** Thank you all. I am sending round a questionnaire for you to fill out for me as part of the study. The questionnaire is designed to give an idea about your existing predispositions and media consumption that will be used to evaluate your participation in the discussion. Now let me quickly say that I know some of you know who I am but I don't want you to get biased; I want honest answers from you, but you should feel free, it is just a discussion nobody is going to report anyone to anybody (participants laughter). So please, feel free to tell me what you think about the topic under discussion, and speak your mind. I will not be able to tell who you are from the voices, neither will I be able to tell who it is, the only reason why I am collecting the consent form; is to make sure that my supervisors know I got consent before you participated. So don't be afraid of anything, I want frank discussion and frank answers from you.

**Respondent 2:** Please I would like to ask a question?

**Interviewer:** Yes please go ahead.

**Respondent 2:** Is it possible we have a bit of explanation in the local dialect, so that it will seem ok for us?

**Interviewer:** There are reasons why we are holding the discussion in English. First is to make it easier to transcribe the recorded discussion. If the discussion is held in the local dialect, it means that, I have to first translate it into English before transcribing. Second, I don't want to be biased, in that which local dialect are we going to use? If I say, Twi is not everybody that will probably understand Twi, and I will be biased, that is why I want us to do everything in official language which is English. Any other questions?

Now the questionnaire that I have given you, I don't need you to say anything that would make me happy; (laughter from respondents) I just need honest answers from you. Whether you are NPP, NDC, CPP, PNC, PPP, NSP or whatever, I don't care I just need honest answers because, I need to be able to tell my supervisors at least there is a representation of all the political parties. So please don't be afraid, don't look at that picture there and think, am expecting you guys to be NPP, because am not an NPP member. (Laughter from respondents)

**Interviewer:** I hope all of you are registered voters?

**Response from all:** Yeah, yes.

**Interviewer:** How many of the elections did you vote? When was the first time you voted?

**Response 3:** Yea I started in 1996.

**Response 5:** 2008.

**Interviewer:** I wanted to find out from you guys your perceptions on how the media covered celebrities who endorsed political parties in the general election campaigns. Have any of you come across such stories?

**Response 1:** Yea, the Bobokala one.

**Response 2:** Yea the Kweku Baako story.

**Response 3:** Yea the Kweku Baako story and then some musicians also putting their weight behind

**Response 4:** The Maame Dokono, Bobokala, Kweku Baako and the showbiz story.

**Response 6:** The Kweku Baako.

**Interviewer:** Generally, when you read such stories how do they make you feel?

**Response 5:** Me personally, there were some facts that if you hear it on-line, or news you get annoyed and gets boring, why are leaders are not putting things in order for we the citizens. Henceforth there are many things that go on bad that affects we the youth and the citizens, therefore we urge the Government to do much better for us. I feel bad.

**Interviewer:** What made you feel bad; do you feel bad that, the celebrities endorse the political parties or the stories?

**Response 2:** the stories.

**Interviewer:** What about the stories?

**Response 2:** That, Mahama bribing Ankrah, I feel bad about it.

**Response 3:** For me I think is bad for some celebrities to be acclaim to some political parties; because as a celebrity, you have been branded in a certain way that, if you go out there that this person should not see you to belong to this particular political party, you don't expect the person to come to you. You know, for example if you are a musician like Kwabena- Kwabena, and you are with a such a political party you may organize a show and then, people who are not party supporters will not want to come. Some celebrities should not adjust to political parties, even if yes you may have a political party, don't make it, don't bring it out in the public domain.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion musicians endorsing some political parties shouldn't be done?

**Response 3:** Yes, because I don't think it's right.

**Interviewer:** Any other comments?

**Response 1:** you may believe in their ideologies, you say you believe in their agenda but, just be at the back to support them. But to come out publicly I think is the whole world they lie, they like to lie.

**Interviewer:** Who likes to lie?

**Response 1:** the celebrities, they like to lie yes.

**Interviewer:** Could you please elaborate further? Why do you think they lie?

**Response 1:** Yea, they speak out what is not in their plans, you see yes because of money and, what they will get.

**Interviewer:** So from your point of view the celebrities who endorsed political parties or candidates did so because they were paid?

**Response 1:** Mine is that, yeah.

**Response 4:** I think he didn't understand the topic very well if you can explain it to him

**Response 2:** Yeah the money is part, although I am backing him for what he just said. As suggested you just don't have to come to the limelight, or be seen as endorsing a particular political party considering the fact that you people have a lot to lose.

**Response 4:** Well I have a different view to that; I believe that we are all Ghanaians; decisions that are made affect each and every one of us. The fact that you are a celebrity doesn't mean you shouldn't believe in ideologies, so if you ask me I think it is even best. I know there are negative implications (noise of moving vehicle) to that; you support somebody so other people who are not believers of that party may not want to associate themselves with you. Now when you look at it these people who believe they are Ghanaians who have the right to belong to any political parties, now I don't see anything with any celebrity endorsing a political party however, my eeeee the only few deaconry is; since Ghanaians do not like from experience what you have seen so far. Since Ghanaians do not believe or feel so well, "I like you, am a fan", you don't have to belong to or seen to belong to a political party. There must be a forum where people will have to be educated (noise) of the fact that, yes; he is a celebrity he is an actor, actress, or whatever you believe in that person, but they have the right, and their language. When they go on these platforms, I think what I think is that people do not have a problem with Bobokala and Maame Dokono, mounting that platform to support a particular candidate.

**Interviewer:** Can you explain your point further?

**Response 6:** No, I think their problem is what they say because; I think their problem even though, they may have a problem with why should you support this political party because, you don't have to show your face and I believe that, most of the time it's their language. The kind of things they say, like the Ankrah issue maybe he went there and said something bad about the opposition, then people will be like why should this guy mount this platform and say something negative about that person. So for me it's not a bad idea, all they have to do is look, yes I believe in this ideologies, I believe in this plans, say positive things market the candidate, rather than be sounding insulting, or lying against the person, that is my view.

**Response 2:** I also have a different twist to this. I consider it they were as democracy is (noise from moving vehicles) when as you compare the much democracy states; like the US, they have musicians and celebrities coming out to fully endorse the candidature of any political party. But then they still (noise) they still win the hearts of their fans, but in Ghana having, being a young-brained democracy, looking at our cultural setting people don't really, people take a different twist to it when you come out publicly to endorse a

political party, a candidate of a political party. Am not really enthused when it comes to a celebrity endorsing a political party it doesn't really affect my decision because, I will always look out the technocrat and politicians who have the basic and sound understanding of economics, rather than the musicians who comes and talks generally. Cos if you listen to what most of them said during the electioneering time you couldn't really; a typical example is Yaw Ampofo on Metro TV: Good evening Ghana, he was asked why he supported why he was endorsing Mahama, he couldn't even come out with any concrete point, it was just general. But, when it comes to choosing or endorsing a political leader I won't in for a celebrity, I will go in for either a technocrat or somebody with a political background.

**Interviewer:** Yes you haven't said anything. What are your thoughts?

**Response 5:** Yes, as to what he was saying, I don't think there is any problem with a celebrity endorsing a political party. I think is a, a democratic dispensation and everybody has their own ideas and, they are entitled to their opinions; you can choose to either like that political party or that. But I think is a strategy to just compose attention to a particular political party, so it depends on the side of which, the do you call it, the celebrity is. He believes in let's say; maybe CPP, so then he says ok, I will go in for CPP, not because of, me I don't really think is because of the money or something but, because of maybe the love he has for the political party, because he is putting himself out there, after sometime it's going to be a stigma and everyone is going to think; oh this guy is from CPP. But they just do it because of the love and everything, and it's just a strategy to get people's attention to that political party, so I don't think there.

**Response 2:** To cut in..., I don't think the musician does this for the love; yeah after the elections we hear that, this party is owing me, I did this song for them, and then I have not be paid, a whole lot. Talk of Daddy Lumba; see before elections he came out with a song against was it; praising Nana, then come back with a song against Nana, you know so they don't do it for the love, they do it for the money. Just wait for your time; just don't be running with this political party for your fans to try to isolate themselves. It's a constitutional mandate for everyone to vote including the Electoral Commissioner; it would be so unfair if he should come out endorsing a political party.

**Response 4:** It's a very sensitive point you are making here, so you are putting celebrities within the same framework as you would put the Electoral Commission.

**Interviewer:** Could you please explain further?

**Response 2:** Pastors, Lawyers, let's leave politics for politicians.

**Interviewer:** Are you suggesting that celebrities should not go public about which party or candidate they support?

**Response 2:** Because they have a role to play.

**Interviewer:** What role do you think they have to play?

**Response 2:** When you sing don't sing for a particular political party, you sing for Ghanaians and you sing for everyone in general, do you understand me. Right, so then, if you try and identify yourself with one political party it would affect your personality.

**Response 6:** Yes, please I get what you guys are coming from, but we are talking of elections and voting. We are in a democratic country, now the person who gets the highest vote becomes the winner, you sit in your small corner, because am an actress, because am a celebrity, am not going out there to tell the people to vote for my person. Then you don't go you are not able to convince people, someone else; let say no celebrity goes and then that person you don't want gets the highest vote. Meanwhile, you know when maybe you mount that platform, you know the kinds of fans you have, so you mount the platform to tell them. Celebrity endorsement has so many effects, when I see you come here and you tell me this is good; once it is you, nobody can convince me. Once you stand there and say look "vote for Mrs. Kuukua, or something", I will do it, because for me, what you have said you have the technical know-how, in-fact whatever you are telling me is the truth and nothing but the truth, once I have seen you I will vote for you. But if I sit at my corner, I am a celebrity I need my fans, let me keep them and somebody I think is not the best person, wins it will affect me.

**Response 1:** I will say is not about what they want, is about what they will earn at the end, the celebrity.

**Interviewer:** So in your opinion you don't think that their endorsements are genuine?

**Response 5:** Let's say am a celebrity, and I go for a program and you call me to be on your platform to talk that will be on a contract basis.

**Interviewer:** But have you considered the fact that, maybe not every celebrity endorser is paid to take part in the campaign?

**Response 2:** There is most established fact that,

**Interviewer:** What makes you believe that, those celebrities taking part in the campaign are being paid?

**Response 2:** Yes, because in Ghana. Most after the elections issues come up, example....

**Interviewer:** Example...?

**Response 4:** Example is eeee... Afriyie Ankrah?

**Interviewer:** What issue came up after the elections?

**Response 6:** Madam the thing is, I believe whether he is supporting them or not. The thing is the contract that they go in.

**Response 1:** Then that is not genuine, because you say its contract.

**Response 5:** It depends on the kind of person, involved in the whole thing. Me I don't believe they are people who will go out there and say yeah we are going to earn money.

**Interviewer:** Please one at a time so I can get what you are all saying.

**Response 1:** the bottom- line is these celebrities endorse political parties for a purpose.

**Response 4:** No, not all.

**Interviewer:** So some of you believe that the celebrities are doing the endorsement because they gain something out from it?

**Response 1:** Yes.

**Response 2:** Yeah, that one is a fact.

**Interviewer:** What do you think they gain out from the endorsement?

**Response 5:** Some are gaining appointment, some are gaining money.

**Response 2:** It's the same thing; appointment, money, I mean.

**Interviewer:** Talking about appointment and money, quickly, do you know a celebrity that has endorsed...?

**Response 6:** they all have, prior to the elections he resigned from TV3 as a Sport's Journalist, he was quite sure of like having a position when Mahama comes. And right after the elections he was voted as the President of Ghana Youth Soccer and as a special assistant to the brother, Afriyie Ankrah.

**Interviewer:** Don't you guys think, that Yaw has done a lot in sports so he deserved the position?

**Response 6:** No.

**Response 2:** I think Yaw deserves it.

**Response 5:** It was a political appointment.

**Response 1:** I am not disputing the fact that, I am not saying that people have not benefited from mounting or campaigning for political parties. But what am trying to say is that, yes we all do things for gain but I don't think everybody that was money, look they are passionate about their political parties. Do you know think they just get up, no they are managers, these people are managers. They get up and say; let me mount this platform because; they are going to give a thousand Ghana cedis. They know the impact, they sit done to calculate; now if I get this money today, how long will it carry me. You know Bobokala he sold his career for this kind of politics, but they think about it every well but because of this passionate drive, they come out and say I believe in this ideology, I believe in this. That is what I think.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion do you think that using celebrities as political endorsers becomes an advantage or disadvantage to the political campaign of the candidate, or party they are endorsing?

**Response 4:** No discerning voters you know they can have any influence but for those that are being influenced, they get to take last minute decision as to who to vote for. In the course of the day they are those that are being influenced.

**Interviewer:** Which voters do you think can be influenced?

**Response 6:** People who are not inclined with political issues and vote based on tribal lines.

**Response 3:** We have some voters who will go in for some celebrities. I have a friend who in 2008 voted all because of a celebrity.

**Response 1:** So what you are saying is that, although most of you of you not all of you, most of you believe that, as a celebrities they shouldn't be endorsing, and if they are endorsing it shouldn't be because they gain something out of it.

**Interviewer:** You think it has an advantage for a political campaign?

**Response 3:** Yes, it really has a strong advantage.

**Response 1:** Like Ghana a lot of people do not have a lot of education because, of the illiteracy level, so they get to hear people they are familiar with, people they consider to have huge talent and once they go out there they speak. Even this person said Nana is this, even I saw this actor, I saw this actress, is what they look at, but for experienced people like me, I listen to the issues.

**Response 4:** Young voters and floating voters.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think celebrities have such influence?

**Response 4:** Is always find yourself with a naïve musician, if you just turn eighteen and you are being asked to just go vote, because it's your constitutional mandate and you are not well a breasted in political issues. But if it happens that, you see Van Vicker endorsing Mahama and you also happen to be, have affection for Mahama, it gets you.

**Response 1:** I don't think it's the celebrities that influence them, but it's their families.

**Response 4:** That is why am saying a friend voted just because of a musician.

**Response 3:** Yeah that is the thing, all of you sitting here are young, in other words are you saying you are likely to be influenced by the endorsement of celebrities?

**Response 6:** I voted for a political party because of what I heard, by way of their manifesto.

**Interviewer:** Were you familiar with all the celebrities that were on the campaign and were endorsing the campaign?

**Response 1:** No. But I heard something the man said something about Asiedu Nketia; the candidate and I thought. Few of them were in the party because their parents were there.

**Response 5:** Okay that is why am saying that, the politicians when it comes to voting, especially in Ghana here we are marginalized we are stormed between two political parties and for some years to come it's going to remain like that. These two major political parties know their voter based already they are on the look for new voters that is the more reason why they will use available means to chance upon these group of voters.

**Interviewer:** So you as individuals, can a particular celebrity you really like influence the way you vote or who you vote for?

**Response 3:** Not at all, I listen to the issues.

**Response 5:** I may not like you but, I like your word. I may not like you in human or the personality, but I may like and love your word of what you are putting in the campaign, and based on that I can vote for you.

**Response 4:** It depends on the kind of person, maybe the person is first man voting and all that, or all that. Oh madam me, yes I would be influenced. Most at times I listen to their argument and all that on radio, but aside that I look at the celebrity and all that.

**Response 1:** It doesn't matter how the celebrities endorse the political parties.

**Response 3:** For me it does not make a difference, I will vote on my experience, okay let me give an example; I remember when Nana lost the election, people were saying if it was Alan Cash, he would have won, that is their point of view. So if it is Alan Cash or Nana, me I would listen to the issues and what the incoming President has for me.

**Interviewer:** So you are more interested in what the candidates have to say, rather than the celebrity?

**Response 3:** Yes.

**Response 6:** Is it because of what you were saying as in, the target group. The level of education is a factor.

**Interviewer:** What are your perceptions of celebrities who endorse political party or candidates? How will their endorsement influence your liking of the celebrity?

**Response 3:** For instance, I wouldn't listen to any other person, if it is him or her that I like, I will just vote and not listen to any one; second or third. I like Yaw Ampofo Ankrah and maybe he endorses NDC, and you don't like the NDC and he endorse NDC, will that influence the way you feel about Yaw Ampofo Ankrah.? If so I will support whatever he does, if Yaw Ankrah supports who ever but that will not change me against Yaw Ampofo.

**Response 4:** The major thing is the party and the celebrity comes in that I admire a lot, supporting a political party that I don't like, definitely I would have a different view about you.

**Response 1:** It makes no difference to me.

**Interviewer:** So, you would continue to be loyal to your favourite celebrity irrespective of the party that they endorse?

**Response 1:** Yes, the person's personality wouldn't affect me; a typical example is: Yaw Ampofo Ankrah until his endorsement of John Mahama people really liked him because of his sports program but, after he had endorsed John Mahama and was later appointed. If you tune in to radio programs, people insulting him a lot especially; there was a Black Stars match outside Ghana, Ghanaians were expecting the match to be telecasted live on TV, which due to some technical problems it was not but it happens that, his brother who was the Sports Minister went to the Stadium and Yaw was also there. There went there on the capacity as Sports representatives of Ghana, but on the radio show they were bashing them; people were saying they had connive as brothers, they were using the tax payers money to sit comfortably and watch while the masses were deprived of the match. To some basis it does affect them absolutely, endorsing a political party.

**Response 5:** Yeah, people may not like you and it will affect people, because I have had an experience where I have friends who really like celebrities and immediately they see them mount those campaign platforms they don't want to know about them. Even it happens in my house, because they didn't like a particular political party, once someone endorse the person not an individually, immediately the advert starts they change the

station, so it has an influence. But me whatever the celebrity is saying it does not really matter me, I try to listen to their argument; the particular political party agenda and then the candidate, the personality of the candidate, and everything I try to whether the person is the best person for me. So for me whether I like you it doesn't make an effect.

**Response 2:** Well I turn to have a different perception about the person, although I may not like the political party and their ideologies, it may change my idea about the celebrity.

**Interviewer:** How do you perceive political parties that use celebrities for endorsement? What do you think about them?

**Response 4:** Well I think is their own strategy to get people to them and attract people's ear on the ground to them and all that, because if per say I like Kwabena- Kwabena and he sign up CPP, and they are having a rally here I will probably go because, it's Kwabena-Kwabena. So it's a way of getting people to come there.

**Response 5:** I think is a smart way like she said, they know the importance of using celebrities, so they go for it. Well I don't see anything wrong with it I rather see it as a plus for them. Cos, if they are able to use it well, they achieve it their target.

**Response 1:** I also see it as a campaign giving and ready to buy votes. It doesn't surprise me there are campaign celebrities. Question: Who buys votes? Response: The politicians.

**Response 2:** I don't feel about it because somebody who has been talking sports and one month to elections starts to talk about politics I don't feel anything about they using celebrities during election campaigns.

**Response 4:** Well I agree with them, the source of income, they are going to get more fans if they buy the celebrities.

**Response 6:** I also think is the strategy of getting more votes so, I don't think there is anything wrong with it.

**Response 3:** I side with them but for me I don't think using a personality affiliated to a political party can influence a vote, because I believe in what the political party can do for me and the nation.

**Interviewer:** As one of you mentioned earlier, Celebrities have a way of generating attention and, don't you think that most political parties use the celebrities in order to grab attention? Don't you think that is the reason why political parties use celebrities in order to grab attention?

**Response 3:** I don't think that is the reason why these two major political parties should be using celebrities in their activities.

**Interviewer:** So discussion your perceptions on how the media reported on celebrity political endorsements in the election campaigns.

**Response 1:** Media reportage has a chance of bringing the news, and with celebrities endorsing political parties is not common in Ghana, it's just these recent two elections. So it's the media use this way as a way of getting people to tune in to their station.

**Response 4:** I think the media is disputing the fact that they need to educate the public but, because are media here belong to political parties and, their fans, and all that, and

when a celebrity does not endorse their political party, they make the person look bad in the eyes of the public. So they create a lot of enemies for the personality for instance; am just giving an example, look at Sakordie, if he endorses a political party that has been killed a lot of Ghanaians and is making the economy collapse, like she said, a lot of people will tag Sakordie as a bad. I think that is a how a lot of stories are being carried like, the Kweku Baako story; they were saying he has changed from Moselm to Christianity, and he is doing that to avoid going to jail. These stories are untruthful, and making people have negative opinions about the celebrity, so for me I don't think the media is doing so well.

**Response 5:** I agree with her, cos most at times the media don't bring the right information out, just because they hear it and they just don't bring the right information.

**Response 2:** Because of freedom of expression, the media reportage because a little bit ...

**Response 3:** Sometimes it is edited, they have an agenda that they have to set so, and they can brain wash. I did a story during Kufour's time and the next day I saw the story and I couldn't tell it was my story. The editor has edited the story.

**Response 2:** I have also had an experience like that. I went to "meet the press" after I did the story and the next time I saw the story it was totally different from what I did, it was cued towards a political idea, and they took the substance out of it.

**Response 1:** Yes, I think sometimes the media is biased, they would do anything just to get people to read their stories and it depends on the media house. Because some media houses are attached to certain political parties, definitely I will say the good side.

**Response 6:** No the National Media wouldn't report because the person financing is the Government. They would be telecasting NDC rally with the sound and everything but immediately it gets to NPP, it will just go off.

**Response 2:** I think there is something under it; the stories are cued to suit them, because when you read the story let say, Daily Guide and you go to the net is see a totally different story. And at the end of the day they just confuse you (laughing).

**Interviewer:** I want you thank you all sincerely for taking time off your busy schedules to be part of this discussion. I have really enjoyed listening to you, and it would be interesting reporting what you said, so I will say thank you for everything.

### **Respondent details**

Respondent 1: 41, MALE, NDC

Respondent 2: 42, MALE, NDC

Respondent 3: 50, MALE, NPP

Respondent 4: 38, FEMALE, NPP

Respondent 5: 30, FEMALE, NPP

Respondent 6: 34, FEMALE, NPP

## **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH FIRST TIME VOTERS (FGD6)**

**Interviewer:** Good evening and thank you all for agreeing to be part of this study. Before we start, could you please go through the statement I have circulated to you, if you have any questions, ask and if you do not have questions and still want to be part of the discussion please sign the consent form that have been provided.

**Respondent 3:** Madam so how will you be able to identify who is speaking and not write our names?

**Interviewer:** Each of you is assigned a number so you will be identifies in the discussions by the assigned number and not names so that you will be completely anonymized in the study. Please do not tell me your names and if you do mention names, be assured that during the transcribing of the discussion, all those names will be taken out. Are you happy with that?

Respondents' nodes in agreement and some say yes.

**Interviewer:** Have you all signed the consent form?

Noises of agreement and yes.

**Interviewer:** Thank you all very much. Before we start, I am circulating a questionnaire to all of you to fill for me. (Questionnaire is passed around). Please fill them independently.

**Respondent 6:** Madam, why are we filling a questionnaire? I thought we are having a discussion.

**Interviewer:** Yes that is true but the questionnaire gives me an indication of your predispositions, media consumption and other indicators that are likely to explain why you make certain decisions.

(Sounds of oh ok, I understand now, from respondents)

**Interviewer:** Has everyone given me their questionnaire? I think we can start now.

Who do you consider as a celebrity?

**Respondent 1:** These musicians, movies actors

**Respondent 2:** Basically celebrities are famous people who are known by each and everyone in the society.

**Interviewer:** Anyone wants to add to what the other two have said?

**Respondent 4:** Celebrities are these musicians; these are all celebrities.

**Interviewer:** So for you when we talk about celebrities, the reference is musicians, actors and actresses...?

**Respondent 5:** Extraordinary people

**Interviewer:** What do you mean by extraordinary people?

**Respondent 5:** They are famous people

**Interviewer:** So who is your favourite celebrity?

**Respondent 5:** Yeah, I have one. Funny face

**Interviewer:** What about you?

**Respondent 6:** I like Nana Akuffo-Addo

**Respondent 3:** To me I follow these foreign gospel musicians.

**Interviewer:** So you don't have a favourite in Ghana?

**Respondent 1:** For me am not into celebrities. So no I don't have one.

**Respondent 2:** Ludacris

**Interviewer:** What about you young lady?

**Respondent 4:** I like Sonni Badu.

**Interviewer:** What about celebrity news? Do watch celebrity's stories or follow news concerning celebrities?

**Respondent 1:** To me, am not given the chance to follow news about celebrities. My father does not allow it. Am always studying.

**Interviewer: So you don't follow news concerning celebrities?**

**Respondent 1:** Sometimes I pay attention to news about actors and actresses.

**Interviewer:** Who is your favourite actor or actress?

**Respondent 1:** it is a Nigerian. Mercy Johnson

**Respondent 6:** I like Nana Ama McBrown

**Interviewer:** Do you listen to news about celebrities?

**Respondent 2:** I spend my time on football.

**Interviewer:** So you hardly pay attention to news about concerning celebrities. So although you like Ludicros you don't pay attention to news concerning him.

**Respondent 2:** No

**Interviewer:** What about you? Sonny Badu

**Respondent 4:** I follow news about him

**Interviewer: Do you follow news about other celebrities?**

**Respondent 4:** Yes if I get the time.

**Interviewer:** What about media stories about celebrities who were involved or endorsed political parties during the election campaigns? Did any of follow or heard about those stories?

**Respondent 1:** Which of them? The publication?

**Interviewer:** Yes, the publications?

**Respondent 1:** Yes the one concerning Mrs. Grace Omaboe, I heard it on radio

**Interviewer:** Yes anyone else? Have you come across any of the stories?

**Respondent 3:** No

**Interviewer:** What about you, have you come across any of the stories?

**Respondent 4:** yeah

**Interviewer:** Which one?

**Respondent 4:** The one concerning Bob Okala joins President Mahama campaign.

**Interviewer:** Anyone else?

**Respondent 6:** The one concerning Grace Omaboe...I heard her when she came for a rally. I heard it from her mouth

**Interviewer:** So not only in the story but you actually heard her on the campaign trail. What your general impressions about the way the media cover such celebrities during the campaign?

**Respondent 6:** As I see it here, in some way they covered it well, in some way too they didn't cover it well.

**Interviewer:** Could you elaborate further?

**Respondent 1:** Bob Okala joins Mahama campaign trail, they say they gave him the chance to mount the stage but the one at...Mahama came to community one site 12 , Bob Okla didn't come on stage but he was there.

**Interviewer:** So you were there at that particular rally so story as presented in the media is not the complete truth?

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Respondent 4:** Sometimes I felt like in Maame Dokono's case like this she was bought or something. She was a prominent member in the NDC and I don't know why all of a sudden she is now in NPP. So am thinking they covered it well or maybe something is behind they didn't tell us why.

**Interviewer:** So you think there was no back story on why she...

**Respondent 4:** (interrupting) I think the stories are misleading.

**Interviewer:** In what way?

**Respondent 4:** Because I don't see any actor as a politician.

**Respondent 3:** I think the publication on Grace Omaboe was vivid. She was a prominent member in the NDC so I think the publication has done a good job. I was really enlightened when I read it.

**Respondent 6:** I also heard her when she was giving her speech. She said when she was in the NDC she was blind but now that she was with the NPP, her eyes are open. So I think the publication is okay.

**Respondent 2:** I think the publication as stated in this paper is informing about how things are being organized by using famous people to deceive people to vote for their political parties.

**Interviewer:** Do you think using celebrities as endorsers during election campaigns translate into any form of advantage for political parties?

**Respondent 1:** I think it has advantages and disadvantages. Maybe I like Maame Dorkono movies that even when I am sleeping, I can wake up to watch her movies and I hear Maame Donkono is NDC, I will try to listen to her and by so doing I am trying to get close to the NDC and to know the NDC. So maybe the time it is voting, I may decide to vote for NDC. I don't think about the other parties because of my celebrity there so I focus more on the party.

**Interviewer:** So your feelings towards the celebrity will be transferred to the political party they are endorsing? What do the others think?

**Respondent 2:** It is a merit

**Interviewer:** Why do you say it is a merit?

**Respondent 2:** Because I will choose to vote for the opposition party.

**Interviewer:** Could you please explain further?

**Respondent 2:** I will choose to vote for the opposition party

**Interviewer:** If a party uses a celebrity endorser, you will vote for them?

**Respondent 2:** Because they may convince me to vote for them

**Interviewer:** Do you think it going to be an advantage or disadvantage to the political parties to use celebrities as endorsers in the campaign?

**Respondent 5:** it will be an advantage because this is a case when Funny Face because I like him; I may choose to vote for that party.

**Respondent 6:** I think using a celebrity depends on how you will use the celebrity because in 2008 I can quite remember, we heard of a lot of music from Daddy Lumba for Nana Addo and that really ginged NPP folks and some of the young ones. But it got to the voting time and we realized a lot dancing to the tune turn to sympathize with the opposition party which is the NDC.

**Interviewer:** Are you suggesting that even though you actually enjoyed what the celebrity was doing, it really didn't influence your voting preference?

**Respondent 6:** Especially looking at the celebrity and what they did. I think Lumba was not very influential on the campaign trail.

**Interviewer:** So for you, it depends on the type of celebrity. Some celebrities are more influential than others?

**Respondent 4:** I will pick someone like Sonnie Badu. He is quite an influential figure to me.

**Respondent 1:** To me, let's take an example am in a party and a celebrity is in my party and after sometimes moves to another party to campaigning for them...they end up convincing the youth and confusing them at the same time. So to me, it may be an advantage or disadvantage.

**Interviewer:** So for you, consistency of that celebrity is important, so they have to stick to one party and not changing parties because changing parties become confusing for their fans and that can be a disadvantage?

**Respondent 3:** I think it is an advantage but since they use famous people like Funny Face, Agya Koo, and since they bring them on stage, it may attract a lot of people to vote for them.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it thus attracts people to vote for them?

**Respondent 3:** Yes because since I like Kwaku Manu or Agya Koo I may choose to vote for them.

**Respondent 6:** I really think it is a merit. Let's take it that it is time for campaign and we go in for someone

Like Shatta Wale to mount the platform for say NPP and since am a fan of Shatta Wale and Shatta Wale is talking about the NPP, I think I will vote for them.

**Respondent 5:** The fact is the type of celebrity the political party chooses is important to the campaign. In other words as young people and if the celebrity is not the type that jibes with me, then am are not likely to be influenced by that person.

**Interviewer:** Do you all agree?

**Respondent 1:** I mean influential by what they do for the party. Most at times party leaders blame celebrities who come and don't give any message. I think when you choose a celebrity and for that celebrity to yield you results, you should preach a certain message and that is the influential part am talking about.

**Interviewer:** What do you all think about what he just said? Celebrities attracting a lot of people means that they're able to give the political parties visibility?

**Respondent 6:** That is what my friend just said that he likes everything about Funny Face so the moment you bring Funny Face on board he is there.

**Interviewer:** So do you mean that if Funny Face endorses a political party, your friend will vote for that party?

**Respondent 6:** Yes, since it is only Funny Face.

**Interviewer:** What about you as individuals? Will you vote for a political party or candidate because your favourite celebrity endorses that political party or candidate?

**Respondent 5:** I think my parent will count on my parents

**Interviewer:** So let me be specific. Who influenced your vote in the 2012 elections?

**Respondent 2:** Well I liked the celebrities and what they were saying but my parents told me who to vote for and I did.

**Respondent 3:** I will dare not go against my family's preferred party so I voted on who they say vote for.

**Respondent 5:** My parents. I have to listen to what they say. They know what is going on in the country (shrug shoulders)

**Respondent 1:** Well I like the same party my parents like so I vote for them.

**Respondent 6:** If I vote for any other party my family will kick me out.

**Respondent 4:** Hmm. I had to vote for NDC even though I liked what NPP was saying and their campaign was exciting but my family always vote NDC so ... Maybe when I get older I will choose to vote different.

**Interviewer:** Thank you all for participating and giving such illuminating discussion on the topic. Very appreciated.

### **Respondent details**

Respondent 1: 20, MALE, NDC

Respondent 2: 22, MALE, CPP

Respondent 3: 20, FEMALE, NPP

Respondent 4: 19, FEMALE, NDC

Respondent 5: (didn't provide age), MALE, NPP

Respondent 6: 20, MALE, NPP

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