



**NLA University
College**

**Media and democratic participation: An
assessment of the influence of radio
broadcasting on citizens' democratic
participation in post-war Sierra Leone**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO NLA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF A MASTER OF ART DEGREE IN GLOBAL
JOURNALISM**

AUTUMN, 2023

DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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ABSTRACT

Since the second wave of democratization that swept across the African continent in the 1990s, democratic good governance became the preferred choice of governance in many countries including Sierra Leone a post-conflict nation. This system of governance enjoys national and international legitimacy as citizens' democratic participation is crucial to their functionality. The media are among the forces that coalesced with civil society to shape and continue to define this unprecedented transformation and establishment of democracy in Africa. Thus, this thesis intends to assess the influence of radio broadcasting in enhancing citizens' democratic participation in the democratization process of post-war Sierra Leone.

Using a qualitative approach and methods, this study analyzed how four major leading radio broadcast news and current affairs flagship programs create an independent arena for democratic discourse in the country. It also provides a critical analysis of how media policies and regulations influence the function of radio broadcasting for democratic deepening in the post-conflict nation. The major findings show that radio broadcasting has enhanced citizens' democratic participation and that radio is a public sphere that facilitates and creates an atmosphere for people to participate fearlessly in debates and discussions on issues of common concern at the local and national levels of society.

The thesis concludes that radio broadcasting creates an arena for citizens of all categories to participate in democratic discussions on socioeconomic, political, and governance issues and that the reformation of media laws, policies, and regulations after the war created the enabling environment for the media to thrive. It facilitates the public sphere for citizens' political participation and democratic deepening. The legal and regulatory environment guarantees and protects freedom of expression and press freedom in Sierra Leone.

Key words. Democratic Participation, radio broadcasting, public sphere, democracy

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would sincerely like to thank God Almighty for His guidance, protection, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding right through my studies at NLA University College.

I must sincerely thank my supervisor, Professor Oddgeir Tveiten for his invaluable and useful contribution to this study. This thesis would not have been completed without his critical but invaluable comments.

To my good-hearted sister, Margret Salamatu Kanu (Sia Brima), and family, I must say thank you for your financial, moral, and emotional support. I am sincerely grateful. I owe you gratitude beyond human comprehension.

To my beautiful and lovely wife, Mrs Isha Mary Kanu, thank you for being a good wife. You are God-sent. I am truly appreciative of your true sacrifice. To my lovely boys, John Ishmail, Donald Rahim, and Gibrilla Kanu thank you for being good. Daddy loves you.

To my friend, Jovinary Kajuna, I am profoundly grateful. Your technical support was truly handy. I appreciate you, brother.

I further owe the following individuals sincere gratitude: Alimamy Lahai Kamara, Deputy Director General Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, Princess Gibson, Amadu Lamranah Bah, Mabel Kabba, Musa S Kamara, Mr Ransford Wright, national coordinator Independent Radio Network (IRN), Samuel Wise Bangura and Rev Gibrilla Kargo, I thank you all for unconditional support.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beautiful wife Mrs. Isha Mary Kanu and lovely children John Ishmail, Donald Rahim, and Gibrilla Kanu for their sacrifice and commitment to seeing me complete this academy journey in Norway.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study	2
1.3 Research Questions	2
1.4 Background and Research Context	3
1.5 Statement of the Problem	6
1.6 Rationale for Studying Radio Broadcasting in the Democratic Process of Sierra Leone	7
1.7 Chapter Summary.....	9
1.8 Thesis Outline	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 A Critical Appreciation of Radio Broadcasting in Sierra Leone	12
2.2.1 The Habermasian Public Sphere Theory and Radio Broadcasting.....	12
2.2.2 Democratic Participants Media Theory	18
2.3 The Media and Democracy	20
2.4 Democratic Participation.....	22
2.5 African Radio Broadcasting Democratic Promotion and Citizen Empowerment.....	23
2.6 Democratic Radio Broadcasting Characteristics and Democratic Participation	24
2.7 The Features of Talk Radio and How It Influences Public Debate.....	25
2.8 Political Effectiveness and Citizenship Participation.....	28
2.9 Chapter Summary.....	31
CHAPTER THREE	33
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	33
3.1 Introduction	33
3.2 Sampling Techniques	33
3.3 Population.....	34
3.3.1 The Sierra Leone Broadcast Corporation (SLBC 99.9 FM).....	34
3.3.2 Radio Democracy 98.1 FM	35

3.3.3 The Africa Young Voices Radio 101.6 FM (AYV)	35
3.4 Research Approach	36
3.5 Research Design	36
3.6 Data Collection Procedures	37
3.6.1 Qualitative Content Analysis of Recorded Radio Episodes.	37
3.6.2 In-Depth Interviews	39
3.6.3 Document/Archival Records Analysis	41
3.7 Data Analysis	42
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	43
3.9 Generalizability, Reliability, and Validity	44
3.10 Chapter Summary.....	46
CHAPTER FOUR.....	47
MASS MEDIA IN SIERRA LEONE	47
4.1 Introduction	47
4.2 Historical Development of the Print Media in Sierra Leone.....	47
4.3 Electronic Media Development in Sierra Leone	49
4.4 Post-Colonial Governments and Press Freedom.....	50
4.4.1 The Media under the Sierra Leone Peoples Party	51
4.4.2 The Media and the NRC Military Regime	52
4.4.3 The Media under President Siaka Stevens APC Administration	53
4.4.4 The Media and the Early President Momoh APC Administration.....	54
4.4.5 The Media under President Momoh during the Civil Conflict.....	55
4.4.6 The Media and the NPRC Military Regime	55
4.5 The State of the Media in Sierra Leone after the war	57
4.6 Chapter Summary.....	59
CHAPTER FIVE	60
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	60
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Sequence of Data Presentation.....	60
5.3 Qualitative Content Analysis of Recorded Radio Episodes.....	61
5.3.1 Krio Language for Radio Broadcasting.....	61
5.3.2 The Broadcast Strategy of the News and Current Affairs Programs.....	64
5.3.3 Citizens' Views and Participation in Radio Broadcast Programs	67
5.4 Document Analysis	68
5.4.1 The Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991	69
5.4.2 Acts of Parliament	71

5.4.3 National and Organizational Media Codes of Ethics	75
5.5 Analysis and Findings of In-depth Interviews	83
5.5.1 The Democratic Functions of Radio Broadcasting.....	84
5.5.2 Contributions of Radio Broadcasting to Democratic Sustainability.	85
5.5.3 Deepening Democratic Accountability and Transparency.....	86
5.5.4 Democratic Good Governance	87
5.5.5 Popular Citizen Democratic Participation.....	89
5.5.6 Peacebuilding and National Cohesion.....	90
CHAPTER SIX.....	93
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	93
6.1 Introduction.....	93
6.2 Summary of Findings.....	94
6.3 Theoretical Implications Derived from the Findings.....	95
6.4 Practical Implications Derived from Findings.....	96
6.5 Conclusion.....	96
6.6 Recommendations	97
6.7 Limitations of the Study	97
Appendix A.....	99
Interview Guide For Radio Journalists	99
Appendix B	100
Interview guide for the National Commission for Democracy (NCD).....	100
Appendix C	101
Interview guide for the Independent Radio Network (IRN).....	101
References.....	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5. 1: Citizens participation tracking figures.....	62
Table 5. 2: Citizen Participation Tracking Figures.....	63

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC-African National Congress
ABCS-attitudinal and Behavioral Change Secretariat
ACC-Anti-Corruption Commission
APC-All Peoples Congress
AU-African Union
CCP-China Communist Party
ECOWAS-Economic Commission of West African States
EPA-Environmental Protection Agency
EU-European Union
GST-Goods and Services Tax
GDP-Gross Domestic Product
FAO-Food and Agricultural Organization
IDA-International Development Association
IMC-Independent Media Commission
MRCG-Media Reform Coordinating Group
NRA-National Revenue Authority
ONS-office of National Security
PSRU-Public Sector Reform Unit
RUF-Revolutionary United Front
SLPP-Sierra Leone Peoples Party
TRC-Truth and Reconciliation Commission

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Following the publication of the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere by Jurgen Habermas in the 1960s, the concept of the public sphere has become increasingly strategic to democratic good governance, with citizen democratic participation at its core (Thussu, 2019). As it is argued, democratic governance without the appropriate creation of a Public Sphere for deliberative political participation is said to suffer democratic deficit (Nanz and Steffek, 2004). Thus, this study employed the public sphere and democratic participants' media concepts in the context of Sierra Leone, a post-war nation that experienced a brutal civil war, long-term dictatorship, and widespread political corruption (Abdullah, 1998). The study assesses the influence of radio broadcasting in the country's democratization process by reviewing how radio programs are structured in terms of presentational techniques and strategies that enhance political openness and the growth of the democratic space and culture. In that, the democratic public sphere is stated as the independent arena between the state and the home where free and equal citizens meet to exchange information, discuss shared issues, and work collectively to solve social problems (Pippa Norris and Sina Odugbemi, 2008). In the same vein, (Goodman, 2011) concurs and states that the media (radio) plays a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for the effective and smooth running of democratic systems with citizens playing a central role.

Therefore, this study proposes that citizens' democratic participation has been enhanced in Sierra Leone through their avid listenership and participation in radio broadcast programs of major radio stations. Considering this, the study critically examines Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone news and current affairs programs. It analyzes the broadcast content of these flagship programs exploring how they have contributed to enhanced citizens' democratic participation, reflecting on emerging views of contemporary democracy in Sierra Leone. The study engages with democratic concerns, examining the power of radio as a tool for participatory democracy, that promotes intense public debates and discussions (Abayomi, 2010). This demonstrates how radio broadcasting has increasingly created an independent platform for citizens' participation in the

democratization of their nations and the decision-making processes of their communities, especially in emerging democracies (Siemering, 2000 Bresnahan, 2007 Birowo, 2010).

Similarly, Mayers (2009) points out that radio despite the growth of information and communications technologies (ICTS) in Africa, “radio remains the dominant medium in Africa with the widest geographical reach and highest audiences compared with television and other information and communication technologies” (Myers, 2009 P-5). Myers continues that today in Africa, radio facilitates a more participatory and horizontal form of communication for the people to engage on issues of critical importance than it obtained with centralized radio broadcasting in the 1960s and 1970s Africa (Myers, 2009). Likewise, Van der Veur (2017) concurs that newspapers in Africa remain an elite medium whilst, on the other hand, radio continues to be the primary vehicle for reaching the vast majority of the African population living in far-reaching rural communities. This research also focuses on national and organizational media policies and regulations influence on the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone. Though there has not been a standard definition of what democratic broadcasting is exactly, several scholars have attempted to state or define the characteristics of public service broadcasting and community radio broadcasting whose broadcasting objectives and focus largely center on the people (Fourie, 2001).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to assess the influence of radio broadcasting in promoting citizens’ democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone but succinctly,

- (1) To examine the influence of the democratic functions of radio broadcasting on citizens’ democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone
- (2) To examine the influence of national and organizational media policies and regulations on the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone.
- (3) To examine the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone

1.3 Research Questions

R Q (1) How do the democratic functions of radio broadcasting influence citizens’ democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone?

R Q (2) How do national and organizational media policies and regulations influence the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone?

R Q (3) What are the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone?

1.4 Background and Research Context

Sierra Leone is a small country in West Africa with Freetown as the administrative capital. It is around the Mano River basin, a small region within the West African sun-region made up of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Ivory Coast. It is bordered by Guinea to the north, Liberia to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015). The current population of the country is slightly over eight million (8,605, 718) according to the 2022 census (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2022). Sierra Leone is a young democratic nation transitioning from a long-term dictatorship of one-party rule to representative democracy after an eleven-year brutal civil war that started in 1991 and ended in 2002 (Abdullah, 1998; TRC, 2004). English is the official language of Sierra Leone. Its daily use is limited to the literate minority, with the Krio local parlance as its national lingua franca estimated to be understood by 95% of the population of Sierra Leone (Tam-Baryoh, 2006:p-14).

Prior to the start of the civil conflict in 1991, the print media sector was almost entirely owned by private companies, while the electronic media (radio and television) was under a government monopoly (Cole, 1995, Tam-Baryoh, 2006, Musa, 2013). The media were largely a Freetown phenomenon (capital city), and they focused on the interests of the "elite" classes of people, while the rest of the country was in a news blackout (Tam-Baryoh, 2006). Newspapers experienced low sales, limited advertising revenues, and poor equipment due to a harsh legal system (Sesay & Hughes, 2005). Along with the low literacy rate, these issues plagued the media industry. Both the print and electronic media experienced severe expansion restrictions due to low audience and reading levels. However, since the end of the war, radio has grown significantly, especially community radio (Tam-Baryoh, 2006).

The horrific conflict that engulfed Sierra Leone cannot be attributed to any ethnic, religious, or political ideological differences among the population. Instead, the authoritarian government's political incompetence and exploitation, on the one side, and the desire for strong foreign interest in the nation's diamond, on the other, were the principal causes of the violent conflict (Abdullah, 1998, Kumar, 2006, Bau, 2010). Since the country's independence from the British in 1961, Sierra Leone has been ruled by authoritarian leaders who have trampled on individual freedoms and rights while undermining the development of

democratic institutions (Abdullah, 1998, TRC, 2004, Kumar, 2006). Similar to its neighboring countries Guinea and Liberia, the media in Sierra Leone endured its toughest times in the 1990s (Cole,1995, Tam-Baryoh, 2006, BBCMA, 2021). The traditions of democratic good governance like freedom of the press, free speech, and human rights are yet to be fully achieved (BBC Media Action, 2018). Today, the country enjoys a flourishing media industry with plural media ownership spanning from commercial/private, public (state-owned), and community, to a mushroom of media institutions (radio and newspapers) dotted across the country (Musa, 2017, 2013, Independent Media Commission Media Watch, 2022).

The establishment of the Community Radio Network (CORNET), the Radio Netherlands Initiative for Mobile Training for Community Radio (Informotrac) media projects, and the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) newspaper printing project, among others, are just a few of the media development initiatives that have contributed to the media's growth in Sierra Leone over the past years after the civil war in 2002. These development efforts range from locally based to those of international origin and support Tam-Baryoh (2006). In addition, Richard Mbayo (2006), a Sierra Leonean media scholar concurs that despite acute financing problems and government intimidation, West African media had shown exceptional resilience. Newspapers and other mass media have flourished, media content quality has increased, and a press that is more people-focused has emerged (Mbayo, 2006).

However, it is important to note that studies and reports on radio as a platform for democratic discourse in post-war Sierra Leone highlight that the radio broadcasting industry has contributed positively to the democratic development, citizen participation, and democratic good governance of the post-war nation (Musa, 2013, 2017, Sowa, 2021, MRCG, 2022). Radio stations serve as a platform to widely discuss and debate state governance by the citizens. In the same vein, Musa (2017-P-1) points out that “Radio is the most popular medium of mass communication in Sierra Leone because of the low literacy and the possibility for everyone to access and participate in radio broadcast programs without much financial burden”.

Radio broadcasting is used as a mechanism by state and non-state actors to discuss decision-making processes by informing the citizens and mobilizing public opinion on major issues that are related to national security, public election, service delivery mechanisms, transparency, and accountability in all sectors of society (Musa, 2017). Other scholars also argue that radio broadcasting gives individual citizens the opportunity and access to express

their critical opinions on governance issues important to national development and nation-building (Kumar, 2006). Both government and civil society used it as a platform. In addition, research also revealed that the TRC and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which were supported by the United Nations, used radio platform to ensure the participation of a large number of civilians in their work (Musa, 2013, Kamara, 2015, Sowa, 2021).

The establishment of the first private radio broadcaster-Kiss 104 FM in the provinces (Bo) and the first community radio station-Radio Democracy 98.1 FM in Freetown serve as alternative voices to the public broadcaster, then the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) (Tam-Baryoh,2006, Musa,2013). These radio stations brought in diverse content, lending citizens' voices on issues of national concern, and awareness raising to foster the process of peacebuilding among citizens and war-affected communities through information and mediation (Tam-Bayoh, 2006, Musa.2013). Radio Democracy FM 98.1 was in this sense designed to broadcast programs to bolster the resilience of Sierra Leoneans and to sustain their confidence in the constitutionally elected government (Kabbah, 2010).

Also, the coming of the United Nations radio FM 103.0 (UNAMSIL Radio) set up by the United Nations Peace Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) accelerated the process of peacebuilding and the integration of war survivors back into society. This radio served as a forum for raising awareness and promoting peace by bringing together all the factors involved in peace consolidation (Musa, 2013, Kamara, 2015). It evolved into an instrument for social and behavioral transformation in the nation. This facilitates the demobilization and disarmament of former fighters nationwide and boosts voter turnout in both the 2002 and 2007 general elections (Kabba, 2010, Musa, 2013, 2017, Sowa, 2021). In 2004, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court established by the United Nations was popularized through the use of radio as a transitional justice vehicle (Kamara, 2015, Sowa, 2021).

The Independent Radio Network (IRN) is an independent body of media professionals formed by broadcast journalists in 2002 to report the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2002. Research notes that the network (IRN) has helped in monitoring and reporting all public elections in the country. As a result, the network has always been funded by donor agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to cover elections at both national and local levels (Musa, 2013, MRCG, 2022). The MRCG (2022) also asserts that this independent network of radio journalists was instrumental in covering the 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2018 elections (MRCG,2022:P-9).

The TRC report (2004) states that the two leading political parties in the country the All- Peoples Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) once operated radio stations when the Independent Media Commission (IMC) granted them licenses in the context of community radio in 2007. The APC operated “We Yone Radio” and the SLPP operated “Unity Radio”. The two radio stations were used by both political parties to campaign, mobilize voters, and contribute to voter registration and education. Musa (2013-2017) states that these radio stations, in addition to other broadcasters, contributed to the successful conduct of the 2007 general elections. Their licenses were subsequently withdrawn, and the stations were shot down when the stations were accused of preaching hate messages and broadcasting inflammatory messages and tribal rhetoric from both sides of the political divide.

In view of Sierra Leone's political and media background, the radio stations mentioned above have existed as forums and spaces for promoting citizens’ democratic participation, dialogue, and peacebuilding. Radio stations in the country contributed largely to peacebuilding and consolidation as pointed out by media scholars. Radio broadcasting not only contributes to peacebuilding and consolidation but also helps in the administration of transitional justice when the special court for Sierra Leone was set to try those that bear the greatest responsibility during the war (Kamara, 2015). Based on this background, this study attempts to read Sierra Leone’s radio broadcasting industry within the literature context; radio as a medium that promotes democratic participation among citizens in post-war Sierra Leone.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

This piece seeks to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the role of the media and democratization processes. Importantly, there is a body of knowledge on the pro-active role the media played in the first and second waves of political and democratic transitions in Africa (Hyden and Okigbo, 2017). In Sierra Leone, there are several studies and reports on the role of the local media in the country’s democratization process, peacebuilding, truth and reconciliation, and the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). A recent report by MRCG noted that the media have been the cornerstone of democracy in Sierra Leone since the end of the civil war in 2002 (MRCG-SL, 2022). Despite this research on the role of the media in conflict and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone (Sowa, 2021) and on radio as a platform for democratic discourse Musa (2013-2017), one could assert that a study on the influence of radio broadcasting in the democratization process of

post-war Sierra Leone remains an unexplored territory and that it is worth researching. Thus, the primary goal of this study is to assess radio broadcasting's influence on the democratization process and the increased expansion of public engagement in democracy in post-war Sierra Leone.

1.6 Rationale for Studying Radio Broadcasting in the Democratic Process of Sierra Leone

Studies on media and democracy have pointed out that in fragile developing democracies, independent media are the only source of political information and forums of public opinion expression. Opposition politicians and civil society activists now have the opportunity to engage government leaders and pass their messages across to the citizens as a result of the availability of political talk radio shows (Mwesige, 2009, Bosch, 2010). The media use this influence by motivating and inspiring the public to reject the culture of silence that has defined them for many years (Mwesige,2009). Musa, (2017:P-13) notes that

Media are essential to democracy, and a democratic election is impossible without media since a free and fair election is not about the freedom to vote, but also about a participatory process where voters engage in public debate and have adequate information about political parties, policies, candidates, and the electoral process itself in order to make informed choices (13).

Musa's claim is supported by the advent of radio broadcasting programs as spheres for citizens' debate and deliberation in Sierra Leone. In a recent report, MRCG (2022:P-2) asserts that media coverage and reporting on the electoral processes in Sierra Leone up until the 2018 general elections had been crucial in Sierra Leone's democracy since the end of the war in 2002. When it comes to educating the public about issues of governance, the media have a significant role and impact. Reporting on the operations of the Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL), the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), and other Elections Management Bodies (EMBs) is one of the media's many vital roles in the 2023 elections.

Election and political-related discourse are significantly influenced by free media, which have long been seen as a pillar of democracy. Free and impartial, traditional media promote transparency, and the dissemination of crucial electoral information since individual citizens can only choose their leaders wisely if they are fully informed about their positions on

various issues, the interests they represent, and their track record in office (Mwesige, 2009, Samer and Gallagher 2015, Musa, 2017). In a similar fashion, Khan et al. (2021) support the claim that in a democracy, independent media are inevitable. They promote pluralism, open societies, and a transparent and responsible political system and safeguard fundamental liberties and rights for all people. The media play a significant role in raising public awareness of critical issues such as government policy and other vital topics, which helps to advance a democratic culture (Beetham & Boyle, 2009). Both traditional and new media play an important watchdog function, act as a platform for campaigns, a place for public discourse, and a source of public education, eventually enhancing democracy (Samer and Gallagher 2015).

In addition, other African scholars also note that radio broadcasting has increasingly created a platform for citizens' enhanced participation in the democratization of their nations and the decision-making process of their communities, especially in emerging democracies (Siemering, 2000 Bresnahan, 2007 Birowo, 2010). Radio broadcasting is considered the most prevalent medium than television and print through which the majority of the African population gets information about happenings nationally and internationally (Bosch, 2010). Radio has high penetration among Africans in general because it doesn't require literacy and it cuts across large geographical areas compared to television (Zaffiro,2000 P 3-4). For example, a 1995 media survey in Niger conducted by a French firm with support from the United States Information Agency (USIA) found that radio sets were more available than television and satellite television, on the other hand, radio is the primary vehicle for reaching people living in rural and interior communities Ott,1998 in Van der Veur (2017).

In a poor nation like Sierra Leone with a low literacy rate, radio is bound to be the most effective means of communication and dialogue. In the words of a leading Sierra Leonean journalist, "Radios are for all, while newspapers are for a few educated citizens" (Metzger in Tam-Baryoh,2001). Radio has a great geographic reach, and, unlike TV, the radio listener does not require electricity to listen to the radio (Tam-Baryoh, 2006). Tam-Baryoh (2006) continues that For example, in 1995, the people of Bo in southern Sierra Leone, who were cut off from the rest of the country due to rebel fighting, were given hope and a way to communicate with the outside world thanks to a new private station, Radio Kiss 104 FM. This illustrates the impact that radio broadcasting had in Sierra Leone even before the end of the war in 2002.

Based on the aforementioned rationale, it is important to note that the role that formal and informal media play is a subject that merits more attention; therefore, it is necessary to study radio broadcasting flagship programs as a media tool that creates an arena fostering a nexus between citizens and politics, whose audiences actively participate in public opinion (Tam-Baryoh, 2006 Musa,2017). Thus, a study on the influence of radio broadcasting in the democratization process in post-war Sierra Leone is very significant. This study is useful for researchers in media and communication studies, politics, public policy, and democratic good governance, among others.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides background information on the study of Radio Broadcasting and citizens' democratic participation from a global perspective to that of Sierra Leone. It further highlights the conceptual foundation and the rationale for studying the Role of Radio Broadcasting in the democratization processes of post-war Sierra Leone. The study engages Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone flagship programs of Radio Democracy 98.1 FM, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation FM 99.9, and the African Young Voices Radio FM 101.6.

1.8 Thesis Outline

There are six chapters in this thesis. In the first chapter, the thesis is presented. Chapter two presented the literature review and the theories employed to situate this study in the context of Sierra Leone. Chapter three outlined the selected research methodology and methods. Chapter four is made up of the historical and political context of the mass media in Sierra Leone since independence. Chapter five contained the findings, discussion and analysis of data, and chapter six is made up the conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Challenges including political corruption, instability, and human rights violations have continuously plagued Africa's developing democracies over the past decades since the continent's democratization drive began. Rocha et al (2008:P-1) state that

A wave of democratization swept across the developing world from the 1980s onwards. However, despite the momentous transformation that this so-called 'Third Wave' has brought to formal political structures in regions ranging from Africa to Asia to Latin America, only a limited number of countries have succeeded in establishing consolidated and functioning democratic regimes. Instead, many of these new regimes have become stuck in transition, combining a rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy with essentially illiberal and/or authoritarian traits (1).

Drawing from the work of Rocha et al above, it is possible to argue that, despite the country having political parties and democratic institutions, which are essentially fundamental to the process of institutionalizing and sustaining democracy, Sierra Leone is not an exception to such challenges and differences in its heterogeneous society. Its citizens are still experiencing divisiveness shrouded in ethnic politics, backward economic development, and poor social well-being. These challenging issues have been raised regarding the role of the media in these emerging democracies in Africa and elsewhere.

In that view, this thesis is premised on the notion that the media have played a facilitative role between the people and the government in these developing African democracies by reflecting the political order in which people are situated and promoting dialogue among their audiences through communication (Christians et al., 2009). Radio remains the most popular mass communication in Africa as Musa (2017 P-1) asserts that radio is the most popular mass media for reporting elections and democratic good governance-related issues, especially in Sierra Leone where most of the people are illiterate and mostly live in rural communities and hard to reach places.

Radio broadcasting is considered the most prevalent medium than television and print through which the majority of the African population gets information about happenings nationally and internationally (Bosch, 2010). Radio has high penetration among Africans in

general because it doesn't require literacy and it cut across large geographical areas compared to television (Zaffiro,2000 P 3-4). For example, a 1995 media survey in Niger conducted by a French firm with support from the United States Information Agency (USIA) found that radio sets were more available than television and satellite television, on the other hand, radio is the primary vehicle for reaching people living in rural and interior communities Ott,1998 in Van der Veur (2017).

In a concept paper for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Mayers (2009) points out that radio despite the growth of information and communications technologies (ICTS) in Africa, "radio remains the dominant medium in Africa with the widest geographical reach and highest audiences compared with television and other information and communication technologies" (Myers, 2009 P-5). Likewise, Van der Veur (2017) observes that newspapers in Africa remain an elite medium whilst, on the other hand, radio continues to be the primary vehicle for reaching the vast majority of the African population living in far-reaching areas and rural communities. Myers also argues that today in Africa, radio facilitates a more participatory and horizontal form of communication for the people to engage on issues of critical importance than it obtained with centralized radio broadcastings in the 1960s and 1970s Africa (Myers, 2009).

As a result, within the context of existing literature on radio broadcasting and democratic participation, this chapter draws on various arguments with a focus on the role of radio broadcasting in the promotion of democracy from different perspectives as Mtimde (2006) advances that radio broadcasting has been one of the most important tools of participatory communication and development. It is generally agreed that the mass media (radio) promotes democratization by making citizens aware of democracy and the governance of their states, nations, and communities (Bosch, 2007-2010-2017). The news and information provided by radio stations in Sierra Leone are deemed trustworthy and reliable by the citizens (Tam-Baryoh,2006, Musa, 2017). Sierra Leone is proliferated with dozens of radio stations nationwide premised on community interest and geographical location; therefore, radio stations have the ability to function as democratic platforms to create the public sphere that enhances citizens' democratic participation, scrutinize government actions, and provide citizens with the necessary information to make informed democratic decisions.

2.2 A Critical Appreciation of Radio Broadcasting in Sierra Leone

In this study, the theoretical framework is intended to provide a theoretical structure upon which the research is underpinned. The study, therefore, draws from two principal theories of Jürgen Habermas' (1962) Public Sphere theory which centers on the concept of citizens' access to information and participation in democracy and public opinion that influences political action, and Denis Maquillas, 's Democratic Participant Media theory which calls for citizens' effective participation in the decision-making process of their society (Calhoun,1993; Eley,2000, Habermas, 1964). An understanding of these approaches and theories in the field of communication and media studies is fundamental to exploring radio broadcasting's roles, and functions in the democratization process of post-war Sierra Leone.

2.2.1 The Habermasian Public Sphere Theory and Radio Broadcasting

Jürgen Habermas in his 1962 theory of the public sphere, attempts to illustrate the significance of the application of the concept to critically appreciate the role of radio broadcasting programs in Sierra Leone's democratization process. According to this social theory, Habermas (1999) maintains that in the salons and coffee shops of 18th-century Europe, the public sphere emerged among the literate bourgeois. "A sphere of informed and reasoned discourse, where government policies were scrutinized, and arguments and perspectives objectively discussed" is how he describes it (Crack, 2008). Although Habermas admits that he presents a "stylized picture of the liberal elements of the bourgeois public sphere" (Habermas 1989a) and that Habermas should have been more explicit that he was establishing an "ideal type" rather than a normative ideal to be revived and brought back to life (Habermas 1992a), his critics argue that Habermas idealizes the earlier bourgeois public sphere by portraying it as a forum for rational debate that includes everybody, wherein, in actual fact, certain groups of people were excluded from the idealized public sphere and that participation was limited to the chosen few (Garnham,1990, Dahlgren, 1991, Fraser, 993).

This concern relates to the Sierra Leone radio broadcasting industry where citizens are faced with serious challenges ranging from national and organizational policies and regulations to lack of finance, electricity power, and accessibility which limit their participation in radio broadcasting programs. These challenges that limit access to certain facilities and opportunities that could enable citizens to participate in radio discussion programs could be referred to as power relations in society that exclude others from actively participating in the governance affairs of their country. This access (public sphere) gives the public a voice on the airwaves and, in doing so, at least gives the impression that they have access to the mass

media (O'Sullivan, 2005). As a means of preventing this situation of limited participation, radio stations broadcasting in Sierra Leone have offered alternative avenues of participation. Radio stations provide listeners the choice to use text messages and social media options like Facebook Live, WhatsApp, and Twitter handles during their discussion programs. The only people who are in a situation to call in and take part in the debate and discussions are those who are economically strong enough to afford the means or top-up cards to call in to contribute and register their opinions on issues being discussed in the studios.

According to Garnham (1986), the public sphere needs to have the following institutional characteristics in order to be effective. He notes the following characteristics as being fundamental to the public sphere:

It was protected from the power of both church and state by its access to the sustaining resources of a wide range of private individuals with an alternative source of economic power. It was in principle open to all in the same way that access to the market was open to all. This Public Sphere thus took on the universalistic aspects of the Hegelian state, membership of the public sphere being conterminous with citizenship. All participants within the public sphere were, as with the competitive market, on terms of equal power because costs of participation were widely and evenly spread and because social wealth in general, within the bourgeoisie, was evenly distributed. On the other hand, it was distinct from the private interests that govern civil society because, in the Enlightenment tradition, it obeyed the rules of rational discourse, political views and decisions being open, not to the play of power, but to that of argument based upon evidence, and because its concern was not private interest but the public good. It thus also took over the rationalist aspects of the Hegelian state (Garnham, 1986: 40-41).

However, it is worth noting that despite the criticisms from Habermas critics, the concept of the public sphere remains very important to other scholars as well as the advancement of democratic good governance and citizens' access and democratic participation. The theory refers to the importance of people's access to an open public forum where they can exchange ideas find a mutual understanding of the problems they want to address and have an equal position in the communication process. This concept has enticed research endeavors about citizens' participation in the decision-making process of their society since the 1960s. The key institutional embodiment of citizens' democratic participation is the Public Sphere theory

propounded by Jurgen Habermas a German theorist. The idea of the public sphere is described as:

the public sphere" we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.1 They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion--that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions about matters of general interest. In a large public body, this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere (Habermas, 1964,p 49).

Mustapha (2012) asserts that the engagement of the public sphere notion surrounds the idea of participatory democracy and public opinion, which is an avenue for citizens' political participation through talk, which is an important underpinning for democratic association in modern-day democratic society. The fundamental argument is that citizens must be free from coercion and debate and deliberate in the public sphere (mass media) on issues that are of critical importance to the public and influence political decisions (Habermas and Press, 1989). Habermas demystifies a complex advanced society of elites and political classicism as one that allows citizens (public) participation in debates and deliberations that take place in the public sphere (the mass media) (Habermas and press 1989).

Hohendal (1974) concurs that the public sphere is a standard piece of work that helps in shaping the political consciousness of the public on issues that are of critical importance to them. A healthy liberal democracy is thought to depend on the public sphere, which is viewed as one of the fundamental tenets of liberal democratic political philosophy. Habermas claims that this area may be seen as a forum for private individuals to interact publicly and debate issues of importance (Habermas, 1989). Habermas further argues that the rise of capitalism in European feudal cultures during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created a new setting or environment for the interchange of ideas through reasoned discourse. "The elimination of the institution of censorship marked a new stage in the development of the

public sphere” (Haberman and Press, 1989-p 79). Nancy Fraser interprets Habermas' concept of the public sphere as being founded on the medium of discussion, where participants are able to openly express their viewpoints (Fraser 2003, p. 84). The discussion can be considered as a part of the deliberative actions among concerned citizens because the domain is accessible to everybody without prejudice. Cammaerts (2007) also states that Habermas's public sphere suggests that participants must be more interested in issues that align their interests with a common good in order for deliberative processes to be directed to common interests rather than their own goals.

Although Habermas' theory rests on rationality, he emphasizes democratization with a focus on political participation as the foundation of a democratic society and a crucial element in individual development. Bosch (2011:198) agrees and points out that despite the Habermasian public sphere being heavily criticized, particularly for its exclusion of women and the poor, it is still a useful theoretical framework through which to examine radio broadcasting programs because it is based on the idea that people can participate in public discourse on a somewhat equal basis. Similar to other disadvantaged groups in Sierra Leone, women, children, and the disabled have been advancing toward equitable representation in all spheres of life. Issues like representation in parliament, national land policy, health issues, and female land ownership should all be regularly discussed on radio broadcasts to appropriately perform the public sphere role and incorporate every part of society. Because Sierra Leone's 1991 Constitution guarantees that: No one's right to freedom of expression may be restricted, except with his or her consent. For this section, this right also includes the freedom to hold opinions, to receive and impart ideas and information without hindrance, to maintain private correspondence without hindrance, to own, establish, and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions, as well as academic freedom in educational institutions (Section 25:1).

Jürgen Habermas, notes that the public sphere is a social realm where public opinion can be formed and is open to all people, notwithstanding its criticisms. According to Habermas, participation in the public sphere is not class-based, and connections between activists are created by a shared desire to participate in issues of common concern. The inequalities that are likely to be shown in radio broadcast discussions, however, cannot be disregarded. Good Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone as a public sphere space appears to have classless considerations when it comes to the invitation of studio guests who can draw attention to issues or provide expert opinion and enlighten the

public on contentious issues affecting the country. This concern comes from the fact that there is a huge dominance of radio stations' studio guests that is made up of government officials past and present who could be regarded as members of the society's elite. Civil society activists, academics, and other professionals as against the ordinary Sierra Leonean citizens who are affected by issues of common interest that are discussed in studios. Given that these guests are skilled politicians and other professionals with the art of debate, this presents the elite with the opportunity to change the agenda and direct the discussions. This is particularly true in situations where radio broadcast programs hardly consider extending invitations to ordinary citizens as their studio guests to discuss issues of general interest. However, the impact of this elite dominance is minor given that ordinary callers still participate actively in radio discussion programs during these hours.

According to Habermas (1989), democracy gives rise to the public sphere. Through the creation of avenues for public discourse, radio broadcast programs are situated by Habermas' framework as means that might create a public sphere, enabling the public to consider Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone audiences in different ways, instead of being overly controlled by usual ownership structures. Considering this, in the Sierra Leonean context, Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone flagship programs have created unstructured platforms for public discourse that are intended to uphold moral and political validity by creating an unlimited space for the open formation of public opinion. Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone's Producers and presenters in Sierra Leone trying to appeal to audiences' interests, viewpoints, and attitudes by emphasizing local and national concerns that encourage political participation. Musa (2017) concurs and notes that these flagship programs give everyone a chance to speak freely on or in response to pressing national issues on a single platform. Evidently, it appears to be directing the national conversation in the country. This ensures that the role of radio broadcasting as a public sphere of democratization has been effectively successful as a discursive realm. However, well-placed African media scholars, Hyden and Okigbo (2017:40) contend that, in the first wave of democratization in Africa, "the influence of the radio, which in those days was not common, was largely negative, that is, it conveyed messages that opposed democratization (40).

The Habermasian (1992, 1998) conceptualizations of the public sphere activity use notions of "rational-critical debate" and "communicative action", (1984, 1987, 1990), both of which

contribute to mutual understanding and consensus-building on the way forward in public discourse in a democracy. This concept relates to Sierra Leone's contemporary public sphere in which Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone's ability to draw their audiences into a regulated discursive realm confirms their focus on handling several topical issues related to democracy concerns. These issues include citizenship education, political tolerance, good governance, the growth of civil society, even resource distribution, diversity, and nationalism. As a result, Habermas' theory has been applied to this study since Sierra Leone's top radio programs, Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone aspire to create a forum for democratic discourse where the public can interact, air their opinions, and register political viewpoints. These flagship programs act as a nonhierarchical avenue where citizens gather to control public authority and the management of public affairs through public opinion. Media and democracy are fundamental issues that have been considered in this research. Habermas' idea is utilized to examine the role of radio broadcasting in facilitating meaningful engagement in the public sphere focused on democracy issues and concerns in Sierra Leone.

This theory is demonstrated in the assessment of "Morning Koffee," "AYV On Sunday," "Gud Morning Salone," and "Wake Up Sierra Leone" to show how radio broadcast programs create democratic spaces or spheres and also how the listeners, through the presentation style of the programs, a space where they can deliberate on issues that are of common concern to them. Through their distinctive presentational styles, "Good Morning Salone," "Morning Koffee," "AYV On Sunday," and Wake Up Sierra Leone have provided an ever-more-unique information delivery service system for audience members to express their viewpoints and opinions. Their radio hosts do not tell people what to do but make people work towards a solution to problems facing them. These flagship programs's producers have made the listeners reliant on this mode by making the programs a space where callers, texters, and social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook live contributors can deliberate on issues that are of concern to them. This is due to their skill to know their audience and, as a result, use a style that would be suitable for them. Even though these programs have been around for over twenty-five years, the style they are presented has not changed because it helps "Radio Democracy," "Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation," and "AYV Radio," maintain the identity and reputation they have built up over the years.

According to Habermas' theory of the public sphere, the idea of the public sphere as a space where society and the state interact and where the general public organizes itself as the voice

of the people is consistent with the principle of public information. In the Sierra Leonean context, this theory relates through the radio broadcast of Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone programs, where Habermas' theory is applied to create a forum for democratic discourse for the people to air their political views and opinions. It serves as a meeting place where people gather to influence public authority and the regulation of public affairs through public opinion. A rising number of people began openly agitating for multiparty democracy and more participation in the management of public affairs in Sierra Leone, for instance, in the early 1990s when the 1991 constitution was introduced that eventually ushered in the first democratic government in 1996. Over the years, Sierra Leone has seen an increase in the number of organizations and people serving as watchdogs and calling for greater participation in various civic issues that include peace and democratic consolidation, free and fair election, human rights, and democratic good governance. They have grown bolder and more vocal, engaging the public in debate about political and other topics. As a result, discussions about issues that have an impact on people's daily lives are more frequently in the media through the democratic space created by radio stations right across the country.

2.2.2 Democratic Participants Media Theory

The democratic participants' media theory is a principal theory engaged in this research to critically assess the role of radio broadcasting in the democratization of post-war Sierra Leone. It focuses on the media system's current democratic, commercial, and professional hegemony. According to McQuail, the objective behind this theory is to challenge the centralization and bureaucratization of media institutions and resist the commercialization and monopolization of privately held media. It places a strong emphasis on communitarianism and promotes civic engagement. Okoro and Abodunrin (2013) note that the theory seeks to explain the normative behavior of the press in countries that are conventionally classified together as developing countries or third-world countries. This theory is a fundamental feature in liberal democracies where effective citizens' participation in the democratic process of their state is encouraged. In the same vein, Fourie (2001) notes that theory vehemently opposes the over-centralization and commercialization of the mass media which tend to inhibit individuals and minorities from the opportunity to participate in mass communication activities and the governance of their state. This relates to the Sierra Leone context of early independence to the early 1990s before the introduction of multiparty democracy when there was complete state monopolization of the media in the country. The

emergence of underground publications during the 1960s and 1970s was caused by the dominance of mainstream mass media controlled by private or public monopolies. The arrival of the Internet improved the efficiency of alternative media technically in the country (Musa, 2017).

In Sierra Leone, the application of the democratic participants' media theory relates to the capacity of African Young Voices Radio, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, and Radio Democracy to effectively use information and communication technology tools (ICTs) to create the space for democratic discourse that promotes direct access and participation in their broadcasting programs by the citizens. The theory stresses the need for access and the right to communication. It also decries the top-bottom character of modern media. Roelofse (2007) concurs and notes that, primarily, the democratic participants' media theory is a reaction to the trends toward commercialization and monopoly formulation in privately owned media, centralization, and bureaucratization in public broadcasting. Roelofse adds that the participant media theory reflects a public reaction against the commercialization and monopolization of privately owned media and the centralism of public broadcasting institutions.

In this context, radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone, mobile phones, smartphones, and all gadgets that ordinary citizens might use conveniently can apply this theory of democratic participation efficiently in democratic discourse without interference from state authorities as it obtains in the 1980s and early 1990s when the country was under dictatorial and military regimes. Considering that everyone who is aware now has access to technology, including those in developing nations. According to this theory, as long as people abide by rules ensuring their personal, social, and societal security, they should be able to freely express their opinions without government or state authorities hindering or private parties interfering or surveillance their activities. It emphasizes the need for equal and enhanced access regardless of status, wealth, and position. Participation in societal decision-making and participation in communication activities should not be the exclusive preserved right of the rich but of all citizens (McQuail, 1987).

The current Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act. 6 of 1991, establishes the "grund norm" of recognition of the right to freedom of expression and opinion. The significance of this Constitution lies in the fact that it reinstated a multi-party system and upheld a number of fundamental Human Rights for the individual. The right to freedom of expression and the press is especially guaranteed by Section 25 of the constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of

1991 Sowa and Kapuwa (2016) in Kamara, (2016). These provisions in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone are consistent with the democratic participants' media theory that advocates for the promotion of media development and the direct and active participation of communities and the public in media activities to the advantage of ordinary citizens (McQuail, 1987 Fourie, 2001). In Sierra Leone today, the establishment of the Independent Media Commission (IMC) in the year 2000, which gives broadcast licenses to radio stations, led to the proliferation of radio stations right across the sixteen political districts of the country, and the increased development in technology, ensure there is effective citizens participation in the democratic process. Radio stations from public to community broadcasters provide that discursive platform for the ordinary citizen to air their opinions on issues of common concern.

2.3 The Media and Democracy

In contemporary Africa, democratization has alternately been crucial to the growth and proper functioning of the media and the media have also been crucial to the growth of democracy (Hyden and Okigbo, 2002). This perspective can be linked to the second wave of democratization in the 1980s and early 1990s when a wide range of Western governments, aid donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, and financial credit organizations embraced and necessitated the growth of democracy as pre-conditions for continued economic assistance globally Cole (1995) in Riley (1992). These pre-conditions for continued economic assistance forced several former dictatorial African governments to adopt multi-party democracy, which is consistent with the second wave of democratization in Africa calling for public accountability, respect for Human Rights, and the rule of law as it happened in Latin America and other places (Cole, 1995; Hyden and Okigbo, 2017). Since then, there has been a massive increase in media publications since the liberalization of the laws regulating the media. Even though not all of them have been political, by appealing to the general people, they have frequently covered or commented on political crises (Hyden and Okigbo, 2017). Curran (2011:P-2) concurs and notes that a democracy needs to be properly briefed to be effectively self-governing. Ogbondah (1997) points out that the legalization of multiparty systems is one major change that took place in the new constitutions of African states that were under a one-party rule or dictatorial leadership, which facilitates freedom of expression and press freedom and ushered in democratization. The new political formation brought in changes from a state-centered constitution to one that seeks to safeguard the rights of individuals, including the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, press freedom, and

other human rights like political association and popular participation. This constitutional change is evident in the 1991 national constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991, which states that; “Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, and for the purpose of this section the said freedom includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, freedom from interference with his correspondence, freedom to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions, and academic freedom in institutions of learning” (Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991:P-16). The introduction of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone and the first democratic elections in 1996 are practical initiatives to dismantle the structure of dictatorship. To accelerate democratization, which defines the current situation of socio-political changes, political parties including the main opposition and civil society have increasingly used political and legal mechanisms (media) to hold the government accountable (Tam-Baryoh,2006, Sowa and Kapuwa,2016, Musa, 2017).

The constitutional provisions above notwithstanding, a renowned Sierra Leonean media scholar Bernadette Cole (1995) argues and notes that there are key structures that are sine qua non in a democracy that enhance the role of the media in the democratization process. These structures must be in place before the media can effectively perform its democratic function efficiently in a liberal democratic society. These structures include civil society, civil service, political parties with alternative policies, an independent and impartial judiciary, and free and independent media. Cole (1995) in Riley (1992) describe civil society as that range of organized interests outside the state, which are generally present in democratic societies, and can contain the excesses of state power. This structure mostly includes trade unions, business groups, women’s organizations, student movements, community associations, professional bodies, and religious groups (Cole,1995). The emergence of vibrant civil societies can hold the government accountable as the concept of democracy places a premium on popular participation in which members of the civil society should be able to discuss freely, exchange views, evaluate alternatives, and criticize where necessary. Cole continues that mass media provides a platform for discussion in order to arrive at well-considered popular decisions in society (Cole, 1995). Sierra Leone has a vibrant civil society that is dedicated to promoting the political, social, and economic well-being of its people. These civil societies try to restrict the state's ability and freedom to infringe on the interests, rights, and freedoms of citizens (Cole, 1995). Musa (2017) attests to this by stating that media are essential to democracy, and

a democratic election is impossible without media since a free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote and the knowledge of how to cast a vote but also about a participatory process where voters engage in public debate and have adequate information about political parties, policies, candidates and the electoral process itself in order to make informed choices (Musa,2017:P-1). Massaquoi (2017) concurs and states that in liberal democratic theory, the media are the undisputed guardians of the public interest created with powers to operate without serious legislative control while enjoying privileges from society.

2.4 Democratic Participation

In the context of democratic balance, political participation is the involvement of citizens within politics (Carpentier, 2011p-5). Carpentier adds that participation is viewed as a political-ideological concept that is intrinsically linked to power. This points out that political power can be corrupt hence the need for participation to avoid misuse and abuse (Carpentier, 2011 and Svensson, 2012). Democracy is described as a system of governance that concerns the inclusion of the citizens in the decision-making processes of their societies. The concept of participation situates well within Held's (1996) definition of democracy "as a form of government, in contradiction of monarchies and aristocracies, the people rule. Democracy entails a political community in which there is some form of equality among the people". This emphasizes the centrality of the people's participation and involvement in the governance of their communities, states, and nations. This demonstrates that citizens' participation in democracy should not be limited to the election of their political representatives but stronger participation in the running of their everyday lives (Held, 1996, Carpentier, 2011).

In progressive liberal democratic systems, "democratic participation is defined as political equality that requires individuals' participation in collective decision-making processes that affect their lives as a moral requirement, developmental opportunity and as a strategic necessity"(Warren, 2002). Within the tradition of liberal democracy, individuals that are affected by a decision should have an equal opportunity to affect that decision. This points out that people in a democracy, the citizens should benefit from collective self-rule and equal chances to influence collective decisions that make the system more robust and vital. Likewise, scholarship advances that today's democratic politics is defined by increasing demand from citizens calling for more accountability, transparency, and institutional reforms. This call gives access to greater public participation in public policy processes whether

through electoral reforms, public access to information, rights claims, and access to legal institutions which increases the nature of democratic governance globally (Cichowski, 2006).

2.5 African Radio Broadcasting Democratic Promotion and Citizen Empowerment

“Radio in Africa was born from official necessity”. Radio broadcasting in Africa has always been the chief information source for the majority of the people in the continent. This came out strongly when independent African leaders showed strong enthusiasm and support for the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) proposal by UNESCO calling for the improvement of the free flow of information in the world in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bredin, 1982). Bredin notes that most African countries experienced radio broadcasting towards the end of colonialism, a time when the wind of change and independence was blowing outside the continent (Bredin, 1982 p-4).

Similarly, African Independent leaders in the 1960s and 1970s, realizing the importance of national broadcasting invested hugely in radio networks across the continent. The results were dramatic making radio the most prominent source of information for Africans in general when compared to newspapers and television (Bredin, 1982 Ott, 1998). For example, a 1995 media survey in Niger conducted by a French firm supported by the United States Intelligence Agency (USIA) found that radio sets are wildly available, while television and satellite television are not (Ott, 1998). However, it is worth noting that African leaders realized the importance of radio and its power to reach out to the vast majority of people and decided to subject the medium under tight control to maintain political dominance.

Radio broadcasting has been one of the most important tools of participatory communication and development (Mtimde, 2006). It is generally agreed that radio broadcasting promotes democratization by making citizens aware of democratic values, rights, and principles and the governance of their society (Bosch, 2010-2017). As a result, within the context of existing literature on radio broadcasting and democratic participation, it draws on various arguments with a focus on the role of radio broadcasting in the promotion of democracy from different perspectives. Broadcasting, therefore, is referred to as the means of media transmission that makes information available to a broad spectrum of audiences in society (O`Shaughnessy et al, 2016).

In Africa, Sierra Leone is among the first countries where radio was established by the colonial governments to disseminate information to the public in the 1930s in Cole (Musa, 2013). The historical development of radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone goes back to the

1930s when the British government set up the Plymouth Committee to find out and proffer the best possible solutions and steps that could be taken to improve broadcasting services in British West Africa colonies and to coordinate such services with the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) (Cole,1995).

Radio is a popular parameter to measure the existence of participatory democracy in contemporary Africa. Radio serves as a platform for wider debates on governance. Both state and non-state actors use as a sphere to discuss the decision-making process by informing the public and mobilizing public opinion on key issues about national security, public elections, service delivery mechanism, transparency, and accountability, in all sectors of management in government (Musa, 2017 P-1).

In the context of Sierra Leone, though a transitional democracy, the country enjoys plurality in radio ownership after the end of the country's eleven-year civil war with the establishment of the Independent Media Commission in the year 2000 that gives licenses to media institutions and regulates their activities (Sowa,2013, Musa, 2017). Diversity in content format, production, issues, and voices emerged during and after the war. Private and commercial radio stations were established in Freetown and the provinces when the war was officially announced ended in 2002 (Tam-Baryoh,2006). In later years, community and religious stations were established as part of peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction processes. Radio was used in awareness raising especially in areas and communities affected by the war (Musa,2017).

2.6 Democratic Radio Broadcasting Characteristics and Democratic Participation

There is no standard definition of what democratic broadcasting is exactly, although several scholars have attempted to state or define the characteristics of public service broadcasting and community radio broadcasting whose broadcasting objectives and focus are largely people-centered (Fourie, 2001). These features of public service and community broadcasting could be easily applied to define democratic broadcasting, which places the citizen's access to information at its core (Carpentier, 2011). Democratic broadcasting is precisely viewed as a form of radio broadcasting that focuses on the promotion of democratic good governance, accountability and transparency, human rights, and the enhancement of citizens' democratic participation in the democratic process of their societies (Held, 1996, Burton, 2010). Bosch (2010) maintains that discussion and debate have been part of democracy. Talk is constitutive

of the public and talk among the citizens is fundamentally important for their participation in the democratization of their society (Bosch, 2010). Bosch maintains that in liberal democratic systems, talk, and discursive interaction between and among individual citizens leads to the creation of publics and consumption communities leading to national cohesion (Bosch, 2010 and Godman, 2011).

The phrase "audience participation" has many different connotations, but in this instance, it refers to the feedback that broadcasters provide using both conventional procedures and modern technologies. It comprises techniques such as commenting by SMS for a radio show or calling in a talk show to voice one's viewpoint (Garca-Avilés, 2012). One of the key components of audience engagement in radio broadcasting news and current affairs is phone calls and new communication methods like Facebook messages. Livingstone and Lunt (1994) highlight the fact that audience (citizen) participation on public radio broadcasting discussion platforms provides a forum for public discourse and enables citizens to voice their opinions about their daily lives in relation to their personal experiences. As a result of a thorough examination of the "constant shift from journalism as a product to journalism as a process," Robinson (2011) discovered that when news becomes a mutually shared process requiring forms of "work" from both groups, journalists and audiences equally recognize and respect what citizens can contribute. According to Tambini (1999), "the very broad notion of democracy and participation is necessary to come to terms with the consequences of new media for democracy. The coming of new media has brought in a lot of opportunities that enhance citizen democratic participation with multi-platforms created (Enli, 2008).

2.7 The Features of Talk Radio and How It Influences Public Debate

The majority of the research on broad radio in Africa has been on several facets of radio, such as radio drama, music, and community radio. However, the talk-centric democratic paradigm change has motivated scholars to examine the democratic potentials of talk radio, which acknowledges the significant role played by citizens in contemporary African democracies before and after the election periods. Talk radio echoes a time when people had a common set of values when people regularly gathered to exchange information, especially on local politics and social issues, and when people reaffirmed their sense of belonging even when belonging meant strongly disagreeing over what was best for the community (Barone and Schrof, 1990). According to studies, talk radio has been linked to increased overall political engagement, a feeling of political efficacy, media exposure and media monitoring of public

affairs material, perception of campaign-related information, and problem awareness (Hofstetter et al., 1999). According to Delli Carpini et al. (2004), studies show a significant paradigm change in the modern democratic model from vote-centric to talk-centric ideologies of democracy.

Talk radio as a format is characterized by dialogue that is "prompted by a show host and typically includes listeners who telephone to participate in the debate about issues such as politics, sports, or current affairs" (Rubin and Step, 2000: 636). The news and current affairs conversation portions on public, commercial, and community radios have elements in common that are centered on "talk radio format," as the host performs this function by making some news subjects more salient than others while presenting some topics from a particular viewpoint (Brundidge and Rice, 2009). "The power of the "audience-public," brought into being through the interactive broadcast, it is argued, arises from in-between these participants in public discussion, whom each invests in multiple and competing imaginaries of the elusive audience in pursuit of diverse ends" (Srinivasan and (Diepeveen, 2018 P-1).

Aalberg and Curran (2018) convincingly note that "Public opinion constitutes one of the cornerstones of democracy". It is maintained that knowledgeable citizens are essential for a democratic system to function effectively. In developed democracies, voters are supposed to make informed decisions based on their understanding of individual party platforms and candidates. The health of democracy depends on public access to information. For instance, it guarantees that people don't behave based on misunderstandings or ignorance but rather make wise decisions. Second, having access to information allows citizens to checkmate elected officials, who could be held accountable by their electorate for failing to keep their oaths of office (Aalberg and Curran, 2018). In this regard, news and current affairs programming on radio stations represents a distinctive mode of citizen engagement in political debate and radio broadcasting (Crider, 2012: 228). They give "an electronic public space" that has the capacity to add to the public conversation in a variety of ways (Herbst, 1995; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994).

Similarly, Bosch (2011b: 207), describes talk radio as a "place for the creation of public opinion" and, more specifically, "creates a space for the development of a public sphere within the context of deliberative democracy". Hofstetter et al (1994), note that talk radio is a "democratic arena lowering political and social alienation, and enhancing self-efficacy and involvement". The practice of citizens talking with other citizens in the public sphere through

media, such as the news and current affairs programs on public, commercial, and community radio stations, is arguably a form of participation that gives the citizens the opportunity to "develop and express their views, learn the positions of others, identify shared concerns and preferences, and come to understand and reach judgments" about issues of public concern (Delli Carpini et al., 2004).

As a result, Bennette et al. (2000) also state that participation in common public life and talking to one another about politics is necessary for democracy, which "depends on conversation". Citizens' conversation is therefore considered "essential to and a manifestation of their engagement" (Dahlgren, 2002:6-10). Talk radio is thus viewed by Hungbo (2013) as a dedicated space that each individual citizen must be familiar with and gain the skills essential for political participation. "To express attitudes and act according to their self-interest, citizens need relevant, up-to-date information about current affairs" (Aalberg et al, 2010). "The media are expected to provide sufficient and relevant political information so that citizens can hold their representatives to account and make informed choices" (Aalberg et al, 2010) in Carpini and Keeter (1996).

Politically aware citizens are essential for a democracy to function effectively. When measured by the criteria of democratic theory, knowledgeable citizens perform better, as Carpini and Keeter (1996) demonstrate. They are more likely to participate in politics, are more likely to hold strong, consistent opinions on various subjects, are better able to connect their interests with their opinions and are more inclined to vote for politicians who share their views. The electorate should therefore be appropriately informed about public affairs by the media for normative as well as empirically validated grounds. Citizen decision-making about the use of state authority is facilitated by news and commentary. In addition, Barber (1989) advances that public talk is participation among a group of citizens about shared issues, like the public good, and is a form of public thinking as opposed to private thinking. Public talk can only take place in a public forum where citizens can discuss and deliberate together. So, it is dependent on participation in communities of active citizens (Aalberg et al 2010). "Talk radio is particularly important in African democracies, which often struggle to escape the legacy of repressive regimes in which censorship, state victimization or imprisonment is most often the direct result of individuals publicly critiquing the state" (Bosch,2010: P-1).

However, Bosch (2010) argues and notes that in African societies, open debate on important national issues is discouraged based on political and cultural reasons as this is often perceived as inciting the public against the government and political leaders. Therefore, talk radio is

crucial to the advancement of democracy in Africa. Talk radio in Africa has the ability to help promote democracy by guiding public opinion and providing a forum for political discussion and debate. In Africa, radio broadcasting is typically regarded as the most common media due to its great penetration compared to print and television, as well as the fact that radio requires minimal reading skills, can be heard in many languages, and can cover enormous geographic areas (Bosch,2010).

Busch (2010) also notes that talk radio helps a discursive or deliberative democracy, in which citizen debate and public engagement are valued more highly than simple voting. On commercial radio, given its commercial imperative, commercial radio seems an unlikely place for such discussion. In a developing context, one might imagine community radio serving a more potent function as a place for parallel discursive arenas where members of oppressed social groups create and disseminate counter-discourses. Musa (2017) concurs and notes that in Sierra Leone, during elections radio broadcasting brings all actors to a common platform to discuss or respond to national issues fearlessly. Indicatively it seems to be setting the agenda for national discourse (Musa, 2017: P-1).

2.8 Political Effectiveness and Citizenship Participation

Democracy is one of the primary places where the idea of participation is articulated since it focuses on including the populace in political decision-making processes (Carpentier,2011). Held (1996) defines democracy as "a type of governance in which, in contrast to monarchy and aristocracies, the people rule. A political society with some degree of political equality among the citizens is what democracy means. The immediate and thorough summary of the intricacy of the concept of democracy provided by Held's work is well appreciated. Held (1996) cites Lively (1975) and Lively (1975) who identify seven key variants on how to arrange political equality in a democracy. Lively focuses on the first two major interpretations of "All should govern; and all should participate in important decision-making with the concept of participation stated primarily in connection to the rule, ignoring the rulers (Carpentier, 2011). At its core, democracy is a straightforward and widely accepted concept, despite the fact that its definition is complex and contentious (Gaventa, 2006: 21).

Similarly, to that end, though participation appears to be understood in many different ways in practice, it is a deceptively simple concept in theory (Somerville,2011). "Democracy, therefore, presumes a demo of equals, who recognize one another as fellow members and also recognize the due process of the demos' decision making. Members are not equally obliged

to participate but they are obliged equally to comply with those decisions taken” (Somerville, 2011:P-2). Even when a demo is acknowledged as such by its participants, some of those participants will be more influential than others, some will participate more effectively than others, and some will not acknowledge the legitimacy of the judgments made by that demo. A "democratic deficit" results when choices are not made in accordance with the desire of the demos as a body of equals, and as a result, members may not feel equally obligated to follow the rules. The less powerful majority may not view the decisions as being valid where they represent, for example, the opinions of a more powerful minority (Somerville, 2011).

Held (2006) states that participatory democracy places a high value on educating the citizens and demonstrates tremendous confidence in the people's capacity for self-governance. Effective citizenship requires a participatory society that "promotes political efficacy, inspires concern for collective concerns, and stimulates the formation of an informed community of citizens capable of self-government," according to participatory democrats (Held, 2006). Given this viewpoint, one could argue that citizens' (audiences') participation in broadcast news and current affairs programs on radio stations is positively related to political efficacy.

This study describes “political efficacy” as the citizens/audience’s belief that their views have the power to influence the socioeconomic and political environment, as political efficacy is the belief that one has the skill to influence the political system (Zimmerman, 1989,2010). According to this perspective, having access to news and current affairs programming on public, private, and community radio stations fosters one's political efficacy by enabling ordinary citizens to make a significant contribution to the democratic process (Muthukumaraswamy 2010).

Bello and Wilkinson (2017) concur and note that "political efficacy and engagement" are crucial behaviors for a strong democracy. Political efficacy is described as the "belief that one's individual political action does, or may have, an impact upon the political process, specifically, that it is desirable to carry out one's civic duties" (Caprara et al 2009). Personal agency and efficacy in politics refer to an individual's traits and abilities to influence their own and others' exercise of rights, duties, and power. Politics is concerned with the exercise of power under reciprocal commitments. A common idea that other members of the group, community, or social system one belongs to are also capable of facing the obstacles of politics is essential for realizing many of the challenges in the political realm (Caprara et al 2009) The idea of "self-efficacy" refers to a viewer's subjective belief in his or her own capacity to shape mediated public discourse and to have an impact on society (Zittel, 2007).

Therefore, a sense of audience empowerment in which callers believe their opinions can affect the political process might be characterized as political efficacy (Pinkleton, Austin, and Portman, 1998, 2002).

Scholars and observers view news media use as essential for educated public affairs participation and have discovered links between media use and political efficacy, learning, and participation (Pinkleton et al, 2012). A vibrant, well-run democracy depends on the participation of informed, politically engaged citizens who follow the actions of their government and public officials (Alberg and Curran, 2012, Pinkleton et al,2012,). Pinkleton et al (2012) further suggest that this participation model is based on the civic voluntarism and psychological engagement models of public affairs, which propose that political interest, as well as access to and proficiency with available resources, promotes public affairs engagement and citizen participation (Caprara et al, 2009, Alberg and Curran, 2012, Pinkleton et al, 2012). Studies also demonstrate that citizens who are involved in public affairs are active information seekers who use the media to learn about the government and public affairs and are more likely to benefit from greater external efficacy and participation in politics.

Considering the transitional democracy in Sierra Leone, Massaquoi (2015) argues that something is fundamentally wrong with the Media, 's recognition of their place and relevance in the democratic architecture of Sierra Leone (Massaquoi, 2015: P-1). Massaquoi continues that the institutions that underpin democracy in West Africa are not necessarily failing, but they are under serious threat of ruin and may eventually fall if nothing radical is done. The media continue to insist on their presence in the political sphere throughout modern-day Africa, as claims M'Bayo (2014). This is more so today that democracy is evolving, and African nation-states are transitioning from authoritarian and dictatorial political systems of the past to pluralistic political systems reflective of modern society (M'Bayo, 2014). How open and free the media are in holding leaders to account, giving citizens a voice, and providing accurate information about issues affecting the state is one of the key measures to determine how democratic and progressive a nation is. Cole (1995) asserts that a properly functioning democracy stimulates healthy debates, encourages the proposal of alternative policies, and promotes accountability. It is the responsibility of the mass media to educate the people on the need to support political parties offering alternative policies across ethnic and religious affiliations. The media should consider it their responsibility to give the ruling party the same amount of airtime and space as the opposition other minority parties and the

general public so that all views and shades of opinion could be heard. In other words, both the government the opposition, and the public should have equal and ready access to all available channels of communication (Cole, 1995). In both historic and contemporary Africa, research has consistently highlighted that the media play a fundamental role in the democratization process of Africa, hence the reason to promote development and peace and to establish a democratic society in Sierra Leone, that international NGOs and the donor community have therefore invested huge social and political capital in the country (Massaquoi, 2015, M'Bayo, 2014, Hyden and Okigbo, 2017).

2.9 Chapter Summary

Reviewing literature on and examining the role of radio broadcasting in the democratization of post-war Sierra Leone in this chapter has provided an understanding of how FM radio broadcasting as a platform (public sphere) can enhance citizens' democratic participation by assessing Radio Democracy FM 98.1, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) 99.9 FM and African Young Voices radio FM 101.6. flagship programs. Therefore, it is important to note that the development of new technologies is an important strategy for FM radio stations as actors intended to contribute to the democratization process of post-conflict Sierra Leone. Radio broadcasting has the responsibility to inform and educate the public on all matters regarding which they must make decisions, promote active participation in the governance of the nation by airing their complaints and problems, bring the actions of those in positions of public authority to the attention of the general public, and project and provide space for a plurality of news and opinions (Massaquoi, 2015, Musa, 2017). Tajan Bosch (2011-92) "Talk radio is particularly important in African democracies, which often struggle to escape the legacy of repressive regimes in which censorship, state victimization or imprisonment is most often the direct result of individuals publicly critiquing the state". Radio broadcasting is mostly regarded as the most common media in Africa, mainly due to its great penetration when compared to print and television; the radio does not require literacy; it may be aired in various languages; and it can cover a wide geographic area (Bosch,2011). In particular, it allows simultaneous information flow between millions of sources. The consequence is that a medium where the public may actively participate and have an impact on political as well as other outcomes can be made available to millions of citizens.

In order to better understand the dynamics surrounding radio broadcasting programs in Sierra Leone, particularly "Gud Morning Salone", "Morning Koffee", "AYV On Sunday," and

"Wake Up Salone" flagship programs and their intricacies, Habermas theory and the democratic participants' media theory of McQuail's are preferred. The public sphere, which has its roots in Habermas' ideas, provides a theoretical lens that leads to a deeper understanding of the dynamics surrounding radio broadcasting programs in Sierra Leone and the democratic participants' media theory through the development of new technologies creates the discursive realm by using technology to participate in radio discussion programs airing their views and opinions on matters and issues of common concern in Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter primarily presents the research methodology and data-gathering techniques that were used to access ways in which radio broadcasting functions as a public sphere that promotes citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. The study adopted a qualitative design that uses three qualitative methods and techniques to collect and analyze data from the study to better understand the research problem. Scholars such as Bryman et al. 2021, Du Plooy, 2002, Bryman, 2012 and Creswell, 2012 have underscored the relevance of using these techniques for a qualitative study.

First, a qualitative content analysis method was used to analyze recorded radio program contents of the three selected radio stations which include listener calls, and text messages. The second was document and archival records analysis was used to analyze national and organizational media policies, institutional documents, and media regulations of the three selected radio stations. Finally, in-depth interviews with journalists from the three selected radio stations and two officials of democracy-promoting institutions.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposeful sampling, a process that selected a sample that has the characteristics relevant to the research questions. The researcher's target population was drawn from the one hundred and four (104) registered radio stations with the Independent Media Commission of Sierra Leone from which three radio stations were selected purposively (Independent Media Commission Sierra Leone: IMC-SL Media Watch, 2022). Four radio programs, eight participants and two democracy promoting institutions. The researcher's expertise as a former project officer for a BBC Media Action program guided the selection process. Three radio stations were selected to ensure the study is balanced in nature in terms of ownership and content production. The selected cases are public, private/commercial, and community broadcasters. It is believed that the performance of media institutions (radio stations) is largely determined by their ownership and control (Chomsky, 2002, Edwards and Cromwell, 2018).

Because there is a point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample as the study progresses, samples for qualitative studies are often significantly smaller than those employed in

quantitative studies (Ritchie, et al. 2003). Therefore, the sample comprised elements that contained the most characteristics, representative or typical attributes of a population. As such, the researcher's judgment is instrumental in informing which subjects were selected to provide the best information to address the research problem and answer the research questions.

3.3 Population

According to Parahoo (1997), population refers to all the units that make up a group from which the data can be acquired. Burns and Grove (1993) emphasized that a study is made up of its components. The population of this study includes the three selected radio stations, four selected news, and current affairs flagship programs, two officials from democracy-promoting institutions, and six radio broadcast journalists featured in the sixty-three sampled radio clips from August 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

To study Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone's content and emerging themes effectively, the study used recorded episodes of the programs for a period of eight (8) months. These came to a total of sixty-three (63) clips that consisted of 126 hours listened to, transcribed, and interpreted by the researcher. The study necessitated the gathering of recorded episodes of "Gud" Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone from the archives of Radio Democracy 98.1, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation SLBC 99.9 FM, and AYV Radio 101.6. The audio content consists of audio tapes of "Gud" Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone programs dating back to August 2022 when the Voter Registration Exercise for the June 24th general and presidential elections was launched in Freetown. The recorded clips of these flagship programs included vox pop interviews carried out in the streets of Freetown, text messages, and phone calls of citizens during the news programs. The sixty-three (63) clips were divided into four groups based on programs. Twenty one (21) for Morning Koffee, twenty one (21) for Gud morning Salone, eleven (11) for AYV On Sunday and ten (10) for Wake Up Sierra Leone.

3.3.1 The Sierra Leone Broadcast Corporation (SLBC 99.9 FM)

The Sierra Leone Broadcast Corporation (SLBC) is the national public broadcaster of Sierra Leone. It was set up by the SLBC Act of 2009. It is owned by the government of Sierra Leone. It is the first radio station in the country established in the 1930s known as SLBS. Its broadcast signals cover the entire country with regional stations in the three provincial

headquarters cities and districts. According to the SLBC Act of 2009, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation is the first legally independent national broadcaster in Sierra Leone charged with the responsibility of providing information, education, entertainment, and above all reflecting all shades of opinion throughout Sierra Leone (SLBC Editorial guidelines, 2012). It enjoys audience diversity that cuts across the demography of the country including youth, children, men, women, and the aged (BBC Media Action Primed Project Validation Research Report, 2020, BBC Media Action Sierra Leone Media Landscape Report, 2018).

3.3.2 Radio Democracy 98.1 FM

The Society for Radio Democracy FM 98.1 (commonly known as 98.1 FM) is a non-profit organization that operates as an independent news media corporation, which aims to promote the ideals and principles of a democratic society that guarantees fundamental human rights, promotes the ideals of open and transparent governance systems, and enables universal access to information by all. Its board membership includes civil society groups, labor unions, good governance NGOs, and other non-profit organizations (Radio Democracy, 2022).

Radio Democracy was set up in 1997 to help restore democracy in Sierra Leone after the country's democratically elected government was overthrown by a group of military personnel. The establishment of the radio station was critical to sustaining efforts at reinstating democratic rule. Radio Democracy not only provided regular updates relating to ongoing efforts to restore democracy but served as a major reporter of issues that counteracted the propaganda machinery of the military junta. It was essentially a medium through which pressure was brought to bear on the military to relinquish power, while at the same time giving hope to a largely crestfallen population. Since 1997, Radio Democracy has never ceased to perform its role as a platform for civil society, democracy, and rights activists, and a mouthpiece for the masses. It has grown in stature and its audience has reached more than one million two hundred thousand (1.2) people (Radio Democracy, 2022). It is generally regarded by many people as a premier source of independent and fact-based reporting on current affairs and other news items that are important to the public (Radio Democracy, 2022).

3.3.3 The Africa Young Voices Radio 101.6 FM (AYV)

The Africa Young Voices 101.6 FM (AYV) is purposively selected based on its wide range of coverage signals in the whole country, despite being located in the western area (Freetown). It is one of the most popular radio stations in the country. It was established in

2011 on the grounds of being the voice of young people in Sierra Leone (BBC Media Action Sierra Leone, 2018, 2020).

3.4 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research method. Bryman et al. (2021: P-39) assert that a research method is simply a technique for collecting data. Qualitative research uses open-ended questions about human realities and experiences that are studied through extended contact with people in their natural contexts, producing rich, descriptive data that helps in understanding their perceptions and attitudes (Reese, 1996:375 & Dingwall et al, 1998). According to John Creswell (1994), qualitative research is an inquiry into understanding that is founded on several methodological traditions of inquiry that examine a social or human problem. He points out that the researcher builds a complex, comprehensive image, analyzes language, records the informants' in-depth opinions, and conducts the study in a natural setting. The qualitative approach is more suitable because it is more flexible and sinks well with the research objectives of the study. According to Reese (1997), qualitative research produces words in the form of comments and statements rather than numbers as a means of presenting the findings.

3.5 Research Design

The qualitative design is more suitable for this study because it is more flexible than the quantitative design or mixed methods. According to Kara (2022), qualitative design provides a deeper insight into intangible factors such as experience and emotion. Kara adds that in a mixed methods study, the quantitative research normally provides partial knowledge, while including qualitative information can provide a fuller and richer analysis of the phenomenon understudied (Kara,2022). This research design sinks well with the research objectives of the study. The choice of design enabled the researcher to explore the selected cases of (news and current affairs flagship programs) understudied better in collecting detailed information through a variety of data collection procedures. A qualitative design is deemed necessary for its ability to produce (descriptive non-numerical) information appropriate in the description and analysis of people's individual and collective social actions, thoughts, and perceptions, as asserted by Miles and Huberman (1994). Hence, this study seeks to understand the role of radio broadcasting in the democratization process of post-war Sierra Leone. Therefore, to get a fuller and richer analysis of the phenomenon, this study adopted qualitative content analysis, document analysis, and In-depth interview methods to systematically describe the

choice and meaning of the themes utilized during the presentation of the news and current affairs programs by journalists of the three selected radio stations in Sierra Leone (Schreier, 2012; Bryman 2016).

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Three different qualitative methods were used for data collection. These methods are qualitative content analysis, In-depth interviews, and document analysis. The researcher personally collected data from the three selected radio stations on a cross-sectional visit to Radio Democracy 98.1 FM, African Young Voices Radio 101.6 FM, and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation (SLBC) 99.9 FM during a visit to Freetown. First, In-Depth interviews were used. The interviews also served as discussion documents to collect detailed information from the stations. Secondly, more information was collected through a careful content analysis of archival records and documents such as operational policies, constitutions, program schedules, annual progress reports, and other important documents deemed necessary for the study. Lastly, qualitative content analysis was used to systematically analyze sixty-three (63) recorded episodes of the four news and current affairs programs of the three selected radio stations.

3.6.1 Qualitative Content Analysis of Recorded Radio Episodes.

While it is important to note that qualitative content analysis is applicable in analyzing visuals and auditory, the purpose of this section was restricted to the analysis of the transcribed data that represents a summary of the major underlying themes of the content extracts examined from each of the sixty-three recorded episodes of the four news and current affairs flagship programs. Thus, content Analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1952-P-18) as cited in Holsti (1969). Because of its persistent features of objectivity, systematic, and generality, Holsti (1969) defines content analysis as a basic research tool that may be useful in various disciplines (quantitative and qualitative) and for many classes of research problems (Holsti, 1969, P-3).

Content analysis is a method designed to identify and interpret meaning in written or recorded forms of communication by separating out small pieces of information that represent important concepts and then applying or developing a framework to organize the pieces of information in a way that can be used to describe or explain the phenomenon understudied (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). Kolbe and Burnett (1991) continue that content

analysis is particularly useful in situations where there is a huge quantity of unanalyzed textual data from newspapers, recorded communication, visuals, and audio records of broadcast.

Content analysis is a well-known data analysis technique that has evolved in its treatment of data (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991, Krippendorff, 2004, Bird et al, 2005).

However, because of its accessibility, content analysis is also an appropriate qualitative method for researchers in the social sciences and humanities. It was adopted by qualitative researchers when the naturalistic qualitative paradigm became more prevalent in social sciences as the way people behave in natural settings became of increased interest in research (Holsti, 1969, Kolbe and Burnett, 1991, Krippendorff, 2004, Kara, 2022). Though it was originally introduced as a strictly quantitative method, recording counts to measure the observed frequency of pre-identified targets in consumer research, content analysis is a well-established data analysis method that has evolved in its treatment of data (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991).

Thus, Schreier (2012) defines qualitative content analysis as “a method for describing the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way” Schreier continues that qualitative content analysis assigns successive parts of unanalyzed data to categories of coding frames that cover the meanings that emerged in the description and interpretation of the analyzed data (Schreier, 2012). Kondracki et al (2002) point out that qualitative content analysis rests on the assumption that texts are a rich data source with great potential to reveal valuable information about a particular phenomenon (Kondracki et al, 2002). Bryman (2016) also notes that a qualitative content analysis method is the most suitable and prevalent approach to analyzing extracted themes of qualitative documents.

Forman and Damschroder (2007) cited in Mayring (2000), also state that content analysis is a systematic, rule-guided method for classifying textual data that is used to analyze the information contained in large collected unanalyzed textual data. Forman and Damschroder (2007) state that a variety of qualitative techniques are used to analyze textual material, one of which is qualitative content analysis. It is a generic type of data analysis since it consists of a set of atheoretical approaches that may be applied to any qualitative research where the informational content of the data is pertinent. This means that qualitative content analysis is used to study a broad range of texts from transcripts of interviews and discussions in social research to the narrative of films, radio, and television programs.

This section of the study largely focused on callers and hosts (presenters) as the active participants in the recorded episodes of the program broadcasts of the three radio stations' whose flagship programs were analyzed. The role of the presenter was examined by looking at their ability to stimulate discussions, debates, and conversations that are attractive to the citizens to participate in. The way the text messages and phone-in calls were managed by the presenters and the manner in which callers and texters that go too political, or attack guests or colleague callers were managed as well were studied. This was done by transcription, translation, interpretation, and repeated reading of the analyzed data to examine the topical issues being discussed and responses generated with a focus on evaluating the program's ability to present democratic issues. This allowed the categorization of results into group themes relating them to the objectives of the study (Forman and Damschroder, 2007, Bryman, 2016). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) state qualitative content analysis seeks to identify a construct or concept within the text using specific words or phrases to provide a more organized structure to the text being described (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The recorded episodes, vox pops, phone calls, and text messages from the Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV ON Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone programs were split into different segments that concentrated on the emerging themes. The themes that stood out were coded into the following categories: Human Rights, politics, free and fair elections, accountability and transparency, gender equality, freedom of association, and government failure. As per the segments, a total of sixty (63) episodes were examined. Twenty-one (21) episodes for each radio station, three (3) episodes in a month, and one (1) episode a week. The episodes for AYV Radio were divided between AYV On Sunday and Wake Up Sierra Leone. Eleven for AYV On Sunday and ten for Wake Sierra Leone. This data collection method directly addresses research question one (RQ1) which examined the recorded episodes of the four programs.

3.6.2 In-Depth Interviews

In this section, the focus was centered on the in-depth interviews conducted with the eight (8) interviewees that represent the views and opinions of journalists on the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone. Thus, the Qualitative interviews with content producers were used to gather data for analysis. Bryman (2021:425) describes qualitative interview as a process that is flexible and dynamic in nature in which greater interest is placed in the interviewee's viewpoint, and the researcher's ideas are often flexible with much room provided for the interviewee to shape the focus and direction of the interview.

Therefore, In-depth interviews were used to explore the topic to uncover participants' perceptions of the particular issue or phenomenon that is under study. They also provided detailed background about the reasons why participants gave specific answers while also allowing for observations of participants' non-verbal behavior. Therefore, at Radio Democracy 98.1FM, SLBC99.9, AYV Radio 101.6 FM, National Commission for Democracy, and the Independent Radio Network, expert interviews were carried out with the presenters (journalists) of the News and Current Affairs programs of Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday and Wake Up Sierra Leone and the two democracy-promoting institutions government and non-governmental officials whose role involve what content to present, doing research and writing scripts for on-air presentation to the public.

In addition, In-depth interviews are described as means with the ability to provide extensive data concerning participants, opinions, recollections, values, motivations, and feelings about radio performance (Du Plooy, 2009 Wimmer and Dominik, 2005). The expert interviews at Radio Democracy, SLBC, AYV Radio, NCD, and IRN were carried out in a bid to understand how the producers and presenters of the selected flagship programs carry out their daily work as well as their experience in the job that they do, which includes their experience over the years at the radio stations and democracy promoting institutions in the country. The method is effective as a way of information gathering where detailed information is required. It is most appropriate where a small sample of participants or informants is involved which is usually obtained using purposive sampling. The expert interviews also tried to know how these flagship programs are shaped and directed that allow the citizens to participate in them.

Broader, open-ended questions were used in the interviews carried out at Radio Democracy, SLBC, AYV Radio, IRN, and NCD to allow the interviewees to respond in their own words and give the interviewer some freedom to ask more questions in response to the interviewee's remarks. Creswell (2014) asserts that open-ended interview questions have the ability to open up the interviewee to the point of giving out unanticipated answers that will invite further questions from the interviewer. These answers are rich in information. Bryman (2021) concurs and states that the interviewer being flexible is key as it caters to the needs of the interviewee to give out information-rich explanations to the interviewer. He continues that the style of the open-ended questions will help the interviewer to get the best data from the interview. The interviews were carried out between January 31 to February 14, 2023. The choice of time was based on the convenience of the interviewees as the researcher visited the radio stations and institutions at the convenience of the interviewees within the interview

period that the researcher was in the country. The interview questions were tailored in tandem with the research objectives of the study. This research method addressed research question two (RQ2) specifically.

3.6.3 Document/Archival Records Analysis

This section restricted itself to only the content side of the content response of the document analysis to determine how media policies and regulations represented the themes that emerged from the analyzed data. Thus, Bowen (2009: P-1) defines document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material in qualitative research. He also notes that in order to extract meaning, gain insight, and develop empirical knowledge, document analysis, like other analytical techniques in qualitative research, necessitates the examination and interpretation of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; see also Rapley, 2007) cited in Bowen (2009). In this study, the researcher collected data through a careful analysis of archival contents of records and documents such as editorial policies; constitutions, program schedules; annual progress reports, strategic plans newsletters as well as business, minutes of meetings, and broadcasting formats and strategies from the three selected radio stations, media regulating bodies, (the Independent Media Commission-IMC and the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists-SLAJ), and the two democracy promoting institutions (IRN and NCD) to find out how national and organizational media policies and regulations influence the broadcast of radio stations in Sierra Leone (Bui, 2013, Creswell, 2013-2015 Creswell, 2018). The examination of archival records is an important method of obtaining complimentary data to the data collected through qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews, which proved to be relevant to the researcher in the interpretation of the data collected.

In this section, during my cross-sectional visits to the three selected radio stations, the Independent Media Commission (IMC), the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Independent Radio Network (IRN), and the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), were also visited. I collected authentic, credible, and meaningful documents like the constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991, code of practice IMC, code of practice SLAJ, IMC Acts old and new, editorial policy SLBC, editorial policy AYV and all major media policy and regulation documents from which extracts were made for the analysis of data. This method addressed research question three (RQ3) specifically. As such, institutional records

(radio documents) were particularly important in the study for providing historical information, and insights about the radio stations and their news and current affairs programs.

3.7 Data Analysis

A theme is an organization of two or more categories of analyzed data that represent an underlying meaning (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It captures something about the data in relation to the research question and represents an aspect of patterning or significance within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2012) state that thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This easily organizes and describes the data set in detail. This process identifies the themes and salient concepts in the data to get the objective truth within the analyzed data with little interpretation. The identified salient concepts were applied during the data familiarization process by identifying the main themes in the data collected. This method systematically identifies, organizes, and offers insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set that helps qualitative researchers easily interpret data better (Braun and Clarke, 2012:P-1).

In order to study Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone, and identify the salient topics discussed during the sampled radio broadcast programs, I transcribed each of the sixty-three recorded broadcast episodes, translated, and interpreted each and every page of the transcribed data. In carrying out this analysis of the data, I singled out the data materials that are related to this study and discarded those that are not relevant. In combination, I further subjected the analyzed content analysis of the sixty-three radio episodes and the analysis of media policy and regulation documents to a thorough analysis, discerning the major themes that emerged from the analysis of the entire data: radio content, document analysis, and the recorded interviews of the eight respondents. As qualitative content analysis demands the researcher to be intimately involved in the analytical process of the data, I repeatedly read each and every set of the three data sets analyzed in response to research questions 1, 2, and 3 (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

Bearing in mind that codes are the currency of qualitative content analysis, the data was examined in depth to provide a detailed description of information, following which the data was categorically coded in group themes (Saldana, 2021). Where quantifiable data is available, illustrative tables were used to present research findings. Following this, I interpreted and synthesized the organized data into general statements of understanding based on the restatement of the aim and objectives of the study. Thus, using this method helped the

researcher to point out identified commonalities in the study and create the needed correlations and links in a concise way that informed sound interpretation and analysis of data extract.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Munhall, people who consent to participate in our research have basically entered the scientific community (Munhall,1988). As emphasized by Punch (1986) cited in Munhall (1988), they are now collaborators as opposed to subjects or objects. Munhall asserts that because qualitative research is a continuous, dynamic, and evolving activity, researchers must promote negotiation and renegotiation in order to protect the human rights of our participants. Therefore, it is important to seek the consent of your participants because it is reflective of the true nature of qualitative research (Munhall, 1988:P-2). In the same vein, Arifin (2018) notes that in every research study, it is important to protect human subjects by following the correct ethical principles. The in-depth nature of the research process in a qualitative study offers ethical considerations a special quality. When conducting a face-to-face interview with a vulnerable group of participants, the concern over ethical issues becomes more salient (Arifin, 2018:P-1). Bryman concurs and notes that as social scientists, it is important to be aware of the principles of ethical guidelines as they are considered best practices among a community of scholars (Bryman, 2021).

This current study ensured that the human rights, autonomy, dignity, safety, and well-being of the research participants were protected. Before starting the collection of data from the field in Sierra Leone, application for research ethical clearance was made to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). The data collection only started when the ethical clearance was formally approved. The research participants were informed and assured of the protection of their confidentiality before the researcher started the collection of data. In addition, the researcher informed the research participants about their rights to withdraw their consent at any time if they so wish.

In this research, consent was obtained voluntarily and with full understanding. The researcher informed the three selected radio stations and two democracy-promoting institutions about the study and its purpose. The researcher first submitted the introductory letter from the NLA University, Kristiansand to the management of the three selected radio stations and the two other institutions concerned. Meetings were scheduled and held, and the management of the selected radio stations and the two other institutions were briefed on the significance,

purpose, and scope of the research. The research participants were all informed and the necessary agreement was made as to the time and place for the interviews at their own convenience. Additionally, the participants were informed by the researcher that the interviews will be recorded and that they will be played in their presence for final approval and consent about the information provided.

The researcher also let the participants know how important it was to treat their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they provided with the highest care. Since it was necessary to directly quote the participants at the data analysis stage, the study, therefore, treated the information they provided with the highest confidentiality. This was accomplished by giving the participants fictional names or codes. Participants' identities were protected by being assigned names or codes for ease of understanding.

In the situation of any risk, the researcher informed the participants of the risk that may be involved in the situation of unforeseen circumstances. The long period of the interviews was also part of the discussion to which all the participants consented willingly. The participants agreed that we meet at their own convenience and time which was consistent with the researcher's time and schedule.

In terms of fees or compensation, nobody was paid or given compensation. It was all voluntary on the part of the research participants. The participants were also encouraged by the researcher to participate effectively as the information provided (findings) is crucial to the study and the entire research. Lastly, the participants also informed that, in a situation where they wish to withdraw the information provided as findings, it will be done, and the information will be deleted with immediate effect.

3.9 Generalizability, Reliability, and Validity

The scope of the findings of qualitative research is in general restricted because of the small size of the participant population. Transparency, trustworthiness, and objectivity are always issues that are related to the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Critics point out that qualitative research's limitations prevent it from being as universally applicable as quantitative research. However, Bryman (2012) notes that in order to find specific insights into individual experiences, ideas, and feelings, qualitative research is mostly carried out with a small group of people in a particular organization, locality, or setting. Creswell (2013) also confirms that the goal of qualitative research is understanding, the rich background of information that results from visiting participants face-to-face, investing a lot of time in the

field, and probing to obtain detailed and accurate findings. Qualitative research does not aim to reflect a population with its interview participants. The quality of the theoretical inferences drawn from qualitative data, rather than statistical principles, serves as the foundation for qualitative research findings (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2021) continues that, for a qualitative research study replicability, sampling, the design, and contents of the data-collection instrument must be reflected in the findings of the study.

As stated above, I followed the data collection procedure as highlighted in Chapter Three of this research. Though my research has only eight participants, it has not destroyed the findings of the research. I ensured there was a major diversity in the sex, age, and positions, of my participants. They all came from different radio stations and organizations governments and non-governmental institutions. To generate authenticity meaning and trustworthiness, I have let voices of my participants to speak right through the text, which can generate multiple interpretations. I have not altered their opinions while transcribing, translating, and interpreting in the process of writing this research.

The Interviews were conducted in an ethical manner where respondents were not induced financially or coerced to participate in the interviews. All procedures were followed through. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of my participants. NSD approval was secured and a letter from NLA University College was presented to the management of all three radio stations and democratic institutions for approval before the interviews were conducted. I agreed with my participants before the interviews were conducted. Transcripts of interviews were shared with the respondents to ensure that the data reflected what they had said.

The researcher ensured that his personal biases did not affect the interpretation of the data by regularly cross-checking the interpretations thereof with the findings from the study and also having a colleague cross-check the data and the interpretations thereof. I maintained objectivity and neutrality right through the research. I carefully discussed the findings of this study in reference to the theories of Habermas and McQuail after the conduct of the in-depth interviews and literature. The findings and discussions of this research were led by my research methodology which I systematically followed in carrying out the study.

I believe my participants have offered valuable insights into the study on the contributions of radio broadcasting to the democratization process of post-war Sierra Leone. These valuable insights into the contributions of radio broadcasting in democratic processes with detailed descriptions of the findings of this research have my research generalizable, valid, and

reliable as it can resonate well with my research audience readers (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, Sanders et al., 2018).

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the methodology and design used in this research. It discusses the relevance of the qualitative research approach in assessing the role of radio broadcasting in the promotion of citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. The study adopted a qualitative design. The study adopted a qualitative research design because it allows the use of a combination of data collection methods and techniques in conducting this study. This approach applies to several qualitative studies (Du Plooy, 2002:82 Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012). This chapter discussed the principal data collection methods employed by the researcher in the data collection process. These are face-to-face in-depth interviews, document analysis, and qualitative content analysis. It further discussed the thematic analytic techniques for analyzing the data in detail. The chapter, therefore, explains and justifies the choice of the research design, outlines the area of study, and discusses population and sampling procedures, as well as the ethical foundation on which the research was conducted. The issues taken into consideration while collecting the data in the field are informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. It also discussed the issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability.

CHAPTER FOUR

MASS MEDIA IN SIERRA LEONE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an abridged historical and political perspective of the mass media in Sierra Leone. In detail, it examines the country's long-time media tradition, chronological development, and essentially outlines national media policies and regulations adopted by different political regimes since media policies and regulations are among the major concepts reviewed by the objectives and research questions of this study. Thus, a presentation of the historical and political perspectives of the mass media in Sierra Leone further illuminates the understanding of how media laws, policies, and regulations significantly influenced the democratic functions of the media in contemporary Sierra Leone. This notion informs the discussion of the country's history with a prime focus on how post-colonial administrations employed the media as instrument of their respective political agendas.

4.2 Historical Development of the Print Media in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone had the first ever newspapers in the history of West African journalism - "the Royal Gazette" established in 1801" and "the Sierra Leone Advertiser" established in 1817 and operated until 1827 (Alie,1990). The New Era Newspaper 1855 was founded by William Drake Omu (1978) cited in M'bayo (2016). The Sierra Leone Watchman 1842 was founded by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society though it folded up in 1846 as a result of political pressure from the colonial government Kaplan et al (1976:148) cited in M'bayo (2016). This period was subsequently followed by the establishment of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) in the early 1930s making it one of the earliest English-language radio broadcast services in West Africa (Alie, 1990, Cole, 1995). Sierra Leone, at independence, in 1961, enjoyed a vibrant media industry, that included the first newspaper, radio broadcaster, and television station among countries in sub-Saharan Africa with no apparent attempt to control or suppress the media (Cole, 1995, Abdullah, 1998 T R C, 2004). For example, the West African Reporter operated from 1876-1884, and the Sierra Leone Weekly News operated from 1886-1951. These newspapers were run by Sierra Leoneans. They were not only critical of the colonial government but also created awareness among citizens on issues of agriculture, education, and health (Cole,1995, TRC, 2004, Kamara and Silverman, 2016).

M'bayo (2016) asserts that in the absence of political parties in not democratically elected colonial administration, and no opposition parties to checkmate the activities of the colonial government, the media (press) was the only effective constitutional weapon that held the colonial government to account and also influenced activities in the country Omu (1968) in M'bayo (2016). M'bayo continues that after the Second World War, in the struggle toward independence in the 1960s in Africa, Sierra Leone experienced the emergence of new political elites, political parties, a change in the genre of journalism, and the establishment of political party newspapers. The Bo Observer 1945 was established by the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP); the Vanguard newspaper in 1965 was established by the SLPP, the Shekpendeh newspaper was founded by the United Progress Party (UPP), and the We Yone newspaper was established by the All Peoples Congress (APC) in 1963 (M'bayo, 2016). The Truth and Reconciliation report (2004) states that, in the early 1970s, Sierra Leone had independent newspapers, as well as government-owned newspapers that largely operated in Freetown. These newspapers were "The Sierra Leone Daily Mail", "Freedom Press newspaper", "The People Newspaper", "The Tablet Newspaper", "The Nation Newspaper" and "The Sunday Flash Newspaper". Research also posits that the total ownership of the print media in the country was private ownership by individual citizens (TRC, 2004, Tam-Baryoh, 2006). The TRC report also notes that some of these newspapers were critical of the government whilst some of them were propaganda machines and mouthpieces of misinformation for the government. Research showed that the state was the biggest advertiser at the time and those newspapers that praised the government were more likely to get most advertisements than those that criticized the government. However, since then, the country's media remained relatively free until the introduction of "Part 5-Defamatory and Seditious Libel criminal law in 1965" by the country's second Prime Minister in 1965 as contained in the Public Order Act, No 46 of 1965 (TRC,2004).

The TRC report (2004) also captures that there was pluralism in the print media, albeit the only government-controlled radio and television station, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS-TV). The TRC report continues that the country only started experiencing media control and suppression around 1965 when the government introduced laws to curtail press freedom, especially against the opposition. A directive was issued to the government-owned newspaper "The Daily Mail" and the state broadcasting agency, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) not to give publicity to the activities of the opposition, the All-People's Congress (APC). These unfortunate incidents lead to media suppression and state

control for over four decades depriving citizens of their democratic rights to political participation (Cole, 1995, TRC report, 2004).

The Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA) was established in 1980 following the hosting of the Organization of African Unity Conference in Sierra Leone in 1980. This government news organ was set up to ensure that all news about the OAU conference was reported not only in Sierra Leone but internationally. The agency was initially funded by the government of Sierra Leone, but later the government in agreement with the United Nations Education and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) and Pan African News Agency (PANA) signed a neutrality agreement that allowed UNESCO and PANA to financially support SLENA to ensure news was reported independently by the agency. However, the TRC report concurs and notes that the government digressed from the agreement, and SLENA became a government propaganda machinery and misinformation outlet (TRC, 2004). The Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA) is the only news agency in Sierra Leone and is owned and operated by the government.

4.3 Electronic Media Development in Sierra Leone

Musa (2013) in Cole (1995) states that the British colonial authority launched broadcasting services in Sierra Leone to disseminate information about governance to the population in the 1930s. These efforts established the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) (TRC,2004, Musa, 2013). This development in the nation's broadcasting history occurred around the 1930s as a result of the Plymouth Committee, which the British government established to consider and recommend practical measures to improve and expedite the provision of broadcast services in the British colonies in West Africa. And those services were coordinated with the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) Cole, 1995 in (Musa 2017). Sierra Leone enjoyed vibrant media that included radio and television broadcast services, which the governments of the post-independence era inherited from the colonial government (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, M'bayo, 2016, BBCMA, 2021).

Radio and television were under state control and monopolized for several years in Sierra Leone because the government considered the broadcast spectrum to be a national resource, which must be controlled by the state in the interest of all the citizens (Cole, 1995, M'bayo, 2013, Musa, 2013). The broadcast media was tightly controlled by the government as Sierra Leone had only one radio and television station (SLBS-TV) up till the late 1990s (Musa, 2013). Plurality in ownership became noticeable after the rebel war when the Independent

Media Commission was established by the government in 2000 (M'bayo, 2013, Sowa, 2013). The state broadcasting agency, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) was strictly controlled by the government, especially under the leadership of the country's second Prime Minister who introduced laws to curtail press freedom (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Musa, 2013).

The dissemination of information to the public continues to be monopolized by government-controlled broadcast media. The SLBS was prohibited from airing news outside of Freetown in the early 1990s. As a result, the majority of Sierra Leoneans relied on rumors to track the development of the war when it started in 1991. While the majority of Sierra Leoneans relied excessively on the BBC World Service to stay informed about events in their own country, the state broadcaster, the SLBS, successfully propagated the government's narrative of the conflict. The main information and dissemination infrastructure in the country was tightly controlled and managed by the government (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Blake, 2005, Sowa, 2013 Musa, 2013, M'bayo, 2013).

4.4 Post-Colonial Governments and Press Freedom

The historical development of the media in Sierra Leone traces back to the colonial era before the struggle for independence in the 1800s and to the country's independence era in 1961 from the British. Sierra Leone is among the nations in sub-Saharan Africa where the first newspapers, radio stations, and television stations were located. At independence, it had a thriving media tradition. The governments of the post-independence era were, in theory, in a great position to preserve the nation's illustrious past (Alie, 1990, Cole, 1995, Abdullah, 1998, TRC, 2004). Since its independence, Sierra Leone experienced several political changes ranging from one civilian government to another including military regimes and interregnums. The media sector in the country is no exception to these political changes as it suffered immensely under the control of post-independence governments.

The media sector plays a significant role in the country's historical development. History points out that the country's first independent government was under the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) which was led by Prime Minister Milton Margai. Under his leadership, the media in Sierra Leone enjoyed complete freedom and unhindered access to information and dissemination (Alie, 1990, Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Musa, 2013). The fundamental rights of every person and freedom of expression were guaranteed under Sierra Leone's 1961 constitution. Media freedom was commonly understood to entail the freedom to

spread information and ideas through the mass media without interference from the government or politicians, even though there were no specific safeguards for the media. A free media environment was thought to aid in the dissemination of factual information about what was taking place in the newly independent nation (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, M'bayo, 2013, Kamara and Silverman, 2016).

Additionally, the media would explain, examine, and make clear the newly independent state's objectives and principles while offering a platform for feedback and criticism of the country's operations. Under Prime Minister Milton Margai and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party, this was the atmosphere in which the media functioned during the early years of the nation's independence. Government intervention was minimal or non-existent when it came to the Sierra Leone Daily Mail, a government-owned daily, and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS). The most-read publication in the nation was the Sierra Leone Daily Mail. The Sierra Leonean, a weekly that the Sierra Leone Department of Information and Broadcasting published in the 1960s was also prominent. It claimed to represent various points of view, but it appeared to be biased in favor of the government (Cole, 1995, Wahl-Jorgensen, 2008, Kamara and Silverman, 2016).

The All Peoples Congress party (APC), which was in opposition, had "We Yone" newspaper, while the ruling SLPP had Unity newspaper and eventually "The People newspaper." Since the introduction of television in 1963, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (radio) has functioned with a high level of credibility (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Tam-Baryoh, 2006). There was also a host of independent newspapers in the country, among them Shependeh, Think, African Vanguard, and Salneb, which were not only critical of the post-independent governments but also reported positively on major development projects in the areas of education, health, agriculture and so on (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Musa, 2013, Kamara and Silverman, 2016). A situation that Fisher (1969) in Cole (1995) describes as "Sierra Leone was a free country. People usually spoke openly, without fear. The newspapers were free. Press control was exercised, as it would be in Britain, through libel laws and other normal restraints. The main issues were debated through public meetings and the press".

4.4.1 The Media under the Sierra Leone Peoples Party

Under the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), however, scholars note that the media environment in the country started deteriorating sharply in 1964 immediately after Albert Margai was appointed Prime Minister on the death of his brother Sir Milton Margai, the

country's first Prime Minister. The Daily Mail, a British Mirror Group-owned independent daily, was acquired by the government of Sierra Leone in 1965. Its position was altered from that of an independent publication by Prime Minister Albert Margai to that of the government. The Daily Mail kept its reputation as being independent and reporting on events from an unbiased perspective for a while. Siaka Probyn Stevens, the leader of the opposition, claimed that the Sierra Leone Daily Mail was the mouthpiece of the SLPP administration and Prime Minister Albert Margai because he found the newspaper's articles to be offensive and biased (Cole, 1995, Alie, 1990, TRC, 2004).

Reports state that Sir Albert Margai enacted measures to restrict press freedom. For instance, a directive was given to the state broadcasting organization, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS), and the government-owned newspaper, "The Daily Mail," not to publicize APC activities in any way. The dictatorship eliminated jurors from seditious libel prosecutions and instituted a judge-only trial after losing a libel case against the APC-leaning 'We Yone' daily for trying to reveal corruption in state-owned companies and agencies like the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004). Many of the journalists who used We Yone newspaper to reveal corruption at the SLPMB, including Ibrahim Bash Taqi, A. F. Thorlu Bangura, and Samuel Holist, were subjected to harassment. The financial controller for the newspaper, A. F. Thorlu Bangura, was found guilty of defamatory libel against the prime minister and given a year in prison. The defamatory libel was made illegal by the Public Order Act of 1965, which also set the precedent for subsequent governments to repress the press (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, M'bayo, 2013, Kamara and Silverman,2016).

4.4.2 The Media and the NRC Military Regime

Under the first military interregnum suppression, the media in Sierra Leone were no exception. The media sector suffered a lot of oppression and suppression from the military regime from 1967 to 1968. This political change followed the 1967 General election, Cole (1995). History notes that media were tightly controlled, despite the National Reformation Council's (NRC) short time in power. The junta said in a proclamation that "any mention of the deposed SLPP regime, the opposition APC, any defamatory materials regarding the NRC or its members, or any comment likely to stir up ill will between the ethnic groups in the country, shall not be published"(TRC, 2004: p-97). As a result, there was self-restriction censorship by the media to avoid the high-handedness of the military regime (Cole 1995, TRC 2004, Abdallah, 1998). Freedom of speech was suspended together with the suspension

of the constitution. The only channel through which the regime would provide information was radio Cole (1995).

4.4.3 The Media under President Siaka Stevens APC Administration

According to history, the media in Sierra Leone under the reign of Siaka Probyn Stevens and the All Peoples Congress government in 1968 was initially ideal for the media to thrive. A political transition after the restoration to power of the APC administration after a short time of an oppressive military regime between 1967 and 1968. Under the Stevens administration, the media landscape was once more made vibrant and active. Stevens pledged unrestricted freedom of speech and claimed that the administration required critical media. When the Stevens administration started implementing repressive policies against the media, that harmonious relationship between the government and the media came to an end. The Siaka Stevens administration introduced strong measures against the media with the independent press in mind (Hayward, 1984, Alie, 1990, Cole, 1995, Abdallah, 1998, TRC, 2004, M'bayo, 2013).

Threats, incarcerations, and physical attacks on the press's properties completely stifled it within a few years. The majority of the people who were left unattended were APC advertising machines (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004). Dr. Mohamed Sorie Forna cited the burning and demolition of the "Freedom Press" offices, which resulted in a child's death, as one of the reasons he resigned as the APC's finance minister in 1970. After the opposition newspaper "The People" was burned down in 1972, the editor of the opposition newspaper "Unity" was jailed without being indicted in March 1973 in reaction to threats made by the President against journalists. The APC triad of Siaka Stevens, S.I. Koroma, and CA Kamara-Taylor used newspapers like "We Yone," "Sierra Leone Daily Mail," "The Nation," and "Sunday Flash" as their mouthpieces (Hayward, 1984, Alie, 1990, Cole, 1995, Abdallah, 1998, TRC, 2004).

History also emphasizes that the Siaka Stevens regime used a variety of harsh measures against the media to quiet them across the country, including sacking bright journalists who dared to criticize the Stevens administration. For instance, reporters from the BBC and other foreign media outlets were expelled from the country. Journalists working for the Department of Information and Broadcasting and the Sierra Leone Daily Mail newspaper were sacked for their opposition to the government's attempts to restrict free speech in the country. The Newspaper Amendment Act of 1980 was proposed by the Department of Information and Broadcasting on July 31, 1980, and parliament passed it into law as a response to the critical

publication of independent newspapers that started to appear in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This new law made it difficult to register new newspapers and the re-registration of old ones. All applications under the new law were submitted to the Minister of Information, who had the authority to accept or reject any of them (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, M'bayo, 2013).

4.4.4 The Media and the Early President Momoh APC Administration

Siaka Stevens retired in 1985. And there was a change in the political climate in the country. Leone. A new-order viewpoint that protected press freedom was presented by army officer Joseph Saidu Momoh during his inauguration as president. This offered new hope to the media, which was already threatened and restricted. Smith (1990) observes in Cole (1995) "Freedom of the press was guaranteed. The press once more became critical of the soaring inflation, heartless exploitation, reckless smuggling, and black marketeering"(Cole, 1995).

In one of his maiden addresses, Brigadier J.S. Momoh, the new president, urged journalists and the media to use their influence to support his presidency and put the country on the path to progress Smith (1990) cited in Cole (1995). The president had also pleaded with the media in several press luncheons to play a crucial part in helping to save the nation from its economic and social distress. The president's remarks inspired, uplifted, and rejuvenated the spirit of journalists and the media in general. High-level state corruption was the subject of several media (newspaper) investigations, the results of which resulted in prominent government officials losing their positions Smith (1990) in Cole (1995) (M'bayo, 2013).

However, the honeymoon between the government and the media ended abruptly in 1989 when a radio announcement from the government stated the immediate banning of five daily newspapers from publishing that included the Vision newspaper, For Di People, Globe, Weekend Spark, and New Shaft. President Momoh unavoidably inherited from Siaka Stevens a government that was hostile to press freedom. The government-owned broadcast media still held a monopoly on the diffusion of information. No justification was given as a reason as to why the newspapers were banned. A statement from the government later stated that the editors of the banned newspapers were in breach of the Newspaper Amendment Act of 1980 and that their registration certificates had not been renewed(Cole, 1995, M'bayo, 2013).

4.4.5 The Media under President Momoh during the Civil Conflict

By 1989, it is reported that the economic situation in Sierra Leone continued to decline beyond the control of the then administration of President Momoh. The SLBS had a monopoly on radio and television broadcasting and strictly regulated it. A lot of speculative journalism has been possible since Sierra Leone never had a Freedom of Information Act. Newspapers that reported on corruption or violations of human rights were virtually always criticized or attacked. People's freedom of speech was severely restricted as a result of the security forces' propensity to detain individuals for engaging in "careless conversation," which in essence meant criticizing the regime. The government was under intense pressure locally and internationally. By this time, there were calls from Western countries and donor partners (IMF and World Bank) for good governance, including press freedom as a condition for economic and donor assistance. In a bid to gain financial assistance from the international community, the Momoh administration accepted press freedom and free press in the country (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, M'bayo, 2013, Kamara and Silverman, 2016).

The government-owned broadcast media SLBS and the Sierra Leone Daily Mail continued to have a monopoly on the flow of information. The SLBS's coverage was limited to Freetown while President Momoh was in power. As a result, most Sierra Leoneans depended on rumors to track the civil conflict's development when it first started in March 1991. Until junior officers of the Sierra Leone military from the battlefield arrived in Freetown in April 1992 to overthrow the Momoh administration, the SLBS successfully supported the government's account of the civil conflict. As opposed to what was anticipated, Sierra Leoneans relied too heavily on the BBC World Service to keep up with events in their own country (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004). Furthermore, the lack of truthful information aided the insurgent, the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) propaganda efforts by causing a huge number of people to flee their villages in fear even when an attack was far away (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Blake, 2005, Kumar, 2006, M'bayo, 2013).

4.4.6 The Media and the NPRC Military Regime

The quality and capability of the so-called "Fourth Estate" were severely diminished as a result of continuous attacks on the media, which pushed many skilled and experienced professional journalists out of the industry. Those days, anyone with a secondary school diploma could work as a journalist. Many media outlets, especially the print media, were owned by individuals who openly displayed their political allegiances to the APC Momoh administration. Many newspapers have become partisan (Cole, 1995, TRC, 2004, Kumar,

2006). As a result of a long period of bad governance, centered on state corruption and human rights abuses by the Momoh administration, there was a sustained call for governance and economic development by the international community and the Sierra Leonean citizens, which ultimately led to the overthrow of the Momoh administration by young military officers in the Sierra Leone army and formed a military government for the second time in Sierra Leone called the National Provisional Ruling Council in April 1992 (NPRC) (Cole, 1995, Tam-Baryoh, 2006).

As in 1967 and 1968, the coming of the NPRC military government came with euphoria and happiness in the country. The government gained both local and international legitimacy. As usual, the honeymoon between the media and the NPRC lasted for only a few months following the April 1992 coup (Cole, 1995). The country's constitution was suspended immediately after the military officers took over the reins of power. However, though the constitution was suspended, the military government called upon journalists and the media, in general, to assist it in accomplishing its principal goal of ending the civil war raging in the southeastern parts of the country and returning the country to a civilian democratic government. By the end of the year, the military government began clamping down on criticisms that they considered unwarranted and biased (Cole, 1995)). For example, in December 1992, the Editor of "For Di People" newspaper was detained and released for publishing a story criticizing a member of the regime for alleged overspending. In January 1993, the Editor of the Pool newspaper was also arrested and detained for publishing a story critical of the military regime on the 29th of December execution of twenty-six (26) people on allegations of attempted coup without proper trial (Cole, 1995, M'bayo, 2013).

On January 13, 1993, new guidelines called "Guidelines for Newspaper Registration" were introduced by the NPRC government to guide the activities of the media. Further, a decree, numbered Decree No 6 (six) was issued by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting that give all the newspapers four weeks to register with the government (Cole, 1995). Decree No 6 came with a lot of restrictions and conditionalities for newspaper proprietors including high registration fees that were massively protested against by the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists calling it a bad law that aimed a muzzling the media (Cole,1995). At this time, Sierra Leone had about thirty newspapers, eleven of them got registered and nineteen were not registered due to circumstances beyond their control. It was reported that most of the newspapers that registered had links with the government (Cole, 1995). The crackdown on the media continued as several journalists were arrested, tried, and jailed for criticizing the

military regime. The NPRC regime revived the SLBS radio and television that had stopped broadcasting months before the coup in 1992 (Cole,1995, Sowa, 2021).

M'bayo (2015) highlights that from colonial times to the current administrations, the governments of Sierra Leone introduced new heavy-handed methods and strict regulations in a bid to curb the media whenever they think they are not happy with the operations of the media. He continues that there are twelve (12) or so regulations in the country all designed in one way or the other to suppress the media. These regulations are mostly inherited from the colonial administration as colonial policies or informed by the English libel laws of the 17th and 18th centuries respectively. Some of these media regulations included: The Newspaper Ordinance of 1924; the Undesirable Publication Ordinance of 1939, and the Public Order Act of 1965, which criminalizes libel and defamation though recently repealed in 2020 (M'bayo, 2016:P-15).

4.5 The State of the Media in Sierra Leone after the war

Although the media in Sierra Leone have gone through phases of oppressive regimes of media control, starting from the colonial era to post-independence governments, military regimes, to civilian governments, they have remained strong and resilient against all odds. The Sierra Leonean media over time developed a peculiar quality, a "hydra syndrome of sorts," whereby the more the governments attempted to control it, the more it thrived. The special quality of the Sierra Leonean media has been put to the test countless times depending on the disposition and attitude of the government and what they perceived as inappropriate behavior on the part of the press (M'bayo, 2016:P-15). The eleven-year brutal conflict that saw the wanton destruction of media infrastructure and the deaths of journalists in the country, is no exception to this resilient nature of the Sierra Leonean media.

The media in Sierra Leone like any other structure in a democratic society suffered serious damage during the eleven (11) year brutal civil war that the country experienced from around March 1991 to July 2002. Media infrastructure was destroyed in both the provinces and Freetown. According to Sowa (2021), the media sector during the war was small. There were only a few radio stations operating in Freetown and the provinces. There was only one television station in the country operated by the government of Sierra Leone- SLBS-TV. Sowa continues that the few operating radio stations in the provinces were located in Kenema, Bo, and Makeni, the provincial headquarters of the North, South, and Eastern provinces (Sowa, 2021). Some of those stations were either closed or taken by rebel forces

when the provincial cities were overrun by the rebels. The print media was small and equally affected by the war like the electronic media. Although it was a traditionally Freetown-based phenomenon, during the war, its readership dropped to low levels as people were displaced from one place to another, and the elite class fled away from the country (Tam-Baryoh, 2006, Sowa, 2021).

However, it is worth noting that the media industry came back to its feet immediately after the war was declared over due to international and local intervention efforts toward the media (Tam-Baryoh, 2006, Sowa, 2021). These interventions included the Community Radio Network (CORNET) project; the Radio Netherlands Initiative for Mobile Training for Community Radio (INFORMORTRAC); Search for Common Ground/Talking Drum Studio (SfCG/TDS) project; the UN Radio established by the United Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) that was peace and reconciliation focused and the BBC World Service Trust and many others global media foundations and INGOs that were involved and contributed in media development of Sierra Leone (Tam-Baryoh, 2006, Sowa, 2021). The Independent Media Commission Act was passed in 2000, and the IMC was established in 2000. It was charged with the responsibility of regulating the media. issuing licenses to media institutions and stopping government interference with the media. The setting up of the IMC in 2000 reduced government interference with the media (Tam-Baryoh, 2006). According to IMC's (2022) Media Watch report, eighty-two (82) registered newspapers, one hundred and four registered radio stations, and twelve registered television stations in the country. Tam-Baryoh (2006) points out that although the media industry continues to be plagued by infrastructural, financial as well as equipment problems, radio, particularly community radio, has, however, flourished since the end of the way.

In conclusion, except for a brief period of unrestricted media freedom in the early years of independence, the media in Sierra Leone over the last six decades have been subjected to the whims of political change and consistent enforcement of repressive press regulations as each succeeding government tried to strengthen its hold on power. The general pattern in each period of political upheaval has been a brief honeymoon phase between the administration and the media, followed by a slow crackdown on critiques of the media (Cole, 1995). Except for the introduction of multi-party politics in 1991, which eventually led to the country becoming a young democratic nation since its first democratic elections in 1996, Sierra Leone has been governed by authoritarian figures who have suppressed individual freedom and

undermined democratic institutions since it gained independence from the British in 1961. (Cole,1995, Kumar, 2006).

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter deals with the historical and political context of the mass media in Sierra Leone since independence. It presents the country's long-time media tradition, chronological development, political changes, and governments, and highlights national media policies and regulatory measures adopted by the different government regimes. It further highlights and links specific media laws, policies, and regulations with the political regime that introduced them from post-independence, military to recent democratic administrations in Sierra Leone. There is a dramatic improvement in the legal and regulatory environment governing the media industry in the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the major findings of the current study with respect to the objectives and the corresponding research questions. In particular, this study exclusively focused on the influence of radio broadcasting as a platform enhancing citizens' democratic participation in the democratic process of post-war Sierra Leone. The key actors in this study include Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday and Wake Up Sierra Leone radio flagship programs as discursive realms for citizens engagement on local and national issues of shared concern.

5.2 Sequence of Data Presentation

The findings were analyzed and presented in three different sections. First, the chapter presented findings from research questions one and two as listed in 1.6 in chapter one. The reason for doing this was that the content analysis of the recorded episodes of "Gud" Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV on Sunday, and Wake Up Sierra Leone News and Current Affairs programs, and the document analysis of media policies and regulations aided in the questions that were asked during the qualitative interviews which form part of research question three. In other words, the findings from the qualitative interviews were used to support the findings from the content analysis of the recorded radio episodes and the document analysis of media policies and regulations. Finally, the chapter presented findings from the qualitative interviews conducted with eight participants: six (6) journalists and two (2) government and non-government officials. Gender representation was taken into consideration during the qualitative interviews. On this account, six male and two female participants were interviewed. Participants in the in-depth interviews were assigned codes in order to maintain their identities on the condition of anonymity in relation to their respective institutions. The following codes apply to each respondent: AYVR1 (respondent 1 from African Young Voices), AYVR2 (respondent 2 from African Young Voices), RDR1 (respondent 1 from Radio Democracy), RDR2 (respondent 2 from Radio Democracy), SLBC R1 (respondent 1 from Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation), SLBCR2 (respondent 2 from Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation) IRNR1 (respondent 1 from Independent Radio Network), NCDR1 (respondent 1 from National Commission for Democracy).

5.3 Qualitative Content Analysis of Recorded Radio Episodes

This section presents the findings from the content analysis of the sixty-three sampled recorded radio broadcast episodes of the four understudied news and current affairs flagship programs. It responds to research question one (1) and research objective one (1) which examine the influence of the democratic functions of radio broadcasting on citizens' democratic participation in Sierra Leone.

5.3.1 Krio Language for Radio Broadcasting

Very similar in some ways, but strikingly different in terms of ownership and media governance structures. Gud Morning Salone of Radio Democracy 98.1 FM and Morning Koffee of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation-SLBC 99.9 FM news and current affairs programs have obvious appeal for comparative analysis using the Krio lingua franca for radio broadcasting. Sierra Leone has a unilingualism policy that favors a single language (English) use throughout its political, legal, social, and economic circles, among other places. The Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991 section (90) states that "the business of parliament shall be conducted in the English Language" (Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No 6 of 1991:P-43). Section 78 of the Courts Act 1965 also states the same that the language of the court shall be the English language. However, it is important to note that the Krio language is kept for use in the informal sector and serves a vehicular function. Because of this, it continues to function as an important platform within the Sierra Leonean society (Sesay, 2021).

This study finds that two of the understudied news and current affairs programs Gud Morning Salone, and Morning Koffee use Krio as their principal medium of broadcast. The Krio language is among the leading native languages in Sierra Leone with a wider communicative usage among the country's eighteen ethnic groups (Sesay, 2021). The two flagship programs adopted Krio as a sphere to broadcast in order to deliberately facilitate a more informal atmosphere and break down stiff social barriers that the English language would have presented to the people to participate fearlessly in debating issues of common concern. Fyle (2002) also notes that in spite of making up less than 2% of the population, one of the smaller tribes, the Krio, has historically and linguistically grown to have a significant influence that is completely out of proportion to its size. As a result, Krio has grown into Sierra Leone's primary lingua franca (Fyle, 2002). It is noted that the Krio language and society developed out of a colonial situation when around 1772 slavery was declared illegal by Lord Justice Mansfield in the United Kingdom, which subsequently led to the repatriation of ex-slaves

from England, Nova Scotia, and Jamaica to the colony of Sierra Leone (Fyle, 2002, Alie, 1990).

In studying Gud Morning Salone and Morning Koffee flagship programs, in discussion with the deputy director general of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) and the acting deputy station manager of Radio Democracy in Freetown in 2023, the study finds that the adoption of the Krio lingua franca as a sphere to broadcast programs generates the ability for people living in Freetown and other urban cities to participate in radio discussion programs as well as the rural poor and those living in hard to reach communities. The Krio local parlance links up the population as a common, inter-ethnic language among the diverse cultures and indigenous tribes in the country (Oyetade and Luke, 2008). Its adoption to broadcast radio programs confirms the claim by studies that radio remains the dominant medium in Africa with the widest geographical reach and highest audiences compared with television and other information and communication technologies (Myers,2009, Van der Veur (2017).

Table 5. 1: Citizens participation tracking figures

No	Organization	Program	Period	Language	Content	Phone-in-calls	Text messages	Total
1	SLBC 99.9 FM	Morning-Koffee	Aug-2022-Oct-2022	Krio	Voter registration	150	100	250
2	Radio Democracy 98.1 FM	Gud Morning Salone	Aug-2022 Oct-2022	Krio	Voter registration	70	200	270
3	AYV Radio 101.7 FM	AYV On Sunday	Aug-2022 Oct-2022	English	Voter registration	50	100	150
4	AYV Radio 101.7 FM	Wake-Up-Sierra Leone	Aug-2022 Oct-2022	English	Voter registration	50	50	100

(Source: Author's computation of field data (2023)).

Table 1 explains the differences in phone-in-calls and text messages in terms of language use in the news and current affairs programs presented in English versus those presented in Krio by the understudied programs. It shows that Krio as a language of broadcast is more attractive to audience participation than English. The figures were manually counted and obtained from the sixty-three (63) recorded episodes of programs collected from the field and analyzed by the researcher. The dominant themes discussed by the four news and current affairs programs included the voter registration exercise, the challenges faced by election staff in the field, and the June 24th presidential and parliamentary elections generally. The time period covered was from August to October 2022.

Table 5. 2: Citizen Participation Tracking Figures

No	Organization	Program	Period	Language	Content	Phone-in-calls	Text messages	Total
1	SLBC 99.9 FM	Morning -Koffee	Nov2022-Mar-2023	Krio	Human Rights reports Amnesty Int	100	250	350
2	Radio Democracy 98.1 FM	Gud Morning Salone	Nov-2022 Mar-2023	Krio	Governance/politics	200	500	700
3	AYV Radio 101.7 FM	AYV On Sunday	Nov-2022 Mar-2023	English	General Election	100	150	250
4	AYV Radio 101.7 FM	Wake-Up-Sierra Leone	Nov-2022 Mar-2023	English	General Election	100	80	180

(Source: Author's computation of field data 2023).

Table 2 similarly explains the differences in phone-in-calls and text messages in terms of language use in the news and current affairs programs presented in English versus those presented in Krio by the four understudied programs but with different time periods and themes. The dominant themes included a Human Rights report by Amnesty International, political parties national delegate conferences, a five-year rule assessment of the president

and government, and party manifestoes. The time period covered was from November 2022 to March 2023.

This study finds that this localization process of broadcasting (use of krio for radio broadcast) helps the understudied news and current affairs programs not only to connect with the urban cities but also to highlight rural aspirations and local sensibilities of Sierra Leoneans. It has greatly helped in the massive growth of citizen democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. This vernacularization of the public sphere (radio broadcast) has seen significant growth in local politics participation and democratic deepening.

5.3.2 The Broadcast Strategy of the News and Current Affairs Programs

In all the news and current affairs programs, the presenters' role in determining the topics and agenda for public discussion was closely examined. In talk or public discussion shows, the audience is also a fundamental component. Thus, audience phone-ins and text messages read by presenters during the shows were studied to determine their meaning.

The four News and Current Affairs programs of AYV Radio 101.6, Radio Democracy 98.1, and SLBC Radio 99.9 are all two-hour aired programs covered by this study. The news and current affairs programs of AYV Radio 101.6 are “AYV on Sunday” aired every Sunday from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM, and “Wake Up Sierra Leone”, aired Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM. “Gud” Morning Salone” is an hour-and-half news and current affairs program by Radio Democracy F M 98.1. from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, and “Morning Coffee” is a two-hour news and current affairs program broadcast on SLBC Radio 99.9 FM from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Monday through Friday.

These news and current affairs flagship programs are normally preceded by the presentation of news bulletins, the majority of which last for five minutes. They are further segmented into news highlights depending on their importance, including current socio-cultural, economic, and political events that are of interest to the general public. Given that most radio stations in Sierra Leone, including SLBC, are mostly funded by commercial means, these segments, which span fifteen minutes, include commercial advertisements. Normally, the discussion on important national issues lasts for one hour and forty minutes.

Equally, the news and current affairs programs on the three radio stations aim to create a public sphere inviting ordinary citizens to participate in democratic discussions on local and national socio-economic and political issues of common concern. Being perceived as independent promoters of democratic participation based on the ideas voiced on air and

ensuring that the stations comply with the broadcasting code of conduct of the Independent Media Commission (IMC), the radio stations have adopted the same method for encouraging citizens to feel free to express their views and opinions on issues of public interest through text messages, Facebook comments, and phone-in calls.

This study finds that the strategy of the news and current affairs programs set the agenda and create the public sphere for public discourse on issues of public concern and common interests that are presented in Krio by Radio Democracy 98.1 and S.LB.C 99.9 and AYYV Radio 101.6 in English to enhance effective citizens democratic participation. This is deliberate on the part of the radio station management decision to ensure every citizen is given the opportunity to participate in the country's democratic process.

Intro of Gud Morning Salone-Radio Democracy 98.1 FM:

From wi New England Ville studio, "Gud" Morning En welcome to anode Edition of d program, Gud Morning Salone wae dae kam to U from d society for Radio Democracy 98.1 FM. T-day, na (Tuesday 13 Dec 2022). Wi wae dae bring U this edition of d program Gud Morning Salone, John is my name, and I am Frances (presenter). Insai d program this (Tuesday) morning, the most important news headlines are read by the presenters, followed by other news items. En t-day na d program, Radio Democracy go tok bot d ... (main topic or event of the day). Member say U dae listen to we live on d internet on www.radiodemocracy.sl en same wae so on Facebook live. En sef U dae listen to we on we partner radio station dem across the country. U kin be part of am by wae U kin send text message na the number 077981981. 0779808620 na d number for send U text message en be part of d program, Gud Morning Salone or go na we Facebook page en drop U comment on issues wae we dae discuss na d program, Gud Morning Salone.

The English-translated version goes like this: From our New England Ville studio, good morning and welcome to another edition of the program, "Gud" Morning Salone", that is coming to you from the Society for Radio Democracy 98.1 FM. Today is Tuesday 13 December 2022. The presenters that are bringing this edition of the program, our names are John and Frances. In the program this Tuesday morning... the most important news headlines are read by the presenters, followed by other news items. And today in the program, Radio Democracy will talk about... Remember that you are listening to us live on the internet www.radiodemocracy.sl and also on Facebook Live. You are also listening to us through our many partner radio stations across the country. You can be part of the program by sending your text message to the number 077808620. The number 0779808620 is the number to send your text message and be part of the program, Gud Morning Salone, or go to

our Facebook page and drop your comment on issues that we are discussing on the program, Gud Morning Salone.

Intro of Morning Koffee on S.L.B.C Radio 99.9 FM:

Well, t-day na Tuesday, January 3 na so we dae welcome to the program. This na d foss Morning Koffee program Insai the year 2023 wae dae cam to you live from the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation. We want for say Happy New Year to all we listeners dem. Well, t-day na d program, we go talk but plenty tin dem. On behalf of d Morning Koffee team, we want for say Happy New Year and welcome to the first edition of d program “ Morning Koffee” for the year 2023. Now news headlines to be discussed in the program... But U kin send text message to the number 033-100- 000.

The English-translated version goes like this: Well, today is Tuesday 3 January, and this is how we are welcoming you to the program, “Morning Coffee”. This is the first edition of the Morning Coffee program in the year 2023, which is coming to you live from the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation S.L. B.C Radio 99.9 FM. We want to say Happy New Year to all our listeners across the country. Well, in today’s program, we will talk about a lot of issues. On behalf of the Morning Coffee team, we want to say Happy New Year and welcome to the first edition of the program... Morning Coffee. But you can be part of the program by sending in text messages and comments to the number 034-100-333 to contribute to the topic under discussion in the studio”.

Intro of Wake-Up Sierra Leone on AYV Radio 101.7 FM:

Good morning to all our viewers and listeners across the globe. This is how we will welcome you to your number-one breakfast show here “ Wake Up Sierra Leone” on AYV TV on channel 33 in Sierra Leone, FM 101.7, and on DSTV channel 399. Today is Wednesday 29 day in the month of March 2023 with barely 87 days more to the multi-tier elections in Sierra Leone. Introduction of the presenters... You can be part of the two-hour conversation through our Facebook page and share your thoughts and comments on the issues being discussed. Stay tuned as we go for a short break and join our sponsors.

Intro of AYV On Sunday on AYV Radio 101.7 FM:

Good evening to all our viewers and listeners across the globe. This is how we will welcome you to the program AYV on Sunday Sierra Leone Decides 2023 on AYV Radio FM 101.7 in Sierra Leone. Today is Sunday the 5th day in the month of March 2023 with barely 100 days more to the multi-tier elections in Sierra Leone. Introduction of the presenters... and to you our viewers and listeners, you can follow us and drop your comments. We do value your contributions. Share them with us on the AYV news Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. We will find time to go through some of them. But please, we always admonish you to tailor your messages to the issues being discussed. No personal attack. Just share your thoughts with us.

In addition, the strategy creates the public sphere for public discourse and places responsibility emphasis on the participants (contributors, listeners, viewers, and guest or expert panelists) for their comments, text messages, phone-in calls, emails, and tweets all in a bid to ensure objectivity which is a fundamental principle in the practice of journalism is observed. Therefore, AYV Radio 101.6 FM, Radio Democracy 98.1, and S.L.B.C. 99.9 cannot be held accountable for listeners' remarks, views, comments, and opinions expressed on issues being discussed. As Tuchman, (1972: P-2) notes "observing fundamental principles represents a strategic ritual that helps to protect against continual pressures, possible libel suits and anticipated reprimands from superiors". The presenters of these news and current affairs programs keep reminding the public about their contacts, emails, telephone numbers, Facebook accounts, Twitter accounts, and Instagram, where they should tailor their views, thoughts, and comments to the issues being discussed respectfully.

The background and introduction to the topic are given on both "Gud" Morning Salone," "AYV on Sunday," "Morning Koffee," and "Wake Up Sierra Leone news and current affairs programs before the guest/expert is introduced followed by the presenter and interviews from expert and ordinary citizens. This segment lasts for some minutes before the audience is given the opportunity to participate in the discussions. Accordingly, this study reveals that "Good Morning Salone", "AYV on Sunday", "Morning Koffee" and Wake Up Sierra Leone News and current affairs programs set the stage for socio-economic and political public discourse that defines the day in Siera Leone.

5.3.3 Citizens' Views and Participation in Radio Broadcast Programs

Mwesige (2009) notes that the emergence of talk radio shows in a number of African countries has provided opposition politicians and civil society activists the opportunity to compete with government leaders to get their messages across to the public. But, more importantly, because of the availability of political talk radio shows, the public has the opportunity to call in and express their concerns and views, challenge official power, and listen and learn about political developments and the opinions of other citizens. In the same vein, Omwoha (2014) also states that an avid radio listener actively participates in constructing meaning through the call-in talk radio show. These studies largely correspond to citizens' democratic participation on radio talk shows in Sierra Leone by sending in their comments and views on the issues being discussed.

Texter one (1)

I hate to say it, but a country where civil disobedience had taken place and could not enact laws for the purpose of protecting our citizens is not a democratic nation. We need laws that are protective of the people of Sierra Leone to stop political violence during elections.

Texter two (2)

Mr. Minister if you think your government has done well for the people of Sierra Leone, please allow them to vote in a free, fair, and transparent election in the upcoming June 24 multi-tier elections.

Texter three (3)

But you are only using the cybercrime law to go after members of the opposition and ordinary citizens. When the law is used for its intended purpose that it is meant for, then everyone will support it. But that is not what this government is using to suppress members of the opposition.

Texter four (4)

Mr. Minister, u say Kaikai say na press release, but u sef jus don say u don read d report, una feel say una go continue for fool the back in these elections.

Texter five (5)

Mr. Rado Swarray could recall when the same organization (Amnesty International) released a similar report about the former president and administration, even though massive killings were not in the report, you were all over the local radio stations telling the people that the same organization, Amnesty international's report was transparent.

The findings from this analysis confirmed an enhanced active citizen participation in the democratic process in the country through the understudied news and current affairs programs. It concludes that the three radio stations at a particular period presented similar program topics like “Five-year Assessment of Democratic Good Governance” and “Human Rights report from Amnesty International assessing the government’s Human Rights record following the August 10, 2022, demonstration that led to the death of citizens including police officers”. The findings also pointed out that the public participated more effectively in radio discussion programs on issues around governance and politics than non-political and governance issues.

5.4 Document Analysis

This section presents the findings from the documents analysis of national and organizational media policies and regulations. It responds to research question two (2) and research objective two (2) which examines how national and organizational media policies and

regulations influence the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone.

Although there are more than a dozen policies that are used to regulate the media in Sierra Leone, among them, there are statutes, policies, laws, codes of conduct, and practices that create an enabling environment for the media to operate unhindered. They also provide that guarantee and promote an atmosphere for citizens to participate in the democratic process of the country (Sowa and Kapuwa, 2015). These media laws, regulations, and policies take three approaches; the constitution of Sierra Leone, Acts of parliament; and self-regulation (Codes of Practice/Ethics), and Quasi State/Technocratic control (the Independent Media Commission's Act Code of practice) and editorial policies of media organizations (Kapuwa and Sowa, 2015).

5.4.1 The Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991

Sierra Leone, like other African countries, was positively affected by the second wave of democratization that swept across the African continent in the early 1990s and ushered in democracy (Hyden and Okigbo, 2002). The introduction of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991 was part of the national call for democratic governance. Since then, Sierra Leone has experienced a democratic upward movement generated from the new political conditions after the overthrow of the All Peoples Congress-Joseph Saidu Momoh lead administration. The change in the political system from authoritarianism, military rule toward democracy created a significant difference that ushered in major changes in the legal and regulatory environment of the media sector in the country (Cole, 1995, Hyden and Okigbo, 2002). As it is noted "the media do not operate in a vacuum but are extensively dependent on how the political system at large is constituted" (Ogbondah, 2017:P-3). Sierra Leone is no exception to this reality as the 1991 national constitution declares in chapter two (2) section 5 (1) that: The Republic of Sierra Leone shall be a state based on the principles of Freedom, Democracy, and Justice.

Subsection (2) paragraph C of the 1991 constitution Act No 6 of 1991 accordingly states that: "The participation of the people in the governance of the state shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution". Essentially, this provision in the constitution of Sierra Leone provides for effective citizen participation in the governance of the state. .It is important to note that Act No. 6 of 1991 is the mother of all laws in Sierra Leone and that its provisions are upheld by all Sierra Leonean citizens. Its provisions reign supreme to all other laws in the country.

Section eleven (11) also states that; “The Press, radio and television, and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times, be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this constitution and highlight the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people”.

Section eleven (11) as stated above, specifically deals with the obligation of the mass media to uphold the fundamental objectives of this constitution to report the activities of the government to the people and also hold it accountable. It gives power to the media to perform its fundamental watchdog role effectively. According to the said provision, it is the responsibility of the media to report government activities to the public at all times without fear of being arrested by the powers that be (government).

In addition, **Section twenty-five (25)** states; “Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, and for the purpose of the section the said freedom includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, freedom from interference with his correspondence, freedom to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions, and academic freedom in institutions of learning: Provided that no person other than the government or any person or body authorized by the president shall own, establish, or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for any purpose whatsoever”.

These constitutional provisions guarantee and promote freedom of expression and press freedom in Sierra Leone. They give citizens and the media the opportunity to express independent views on issues of national and common concern. In addition to that, the Independent Media Commission’s Act of 2000, and its subsequent amendments, gives citizens the right to register and own media institutions in the country without hinderance. It also gives academics in higher institutions of learning the freedom to express their opinions on issues of public interest and national concern without fear of interference from government. It gives media practitioners and journalists unhindered freedom of expression without fear of government interference in the performance of their sacred duty of informing the public.

Kamara (2016) as cited in Sowa (2017) states that the current Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No 6 of 1991, establishes the "grund norm" of recognition of the right to freedom of expression and opinion. The importance of this Constitution lies in the fact that it reinstated a

multi-party system of governance and upheld a number of fundamental human rights for each person. The right to freedom of expression and the press is specifically guaranteed by Section 25 (Kamara, 2016). This law is fundamentally important to the democratic function of the mass media because it provides for the enjoyment of freedom of expression and of the press. Both journalists and citizens enjoy this right as provided for in the constitution. However, subsection two (2) of section twenty-five (25) limits the enjoyment of the same freedom granted by subsection one (1) in order to preserve the reputations, rights, and freedoms of others, prevent the revelation of information obtained in confidence, or for reasons related to defense, public safety, public order, morality, or health (Sowa, 2017).

5.4.2 Acts of Parliament

Here, the study analyzes major sections and subsections in Acts of parliament that are fundamentally important to the study as underscored in research objective two in 1.5. These provisions are analyzed because they are media related to point out their subsequent implications on the functionality of the media (radio) industry.

(1) The Public Order Act No 46 of 1965: “It is an Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to Public Order”. It contains provisions that deal with media regulation. The whole of part 5 of the Act -Defamatory and Seditious Libel Defamation deals with media regulation. Section twenty-six (26) titled: Knowingly publishing a false defamatory libel: deals with the false publication of news items against people by journalists and if a person found guilty on conviction is punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both, and section twenty-seven (27) titled Defamatory libel deals with defamation libel, which is against the malicious publication of news items against person knowing the story to be false. People found guilty of committing such offenses on conviction are punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both (Sierra Leone laws web, 2023). The Public Order Act of 1965 made defamatory libel a crime and set the stage for press repression under succeeding governments up to 2020 when it was repealed by the parliament of Sierra Leone (TRC, 2004).

However, part 5 of Public Order Act No. 46 of 1965 has been amended in 2020 and sections 26 and 27 that criminalize the work of journalists have been repealed by parliament and signed into law referred to as the Public Order Amendment Act No. 4 of 2020. The entire part five (5) of the Act-Defamatory and Seditious Libel Defamation that previously criminalized journalists was replaced from criminal to civil. The repeal of part five (5) of the Public Order Act No 46 of 1965 removes criminality on the work of journalists. Part five was media oppressive as it was used against journalists by politicians and other economic forces.

The new Act protects journalists and media practitioners from being prosecuted in court and charged with criminal offenses for the publication and broadcast of articles in newspapers, radio, and television (Sierra Leone law web, 2023).

(2) The Independent Media Commission Act of 2020

The IMC Act of 2020 is an Act that provides for the continuation of the Independent Media Commission as amended in 2006, 2007, and 2020. This Act deals with the registration and regulation of media institutions in Sierra Leone. It is among other established guidelines for the establishment and operations of media institutions (radio, television, magazines, and newspapers).

Part six (6) section twenty-four (24) of the IMC Act of 2020 deals with licensing and registration of radio and television. However, section twenty-four (24) (1) of the IMC Act of 2020 provides for the registration of radio and television stations. Radio and television license.

It states: A person or media institution who wishes to carry out radio, television, or digital satellite service broadcasting shall apply to the commission for a license for that purpose.

This study finds that this Act in effect led to a proliferation of media institutions (radio and television) in the country. It greatly contributed to increased citizens' political awareness and citizens' democratic participation as radio stations are almost in every district and chiefdom country wide. This study finds that across Sierra Leone, especially in Freetown, largely, the content that is mostly presented by radio stations is on politics, democracy, Human Rights, and democratic good governance. This trend of broadcasting enlightens the citizens and enhances their participation in the democratic process. Subsection two (2) states the criteria that one should meet to be awarded a licence to operate radio and television in Sierra Leone.

The IMC Act of 2000 and its subsequent amendments in the IMC Act of 2020 made the registration and award of licences to media institutions to become easy (Sowa and Kapuwa, 2015). The Independent Media Commission (IMC) established by an Act of Parliament in the year 2000 is the autonomous body established by the government charged with the responsibility to regulate media institutions and other matters connected therewith (IMC Act, 2000). This finding confirms Ogbondah's (2017) study that the constitutional and legal reforms in most African states in the 1990s look quite impressive and better than preceding clauses and provisions. This Act makes it easy to register radio stations that lead to increased awareness and better citizen democratic participation.

(3) The Right to Access Information Act No 2 of 2013

The Right to Access Information Act No. 2 of 2013 deals with access to information held by public authorities and persons providing services to the public including journalists. The Act allows for the disclosure of information requested by members of the public including media practitioners and journalists.

Part two (2) of the Right to Access Information section two (2) subsection one (1) states that; “Every person has the right to access information held by or is under the control of a public authority”.

Subsection two (2) states that; “Every person has the right to access information held by or under the control of a private body where that information is necessary for the enforcement or protection of any right”.

Subsection three (3) states that; “Nothing in this Act limits or otherwise restricts the disclosure of or the right to access information pursuant to any other enactment, policy, or practice”.

Subsection four (4) states that; “Any person making a request for information to a public authority shall be entitled”.

This study finds that the country’s media landscape is rapidly changing since the enactment into law of the “Right to Access Information Act of No1 of 2013” was signed into law in 2013. Journalists now use this Act to source critical and pertinent information from public officials that they think is publishable. Before this time, journalists were not allowed to seek information from government officials. The Civil Service Code was used by government personnel to keep information away from the media or the press as stated in rule 9 section C of the rules of the general provision; “Civil personnel shall not publish any official letter, information to the press, or book unless the head of the department or the Director General has given previous written permission” (Civil Service Code, 2009:P-97). Contrary to the Civil Service Code of 2009, the “Right to Access Information Act of 2013” in Part 11, gives complete right to the media and the public to access information from government authorities (RAIC, 2013).

(4) The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation Act of 2010

The SLBC Act No. 1 of 2010 is the Act of Parliament that established the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) in 2010. This law regulates the Public Service

Broadcaster. It outlines the functions and responsibilities of the public service broadcaster to the people of Sierra Leone. Part 111 (3) titled Functions of the Corporation outlines the functions, guiding principles, and independence of the corporation. Section ten (10) deals with the function, section eleven (11) deals with the guiding principles and section twelve (12) covers the independence of the public service broadcaster. Section ten (10) subsection (1) states “The objective for which the corporation is established is to provide information, education, entertainment and reflect all shades of opinion throughout Sierra Leone”. This particular provision gives the SLBC the right to broadcast information to the public without fear or favor from the government or the opposition political parties.

Part 111(3) Function of the Corporation- section eleven (11) (1) states that “ In the discharge of its functions under section nine (9), the corporation shall be guided by principles geared towards the development of free and educated opinion, the respect for the rule of law, human rights and with due regard to issues of public interest and fair play”. Subsection (2) states; “without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), in the discharge of its function the corporation under section 9 shall be guided by paragraph (a) “Sierra Leone’s constitution guarantees freedom of expression”. The Act further provides in paragraph (b) that “the principles enshrined in the media code of conduct adopted by the Sierra Leone’s Independent Media Commission (IMC Code of Practice of 2007)”. Is followed through and implemented by the corporation. The IMC code of practice for electronic media under the implementing strategies states that; broadcast programs shall reflect the various shades of opinions and interests in society (IMC Code of Practice, 2007). Paragraph (c) promotes fair competition as it states, “promotion of fair competition based on internationally accepted principles for a public broadcaster, which include independence management, public service ethos and representation of all viewpoints and sectors of society in a non-partisan and objective manner”.

Paragraph (d) deals with the accountability of the corporation to the public. It states that “ Accountability to the public through an independent board, protected against the interference of a political or economic nature, with editorial independence and adequately funded in a manner that protects it from arbitrary interference”. Paragraph (e) deals with the broadcast transmission of the corporation and political impartiality. It states that “ transmission covering the whole country and politically balanced programs”. As stated, part 111 (3) of this Act notes that the SLBC in the performance of its functions shall not be subjected to the control and direction of any person or authority. This guarantees the independence of the

corporation objectively. These provisions in the SLBC Act create a level of playing field for the national broadcaster to perform its duties with the sole objective of promoting democratic good governance in Sierra Leone.

(5) Article 19 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights

Article (19) of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 is part of the laws of Sierra Leone. It was adopted and domesticated in 1996 by the government of Sierra Leone. Article 19 of ICCPR in subsections (1) and (2) provides for the enjoyment of freedom of expression and of the press and the restrictions to the said freedom. This international instrument gives journalists and media practitioners including those in the broadcast media to perform their duties effectively and efficiently without fear. Its adoption by the government breaths some fresh air in the country's media industry (Sowa and Kapuwa, 2015).

5.4.3 National and Organizational Media Codes of Ethics

In this section, the study restricted its focus only to national and organizational media codes of ethics. The study places emphasis on provisions that are fundamentally important to the effective function of the media and practitioners and how they influence the democratic function of the media in Sierra Leone.

(1) Independent Media Commission Media Code of Practice

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) of Sierra Leone in the year 2007 developed and adopted a media code of practice after several media workshops held between the IMC and the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ). The media code of practice contains rules and regulations guiding the establishment and operations of print, electronic media, and advertising in Sierra Leone (IMC Code of Practice, 2007, 2020, and 2023). The ethical principles guide media institutions and practitioners to perform their duties objectively. Guiding principle 1.1 states that; if the country is to become a stable democracy, vibrant economy, a united people, a progressive nation, and an attractive country, the media must play their part. For the media to support and enhance the country's vision of a progressive nation, they must be consistent with national values and aspirations, as well as international norms and instruments (IMC Code of Practice, 2000, 2020, and 2023). The IMC code of practice contains the following policy objectives outlining the responsibilities of the media in Sierra Leone to improve democratic processes in the country.

Objective (1)-**Democratization** states; that the media must support national development initiatives and programs, and positively affect the quality of life of the people of Sierra Leone through facilitating systematic and effective use and coordination of mass communication strategies and activities. Objective (2) **Popular Participation** states; that the media must promote participation in a national dialogue on development issues by all citizens, consistent with the emerging democratic culture and national constitutional provisions. Objective (3) **Equity and access to information and communication** states: that the media should enhance access to information and communication infrastructure and new technologies, especially in rural communities. The media should ensure there is access for people in hard-to-reach areas to participate in the democratic process. Objective (4) **Freedom of expression** states; that the media should preserve national cultural identity, promote the national cultural heritage, and enhance the development of cultural and artistic capabilities and institutions for public communication.

The electronic policy objectives that guide the operations of radio stations in the country are consistent with the general policy objectives of the IMC Code of Practice of 2000. The electronic media comprise radio, television, and direct satellite television (DStv). It is spectrum oriented. Because of the limitations of spectrum availability, the electronic media in regulations regard the facility as The people's right to all its benefits and advantages and not for managers; and a vehicle for people and issue-oriented delivery rather than personality-driven. This makes radio in Sierra Leone the people's medium. It is the principal source of information for the people as noted by Musa (2013 and 2017). Policy objective (1) states; that electronic media should be made accessible and affordable to all Sierra Leoneans and (2) be used for the preservation and promotion of the nation's culture and values. These policy objectives give the electronic media (radio and television) the opportunity to create an avenue for the inclusive participation of citizens in the democratic process in Sierra Leone. Neyazi (2014) states that political participation is an important part of democratic citizenship. This does not only speak to the process of democratization but also, to the survival of fragile democracies through citizen participation.

The implementing strategies of the code of practice indicate inclusive participation. Strategy (2) states that "Broadcast programmes shall reflect the various shades of opinions and interest in society" Strategy (4) also states that; "the development of community broadcasting shall be promoted", and strategy (5) states that; "All broadcast stations shall allocate a specified percentage of their airtime of local production". These strategies ensure that radio stations in

the country provide space and airtime for the local community and people to participate in the democratic process of their communities and the country as well. Through local broadcasting, people in far-to-reach communities, are given a voice to discourse and register their opinions and voice on issues of common concern to them. This reflects not only the opinions of the elites but the common citizens as well.

As with other media laws in the country, the media code of practice creates room for the media to express independent views. Section 2 of the code governing radio and television stations states that; “every radio/television station must devote at least ten hours a week to public service broadcasting which shall include programs on areas covered by the fundamental principles of state policy as underscored in section 11 of the national constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991, and the fundamental Rights and Freedom in section 25 thereof”. Section 11 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone obligates the mass media to hold the government accountable. It also gives the mass media the freedom to report the government to the people. It states that the press, radio, television, and other mass media outlets shall always be free to promote the fundamental principles outlined in this Constitution and draw attention to how accountable and responsible the government is to the people. Section 25 deals with the protection of freedom of expression and the press. It states that No one's right to freedom of expression may be restricted, except with his or her own consent, and for the purposes of this section, that right includes the freedom to have an opinion, to receive and impart ideas and information without hindrance, to maintain private correspondence without hindrance, to own, establish, and run any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions, as well as academic freedom in institutions of higher learning (Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991). These constitutional provisions as indicated in section 2 of the radio and code provide the scope and avenue for citizens to express their opinions through radio broadcast programs in the country (Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991).

Radio code 11 deals with creating a level playing field for the expression of different views and opinions by radio stations for the citizens. It states that radio stations should make sure that opportunities are offered for the representation of many points of view on the subject in order to provide a level playing field (Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991, IMC Code of Practice, 2007, 2020, and 2023). This provision gives radio stations the opportunity to create a discursive forum where citizens discuss national and community issues that are of common concern to them. This participation deepens democracy and consists of the poor and middle

class that are considered ill-equipped to adjust to democratic functioning without such provisions (IMC Code of Practice, 2007, 2020, and 2023).

(2) Sierra Leone Association of Journalists Code of Ethics 2016

The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) founded in 1971 is the national body of journalists in Sierra Leone. Like other national organizations, SLAJ is the professional body of journalists in Sierra Leone that is responsible for promoting freedom of expression and of the press, to seek the welfare and protection of its members. It is not only responsible for the protection of journalists but also seeks training and capacity-building opportunities for its membership. It also seeks for journalists in Sierra Leone to practice professionally by upholding the standards of the profession of journalism (SLAJ, 2023).

SLAJ has five other objectives. But, however, this study is only interested in four that include the following: (1a) To uphold the ideals of journalism, work for exemplary standards of professional practice, as well as preserve and enhance the dignity and prestige of the Fourth Estate.

(2b) To assist in the growth of the press as a powerful force for the betterment of the nation through the dissemination of accurate and objective information, fair comment and a constant quest for improved standards and techniques of journalism.

(4d) To work with the independent media commission to improve the standards of journalism in Sierra Leone and in the enforcement of the code of practice for Journalists in Sierra Leone.

(5e) To strive to promote good journalism through self-regulation.

This study finds that four of the other objectives of SLAJ are in tune with the SLAJ Code of Ethics of 2016, which focuses on addressing the ethical issues facing Sierra Leone's journalism and providing a guide to professional media practice (SLAJ Code of Ethics, 2016).

Article one (1) (freedom and responsibility) of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists Code of Ethics gives journalists the freedom and responsibility to keep the public informed at all times. It places priority on the interest of the public. Paragraph (1) of Article (1) states that “ Journalists shall at all times strive to uphold and defend the right of freedom of expression and information, the principle of media freedom and responsibility, and the right of the public to be informed” (SLAJ Code of Ethics,2016; P-2). This article in tandem with the Freedom of Information Act of 2013 that catalyzed the right-to-information which

journalists use today to access information from public officials and institutions and report to the public information that was shrouded in official secrecy acts (Civil Service Code, 2009, SLAJ Code of Ethics, 2016).

The journalists and the public accept and appreciate this intrinsic value of freedom of expression and information in the country. This enhances bureaucratic transparency and government accountability (Norris, 2017). Article (2) Paragraph (2) states that “Journalists shall help to promote national unity, universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, and peace”(SLAJ Code of Ethics, 2016:P-2). This article essentially gives the media (journalists) the freedom to promote national values that include democracy. Broadcast journalists use this provision in their broadcast programs to create a discursive avenue (public sphere) for citizens to participate in the discussion of national issues. Paragraph (3) Article (2) also states that; “Journalists serve democracy and the public interest by reporting the truth. Defending the public’s interest includes promoting the free flow of information, exposing crime or wrongdoing, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled. The public’s need for information should be balanced against potential harm or discomfort” (SLAJ Code of Ethics, 2016: P-2). This provision also gives journalists the right and responsibility to not only hold government or public officials accountable but also promote democracy by serving the interest of the public. It enhances transparency as it enhances trust and credibility (Norris, 2017). Broadcast journalists use this provision to expose wrongdoing like corruption and human rights abuse by reporting such happenings to the public.

Article 2 paragraph (5) speaks to media owners. It gives priority to the public interest in accessing information. Media owners should not be gatekeepers to information that is of interest to the citizens. It states that; “Media owners, publishers, and media practitioners shall not suppress or distort information about which the public has a right to know because of pressure or influence from advertisers or others who may have a corporate, political or advocacy interest in the media institution concerned”(SLAJ Code of Ethics,2016:P-2). In a similar vein, paragraph (6) points out that “Journalists shall serve the public interest, and put the needs of their audience – readers, listeners or viewers – at the forefront of their newsgathering decisions” (SLAJ Code of Ethics,2016:P-3). Proponents claim that open governance has sparked innovation, driven efficiency gains, and fuelled economic development Gordon (2014) as cited by Norris (2017). Broadcast journalists in Sierra Leone have successfully opened up the governance system for citizens to participate by bringing

elected as well as appointed government officials to the media for questioning on issues of public interest.

Article (4) paragraph (1) Truth and Facts states that the journalist's primary obligation is to respect the truth and the public's right to the truth. This provision obligates journalists in the country to report facts-based stories to the public. This continues in article (5) paragraph (1) when it states that; "Factual, accurate, balanced and fair reporting shall be the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust, confidence, and respectability" (SLAJ Code of Ethics, 2016:P-4). These provisions lead to a dialogic way of broadcasting wherein the citizens are allowed to participate in issues that are being reported by radio stations. The Sierra Leonean is majorly reliant on information coming from media (radio stations) than other sources of information. However, Article 8 paragraph (1) provides the right to privacy of the citizens when seeking to keep the public informed. It states that; People have a right to privacy even though the public has a right to know about the institutions it supports and the people it chooses or employs to serve its interests. It is inevitable that the right to privacy and the right of all citizens to know about issues of public concern will come into conflict. Every case will be judged according to its relevance, humanity, and common interest (SLAJ Code of Ethics,2016). It concludes in paragraph (2) by stating that "As a general rule, a journalist shall respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless the public interest is at stake" (SLAJ Code of Ethics, 2016:P-5). In their quest to report accurate information to the public, this code reminds journalists in Sierra Leone to respect the right to privacy of the citizens.

(3) Editorial Guidelines Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) 2012

The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation Editorial Guidelines 2012 is to protect the credibility of SLBC, 's programming by ensuring high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and staff conduct. It addresses the ethical issues facing journalists working at the SLBC. It provides the rules and policies for professional media practice. It is a living document meant to serve and ensure that the journalistic independence of the SLBC is not compromised and that the IMC code of conduct is abided to by journalists. This study finds that the SLBC editorial policy contains certain provisions and sections that influence democratic broadcasting at the SLBC (SLBC Editorial Guidelines, 2012).

SLBC should:

- (1) Serve to safeguard, enrich, and strengthen the cultural, political, social, and economic fabric of Sierra Leone
- (2) Encourage the development of creative expression by providing a wide range of programming that reflects Sierra Leonean attitudes, opinions, ideas, and values.
- (3) Through its programming and the employment opportunities arising out of its operations, serves the needs and interests, and reflects the circumstances and aspirations of Sierra Leonean men, women, and children.

In its definitions, in the interest of the public, the guidelines state that: The right to freedom of expression and of the press must be defended against encroachment from any quarter, public or private because SLBC serves democracy and the public interest. Journalists must be alert to ensure that the public's business continues to be conducted in public. Journalists who abuse their power betray the public interest (SLBC Editorial guidelines, 2012:P-5). This definition of public interest by SLBC's editorial guidelines informs the people-centered programming of the SLBC. It creates an arena for citizens to participate in the program broadcast by the radio station.

Article three (3) provides that: SLBC serves democracy and the public interest by reporting the truth. This provision guarantees the independence of the state broadcaster, where there is sometimes a conflict of interest with the various wishes of public and private interests, including advertisers, government, and news sources. It prioritizes the interest of the public ensuring that the public is served. It also points out that SLBC must have editorial integrity and independence in order to fully serve its audience.

Article six (6) **Monitor of Power/Watchdog** provides that: defending the public's interest includes promoting the free flow of information; exposing crime or wrongdoing, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled and Article seven (7) **Forum for Public Comment and Criticism** provides that: SLBC will make room for the interests of all: minorities and majorities; those with power and those without it; disparate and conflicting views. Newspapers, radio, television, and the web are forums for the free interchange of information and opinion (Editorial Guidelines, 2012). On elections in Sierra Leone, this study finds that SLBC has an open-door policy for all registered and recognized political parties. The guidelines state that; the officially recognized, registered political parties with representatives in parliament will have access to periods of program time during an official election campaign (60 days before a national election) so they can directly explain

their policies to the electorate through SLBC platforms. It also states that; SLBC programs should offer viewers and listeners an intelligent and informed account of issues so that they can form their own views and opinions. The audience must be able to trust what they hear on the radio and see on television. Journalists should avoid doing or saying anything that could reasonably make listeners and viewers doubt their impartiality (SLBC Editorial Guidelines, 2012).

(4) African Young Voices Media Empire: Public Engagement, Coverage, Production and Publication Policy 2022.

AYV Media Empire Policy guidelines foundational document that establishes the Media Empire's independence in the production and publication of news and current affairs content to the public. It states the media's position against external influence and how journalists working for the news organization should demonstrate professionalism in their engagement with the public. It places emphasis on the interest of the public. It serves as a guide to media ethics, values, and best practices by the journalists at AYV Media Empire.

This study finds that AYV's public engagement policy creates room for the expression of independent views. It also contains provisions influencing the promotion of democratic participation in Sierra Leone through radio programs. Part one section (1.4) states that "The AYV's reputation and the strength of its brand in Sierra Leone and around the world are based upon its fundamental values of editorial integrity, independence, and impartiality. These values are central to both AYV's Public Services and Commercial Services to the public. Audiences everywhere must be able to trust the AYV. To achieve that, our impartiality, editorial integrity, and independence must not be compromised by outside interests and arrangements. We must maintain independent editorial control over our content" (AYV Media Empire Public Engagement Policy, 2022:P-2). This section creates room for the radio station to run programs that are of interest to the public. For example, AYV On Sunday and Wake Up Sierra Leone as flagship programs for public participation. The programs serve as a discursive realm for citizens to discuss issues of national interest.

Part two (2) titled **Basic Principles** provides in section 2 (1) that; audience first, as part of our audience first strategy, AYV is dedicated to providing the finest media experience for our audience, maximizing our messages to make sure they are understood by our target audience, and acting in the best interests of the general public. Section 2 (2) also provides that both staff and audience will have the chance to offer input on the creation of AYV's guidelines,

recommendations, and quality standards, to support their implementation. Part 3 section 3 (1) states that “At AYV, we treat every member of the public with the professionalism, respect, and attention that we would expect to receive as members of the public ourselves. This means we put your interests first and we work hard to understand exactly what you are looking to receive from us. That goes beyond simply creating the right media solutions for you-it includes appreciating how you want our media service and coverage to work best for you”(AYV Media Empire Public Engagement Policy, 2022:P-3). Its basic principles and commitment are key principles embedded in the policy that creates the avenue for citizens’ participation and the promotion of democratic good governance in the country. Its programs, AYV on Sunday and Wake Up Sierra Leone are not only citizen-focused but also good governance-centred. Their discussions are largely around governance, elections, human rights, democracy, and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. All this sinks with a common thread in the literature that the media are the undisputed guardians of the public interest created with powers to operate without serious legislative control while enjoying privileges from society (Massaquoi, 2017) and that media are essential to democracy, and a democratic election is impossible without media since a free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote and the knowledge of how to cast a vote but also about a participatory process where voters engage in public debate and have adequate information about political parties, policies, candidates and the electoral process itself in order to make informed choices (Musa,2017:P-1).

This study finds that constitutional provisions, national media policies, and regulations to organizational media code of ethics and conducts provide the enabling environment for unhindered radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone. It also finds that the legal and constitutional reforms after the civil war, create room for the media as well the public to express independent views on issues of national and common concern in the country.

5.5 Analysis and Findings of In-depth Interviews

This section presents the findings from qualitative In-depth interviews in relation to research objective three (3) which examines the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone, and it answers research question three (3); What are the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone?

After assigning codes to respondents as listed in 5.2 in chapter five of this study, participant responses were divided into six recurring themes that emerged from the eight (8) long

interviews. The themes that emerged gravitated around the democratic functions of radio broadcasting, the contributions of radio broadcasting to democratic sustainability, deepening democratic accountability and transparency, democratic good governance, and popular citizens' democratic participation. Because of its unique role in building democracy in Sierra Leone after the civil war, radio broadcasting is fundamentally examined in its contribution to democracy.

Quotations from interviews have not been edited for the maintenance of originality. All interviewees were promised anonymity. The institutional affiliations are included in the notes with pseudo codes assigned to the interviewees.

5.5.1 The Democratic Functions of Radio Broadcasting.

The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, African Young Voices, and Radio Democracy respondents confirm that radio broadcasting has played an increasingly important function in the democratization process of Sierra Leone since the end of the civil war. This pointed to the fact that radio broadcasting has been a platform for citizens to widely discuss and debate state governance at all levels of society. Radio has been a sphere to discuss decision-making processes by the state and non-state actors. The SLBC, 's first respondent (SLBCR1) stated: "Well, by what we do at the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), and this being a public service broadcaster, means that we conduct ourselves in such a way that we can uphold the democracy of the state. And if you take a look at some of the principles of public service broadcasting, one points to the maintenance of the political system of the country. So, when you provide that platform to political parties to checkmate the government in power and to suggest ways that they can do it better, is a huge contribution to governance and the democracy of the state" (Field interview, January 2023).

Respondent 1 (AYVR1) African Young Voices added: "In Sierra Leone, radio still accounts largely for the way people receive information more than television, newspaper, and even social media. So, radio has played a significant role in building peace, and democracy in Sierra Leone. I specifically, as an individual started my journalism work as a radio broadcast journalist." I worked as a cub reporter, reporter, producer, and presenter and I am mainly involved in covering stories around politics and governance. So, I have been involved in stories that have to do with political parties holding their conventions, political parties holding their delegate conferences, and covering elections as well. I covered the 2012 elections, and these are the things that uphold democracy and good governance" (Field interview, February 2023).

Respondent 2 (RDR2) Radio Democracy noted: “Well if we go back to the establishment of Radio Democracy, it was set up purposely for the promotion of democracy in the country after the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Sierra Leone by a group of military officers in 1997. This is how Radio Democracy was set up to contribute to the democratic development of the nation some twenty-six (26) years ago.” (Field Interview, February 2023).

5.5.2 Contributions of Radio Broadcasting to Democratic Sustainability.

Radio broadcasting has been fundamental to the survival of democracy in Sierra Leone. It was used for the restoration of democracy in 1998 when a group of military officers toppled the democratically elected of Sierra Leone in 1997. Radio broadcasting has also been a platform for democratic sustainability since the end of the war due to radio broadcasting notable role before, during, and after elections in the country. For example, election management bodies have used radio broadcast programs extensively in the conduct of elections, spanning from voter registration exercises to voter education and the vote-casting and tallying processes.

The Independent Radio Network, Radio Democracy, and the National Commission for Democracy respondents confirmed that radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone has played a significant role in the sustenance of democracy in the country. IRN’s first respondent (IRNRI) stated: “The initial idea is, we come together around elections. Elections have been the main area around which we revolved. The election is the focus of this network initially. But with time, we have been able to expand into other areas. So, basically what we have been looking at is to see how we will be able to use radio to produce issues-based programs, taking a cue from the fact that in the regions, or in the provinces, you have a lot of community radio stations, but they can’t produce a program on their own. So, the network has been able to provide a platform where listeners to community radio stations or audiences across various parts of the country can benefit from adequate information from government officials, on issues of democracy, and issues on elections. So, in terms of our contributions to the democratic process, information provision is one of the things we are focused on in terms of our vision to provide credible information to the citizens. We want the citizenry to be adequately informed. So, in terms of democracy, we have been able to produce programs that help people to understand how the democratic process works. We have been able to provide information about elections, voter education, and the like.”(Field interview, February 2023).

Radio Democracy respondent 1 (RDR1) added: "Remember, an election is one of the key components of democratic dispensations in Africa in particular. So, during that process, Radio Democracy gave voice to all and sundry regardless of the political party, size of political party, civil society, non-governmental organizations, embassies, and also religious organizations that were working to give voice or raise awareness about non-violence and other movements. So, Radio Democracy was considered to have contributed largely to strengthening democratic dispensations in Sierra Leone in the media industry for the platform provided by Radio Democracy." (Field interview, February 2023).

Respondent 1 (NCDRI) National Commission for Democracy concluded: "We have done a lot to raise awareness of what the Constitution says regarding rights and responsibilities with a focus on law and order. So, with what we do, say when we engage the radio, when we go to communities when we are addressing various issues relating to democracy. It is to effectively ensure that law and order is maintained and that we have peace and stability across the country." (Field interview, February 2023).

This finding confirms Bosch's (2010-2017) claim that it is generally agreed that radio broadcasting promotes democratization by making citizens aware of democratic values, rights, principles, and the governance of their society. The finding also justifies Neyazi, (2014) claim that the media have a crucial role to play in the democratization process and in maintaining democracy.

5.5.3 Deepening Democratic Accountability and Transparency.

Radio broadcasting serves as a sphere for discussing decision-making processes by educating the public and inspiring public opinion on important issues relating to national security, open elections, service delivery systems, openness, and accountability in all governance sectors and levels. This is attributed to the potential for transparency and open access to information to enhance democratic government which has recently attracted renewed emphasis. Information that is current, precise, detailed, and openly accessible has many practical advantages and is often considered to be intrinsically valuable.

African Young Voices' first respondent (AYVR1) stated: "And the other thing we do is, we have used radio, and the media to hold public officials accountable through programs that we do, interviews, and conversations on radio as well. I think to a very large extent, my work as a journalist, has been around democracy and governance and holding public officials accountable for their roles and responsibilities". (Field interview, February 2023).

Radio Democracy first respondent (RDR1) added: "Since 1997, Radio Democracy has been a platform where we interview different personalities be they political, economic, or social to answer questions that have to do with human interest and national development, especially on the development of the country's democracy and peacebuilding. Radio Democracy has been a leading journalistic institution in building democracy and maintaining it. Therefore, Radio Democracy has been the platform and mouthpiece for the people to talk about the issues that have to do with the country's peacebuilding and democratic growth". (Field interview, February 2023).

Radio Democracy's second respondent (RDR2) concluded that: "The media is also important, you know, it allows you to bring out issues that other people could not bring out to the public. As a reporter and presenter, I am expected to ask public and government officials critical questions that ordinary men and common Sierra Leoneans cannot ask because of the power of the mic. "For example, if you want somebody to be accountable to the public for his or her actions, especially politicians and political appointees and elected officials it becomes a problem. Once they take up political appointments, some people would not like to be answerable to the people anymore." (Field interview, February 2023). This finding confirms Curran's (2011) notion that a democracy needs to be properly briefed to be effectively self-governing. In Curran's study, it is pointed out that in a functional democratic system, the citizens need to be effectively informed about the activities of the government. There should be accountability and transparency in the decision-making processes of the state. Norris (2017) noted that anticorruption advocacy agencies assert that in development, transparency and accountability will help stop the leaky pipes of bribery and inefficiency, channel public expenditure more effectively, and produce better services.

5.5.4 Democratic Good Governance

It is crucial to talk about where radio stands today in national governance after considering how radio has evolved and affected decision-making processes in modern-day Africa. In contemporary Africa, democratization has alternately been crucial to the growth and proper functioning of the media and the media have also been crucial to the growth of democracy (Hyden and Okigbo, 2002). Based on the use of radio as a sphere, civic activism against corruption and bad governance became visible (Musa, 2013).

The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation's second respondent (SLBCR2) stated: "So if you relate that to our contribution, it is huge by providing the platform for various dialogues,

and players involved for democratic governance to take place. And also serves as a platform to hold government officials accountable, scrutinize them in the discharge of their functions, and also provide information to the public, our audience, and the listeners on the activities of the government, how they could perceive government, how they should see themselves as part of the social contract of governance and how they could also contribute to the governance structure as a whole” (Field interview, February 2023).

African Young Voices second respondent (AYVR2) added: "Because we have our weekend program called “Salone T-day”, that program focuses more on trending issues in the public domain. Trending issues most times have something to do with peacebuilding, democracy, and good governance programs. We are also developing programs that have to directly deal with politics as we are going into elections, politics, and democracy." "So, we have been able to also develop programs, as I mentioned earlier, that could hold political appointees or elected officials and people in public service accountable. For me, that is the most important area in ensuring accountability, democracy, and good governance, because if you are a journalist and a media person, your role is to hold public officials accountable and inform and educate the people. So, if you are performing that role effectively, it means we are contributing greatly to the democratic process of the country (Field interview, February 2023).

Radio Democracy first respondent (RDR1) concluded: "I mentioned earlier that you cannot write about the peace process of Sierra Leone without mentioning Radio Democracy. That is one instance of the radio’s intervention in the promotion of democratic good governance in the country. In current-day democracy, this radio station has operated and has helped the democratic conversation to be deepened and changed the narrative. For example, the peace commission of Sierra Leone might not operate as the intention behind its establishment, because everybody could have his or her own opinion, but Radio Democracy played a very central role in ensuring that the commission was successful in its establishment. Therefore, these instances are practical examples of the contributions of Radio Democracy to the promotion of democratic good governance in the country”. (Field interview, February 2023).

This finding confirms Cole’s (1995) study that the mass media (radio) provides a platform for discussion and dialogue on issues of national importance to arrive at well-considered popular decisions in society. Massaquoi (2017) concurs and states that in liberal democratic theory, the media are the undisputed guardians of the public interest created with powers to operate without serious legislative control.

5.5.5 Popular Citizen Democratic Participation

Studies on democracy have consistently shown that citizens, participation is fundamentally important. Democracy is described as a system of government that is made up of the majority. In progressive liberal democratic systems, democratic participation is defined as political equality that requires individuals' participation in collective decision-making processes that affect their lives as a moral requirement, developmental opportunity, and strategic necessity (Warren, 2002). Studies have highlighted the impact of news media on increasing political participation and political discussion as discursive arenas (Neyazi,2014).

The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation's first respondent (SLBCR1) stated that: "It is a public service broadcaster. Freedom of expression as enshrined in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone, is practiced here as a way of promoting democratic good governance. We interview as well as give access to ordinary Sierra Leonean citizens to come to the studio and express their views on matters that have to do with their livelihood, education, health, and security." (Field interview, February 2023) African Young Voices' first respondent (AYVR1) added: "I will tell my colleagues that the citizens, the people are very important to the work we do as radio institutions and that the people we give information to sometimes are more informed on issues than us, the radio journalists. So, people and their contributions have been challenging as well as impactful because we have had cases where sometimes you will have people who contribute to our programs by attacking people you have in the studio or their political rivals. Sometimes even when you open phone lines or take text messages, they will ask questions you don't even think of asking either the politicians or public officials we have in the studio. Sometimes even when you open phone lines or take text messages, they will ask questions you don't even think of asking either the politicians or public officials we have in the studio. So, public participation, and the contribution of the people in our programs have, to a very large extent contributed to setting the agenda on the issues we are to discuss in the studio. Sometimes, they even guide the presenters on what questions to ask the guests" (Field interview, February 2023).

African Young Voices' second respondent (AYVR2) also added: "The level of how far we go, how far people follow us, and how far we have tried to ensure that people in remote communities get our broadcast programs because we are broadcasting directly from Freetown, the capital city is what stands out about us as a journalistic institution. So sometimes you have people like the Minister of Information or Spokesperson of the president in your studio and you have someone calling from far away Falaba, the exterior north to ask a

question or someone from Kailahun in the exterior east of the country calling to contribute or someone from Kono calling to contribute or to ask questions. So that particular action is participatory democracy, where you have people listening to public officials or elected officials and members of parliament, they can ask questions about what they are doing or what a certain bill means to them." (Field interview, February 2023).

Radio Democracy second respondent (RDR2) concluded that: "Democracy is the involvement of everyone on issues that affect people in their different communities. So, most times, when we have public officials or politicians in our studios, we either take text messages to get the views of people or their concerns, or we open phone lines for people to call in and ask questions and give their concerns on the issues being discussed in the studios. So participatory democracy through the media is what we have been able to do as an effort in helping the democratic process in the country." (Field interview, February 2023).

This finding confirms Garca-Avilés's (2012) study that audience participation has many different connotations, but in this instance, it refers to the feedback that broadcasters provide using both conventional procedures and modern technologies. It comprises techniques such as commenting by SMS for a radio show or calling in a talk show to voice one's viewpoint. One of the key components of audience engagement in radio broadcasting news and current affairs is phone calls and new communication methods like Facebook messages.

5.5.6 Peacebuilding and National Cohesion

The findings also revealed that radio broadcasting played a great role in peacebuilding and national cohesion after the war in Sierra Leone. Studies have revealed that radio was used to advance the peace-building agenda and facilitate post-war reintegration. The United Nations Peace Mission in Sierra Leone founded Radio UN FM 103.0 radio served as a forum to increase public awareness of the functions and contributions of various parties engaged in fostering peace.

Radio Democracy's first respondent stated: "Also, for instance, the head of the peace commission was here talking about their plans and calling on people that wanted to demonstrate not to engage in that demonstration. They had a dialogue after the program on Radio Democracy and the issue was resolved and the said demonstration was canceled. In addition, remember, ahead of the establishment of the peace commission in Sierra Leone, this radio station, 98.1 FM, has been pivotal in ensuring or in giving a platform to ensure that everybody's voice is heard, and the program of the Peace Commission is shaped to a level that everybody could want it to be." (Field interview, February 2023).

The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation's first respondent (SLBCR1) added: "What stood out is our nomenclature being a public service broadcaster, which is very key. "We reflect their interest, we reflect their emotions, we reflect national cohesion, we reflect societal development, we reflect the needs of the common man, and we hold duty bearers accountable. We provide a platform for popular participation, discussion, and dialogue. We also provide a platform for disadvantaged groups, for minority groups." (Field interview, February 2023).

Radio Democracy's first respondent (RDR1) also stated: "All these institutions are peace and democratic strengthening institutions that have been supporting Radio Democracy to ensure it functions well. Apart from its inner program, the "Gud" Morning Salone", "Watin Dae Be" Di "Mid-Day Show", and "Election Time" at 12, we have that program during elections, "We American People", apart from those programs, the radio institution also partner with the Independent Radio Network (IRN) to ensure that they lend the voice or disseminate information about the election to the wider population across Sierra Leone. So, in various forms and ways, the radio station had ensured it worked in that direction in strengthening peace, and the democratic dispensation in Sierra Leone through its programs and partnership and sponsorship programs." (Field interview, February 2023).

African Young Voices' second respondent (AYVR2) concluded that: "The programs that were created for broadcasting were all centered around reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the mindset and how we keep Sierra Leoneans informed to make better judgments and informed decisions that will not result in taking up arms and the barrel. So, all our shows be it Wake Up Sierra Leone, be it AYV On Sunday, be it Insai D Barray, have all been created as a way of trying to unite Sierra Leone, keeping Sierra Leoneans informed, and ensuring that we keep a cohesive society. So, we have been very much impactful in keeping the peace and reconstruction of Sierra Leone as a post-war nation" (Field interview, February 2023).

The views expressed by eight respondents relative to the democratic function of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone, clearly illustrated how radio broadcasting has contributed to the democratization process of post-war Sierra Leone. Radio has been the public sphere for citizens to participate in the democratic process and contribute to the democratization process of Sierra Leone. Indeed, the media (radio) has been the cornerstone of democracy since the end of the civil war in 2002.

In conclusion, this chapter presented the major findings and essential outcomes, analysis, and discussion of the study. The chapter presents the findings and outcomes sequentially in relation to the research objectives and questions outlined in 1.3. It highlighted the criticality of radio broadcasting in the democratic process and engaged Gud Morning Salone, Morning Koffee, AYV On Sunday and Wake Up Sierra Leone news and current affairs flagship programs of Radio Democracy 98.1 FM, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation 99.9 FM, and the African Young Voices Radio 101.6 FM in enhancing citizens' democratic participation in Post-war Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction.

Sierra Leone had its first democratic elections in 1996. The war formally ended in 2002. The country is transitioning, working hard to erase the scars of bad governance, and remains a true democracy defined by good governance principles like human rights, free and independent media, free, fair, and frequent elections, rule of law, participation of citizens, and democratic good governance. The objectives of this research were informed by the need to investigate media and democratic participation. This thesis investigated the role of radio broadcasting in the democratization process of post-war Sierra Leone.

Thus, the purpose of the thesis was to provide answers to the following three research questions:

R Q (1) What are the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone?

R Q (2) How do national and organizational media policies and regulations influence the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone?

R Q (3) How do the democratic functions of radio broadcasting influence citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone?

There are six chapters in this thesis. Chapter One is the introductory chapter. This chapter provides background information on the study of Radio Broadcasting and Democratic participation from a global perspective to that of Sierra Leone. It provides the background and research context. It highlights the conceptual foundation and the rationale for studying the Role of Radio Broadcasting in the democratization processes in post-war Sierra Leone. Chapter two contains the literature review and theoretical considerations. It reviews the literature on media and democracy with an emphasis on radio broadcasting as a public sphere for deliberative democracy and effective citizen participation. This chapter also discusses Jürgen Habermas' (1962) theory of the public sphere and Denis Maquillas's Democratic Participants Media theories in an effort to show how important it is to apply the concepts in appreciating the critical contribution of radio broadcasting to Sierra Leone's democratization process. Chapter three is the research methodology. It primarily presents the research methodology and data-gathering techniques used to access ways in which radio broadcasting functions as a public sphere that promotes citizens' democratic participation in Sierra Leone.

This chapter also provides for the adoption of a qualitative design that uses three qualitative methods and techniques to collect and analyze data from the field. Chapter four contains an abridged history and political context of the mass media in Sierra Leone. This chapter presents a brief history and political context of the mass media in Sierra Leone. It provides a retrospective overview of state control of the media and the political climate in which they operated for decades. Chapter Five contains the findings, discussions, and analysis of data. It presents the major findings and essential outcomes, analysis, and discussions of the study. The chapter presents the findings and outcomes sequentially in relation to the research objectives and research questions outlined in the study. Chapter six is made up of the conclusion and recommendations of the study. It presents a summary of the findings in brief sentences.

6.2 Summary of Findings.

According to the findings of this study, it became clear that radio is a public sphere that facilitates and creates an atmosphere for people to participate fearlessly in debates and discussions on issues of national and common concern. The study revealed that radio broadcasting is a sphere that enhances effective citizens' democratic participation. Radio creates an arena for citizens of all categories to participate in democratic discussions on local and national, socio-economic, political, and governance issues.

The study also discovered that the use of the Krio language by radio stations for broadcasting in Sierra Leone produces the ability for citizens to participate in radio discussion programs without the fear of making mistakes like in the English language. This facilitates a more informal atmosphere and breaks down stiff social barriers that the English language would have presented to the people to participate. The study finds that Krio is a magnetic attraction to participation in issues of public concern and common interests.

The study also found that the adoption of the Krio lingua franca as a strategy to broadcast programs generates the ability of people living in Freetown and other urban cities to participate actively in radio discussions as well as the rural poor and those living in hard-to-reach communities in the country.

The study further revealed that national and organizational media policies and regulations influence the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone. The reformation of laws, policies, and regulations after the war created the enabling environment for the media to thrive. It facilitates the public sphere for citizens' political participation and democratic

deepening. The legal and regulatory environment guarantees and protects freedom of expression and press freedom.

The study found that there are major constitutional provisions that provide an unhindered radio broadcasting atmosphere and the expression of independent views on national issues by radio journalists in the country without fear of being arrested and detained.

The study again confirmed that radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone contributes to democratic sustainability, national cohesion, and peace consolidation. The analyzed data from the field prominently pointed out that radio broadcast programs have sustained the peace and contributed to national cohesion in post-war Sierra Leone.

6.3 Theoretical Implications Derived from the Findings.

In this study, the researcher noted that the theoretical implications of the study confirmed the success and failure of the proposed “public sphere and democratic participants media theories” that guided the researcher to situate the study in the context of Sierra Leone. The study revealed that radio has been a public sphere in Sierra Leone purposely for the promotion of democracy in the country after the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Sierra Leone by a group of military officers in 1997.

The study also found that Radio Democracy was set up to contribute to the democratic development of the nation some twenty-six (26) years ago. Radio Democracy has been a platform where discussions and interviews of different personalities have taken place on political, economic, or social issues for political leaders to answer questions on human interest, national development, democracy, and peacebuilding. It was noted that Radio Democracy has been the platform and mouthpiece for the people to talk about the issues that have to do with the country’s peacebuilding and democratic growth.

The study further found out that the Independent Radio Network (IRN) started in 2002. It is a coalition of private radio stations. Since then, the network has been that public sphere that provides a platform where listeners to community radio stations or audiences across the country can benefit from adequate information from government officials, on issues of democracy and elections. So, in terms of democracy, the radio network has produced programs that help people understand how the democratic process works in Sierra Leone.

6.4 Practical Implications Derived from Findings.

Here, more emphasis was placed on the major issues that emerged during the study. The overall outcome results of the study pointed out to be generally positive. A dramatic improvement in the democratic process came out evidently. Radio stations have provided information about elections, voter education, and the like. So, in terms of getting people to understand the democratic process, their roles as citizens, civic education, and the like, the study indicated that radio broadcasting has brought massive improvement in Sierra Leone.

The study identified that there has been improvement in content generation, script writing, news production, and presentation. Inclusive programming in terms of women's participation is now a premium in all programs broadcast by the selected radio stations. Accountability and transparency programs and governance issues are covered by all the understudied flagship programs, and the impact is immense in all aspects.

In addition, it was also noted that the legal and regulatory environment has improved. The reformation of the media laws, policies, and codes of practice for journalists has created room for professional journalism practice without fear of being reprimanded by the law.

However, it is worth noting that there is room for improvement in the legal and regulatory environment of Sierra Leone.

6.5 Conclusion

This study attempted to find the role of radio broadcasting as a public sphere in the democratization process and effective citizen participation in post-war Sierra Leone. In this study, the researcher followed a qualitative approach. Data for the research was generated through qualitative content analysis, document analysis, and in-depth interviews. The qualitative content analysis technique was on purpose. It was employed in order to generate rich data and equally understand the strategy of how the four understudied radio flagship programs are performing their democratic functions. This indicates how radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone creates the arena for democratic discourse in Sierra Leone.

Secondly, document analysis was also employed to generate data and find out how influential national and organizational media policies and regulations were on the democratic functions of radio broadcasting in post-war Sierra Leone. In this regard, important documents were reviewed. These documents include the national constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991, Acts of Parliament, national codes of practice, and organizational media codes of

conduct. The analysis indicated a clear insight into the relationship between the media and the legal and regulatory environment in the country. However, it is important to clarify that the analysis focused only on the legal provisions and articles that have effects on radio broadcasting, freedom of expression, press freedom, and the media generally.

Lastly, in-depth interviews were also in this study to generate data on the democratic functions of radio broadcasting and its influence on citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. The interviews were conducted to generate qualitative data. The interviews were done with six radio journalists, one radio journalist working for a non-governmental organization, and one government official. This clearly indicates and explains the role of radio broadcasting as a public sphere that creates the arena for citizen democratic participation in Sierra Leone.

The analysis concludes that it is a universally accepted truth that there is a strong interconnectedness between democracy, press freedom, and independent media (Higgins, 2014). It is observed in this study that radio broadcasting is a catalyst for the speedy democratization process in post-war Sierra Leone.

6.6 Recommendations

The study of the role of radio broadcasting in the democratization process of countries is predominantly concentrated around Western established democracies with few examples from southern Africa. This study is an attempt to assess the contribution of radio broadcasting in the democratization process and citizens' democratic participation in post-conflict Sierra Leone with an underpinning largely informed by well-established democracies. However, the researcher observed that the theoretical consideration of the public sphere and democratic participants' media theories is more practical in functioning democratic systems. A vivid understanding of the local political context of countries is crucial to such studies. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies of this nature are important to understanding the role of radio in the democratic process of post-conflict societies, especially in Africa.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

Every study has its own limits, and this one is not an exception to that rule. An intensive case study of all the radio stations in Sierra Leone would have been the most appropriate approach to present a generalized report on radio broadcasting's contribution to the democratization process and the enhancement of citizens' democratic participation. However, the study did

not cover all operating radio stations in the country except for the strategic three mentioned in the background of the study. Hence the findings of the study may not be generalized in recognition of the fact that radio broadcasting in the country is premised on varying socio-economic and geographic settings and geopolitical zones of the country. In addition, accessing the information was difficult. Organizational documents were not easy to get, especially from Radio Democracy. Therefore, the quantity of information accessed by the researcher.

R Q (1) How do the democratic functions of radio broadcasting influence citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone? Personally, as a researcher, I would have loved to conduct an audience survey using research question one, but time was a serious limitation and a problem faced by the researcher in carrying out this study. To solicit information in Sierra Leone is constraining especially one that involves interviews with the general public.

Appendix A

Interview Guide For Radio Journalists

I am Bai Santigie Kanu a master's student at NLA University College Kristiansand Norway. I am conducting research on the influence of radio broadcasting on citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. I would appreciate it if you could be part of this research by providing the best responses to the following questions. Your response will be held in confidence and used only for academic purposes.

- (1) How has your radio broadcasting practice and function contributed to the democratic process of post-war Sierra Leone?
- (2) Please describe how experience within the broadcasting industry over the years has made the country's democratic process participatory.
- (3) Can you describe more on how your radio station is performing its democratic function in the country?
- (4) How participatory are the programs that you run as a radio station?
- (5) How would you describe citizens' contribution to your broadcast programs?
- (6) How democratic in nature are the programs you broadcast, and what are some of these programs for example?
- (7) How often do you broadcast programs that the public could participate in?
- (8) What stood out to you as the defining characteristic of your radio station when talking about radio broadcasting and democratic participation in Sierra Leone?
- (9) Tell me more about how your radio station has helped the promotion of democratic good governance since its establishment.
- (10) How do you feel about working as a broadcasting journalist in Sierra Leone, is it fulfilling?
 - a. What are your means of feedback from your audience in relation to the programs you aired?
 - b. Who do you often invite as guests?
 - c. What is the strength of your staff capacity?
 - d. How has your institution stood out among a well-dominated male industry-
What is the story behind this?

Appendix B

Interview guide for the National Commission for Democracy (NCD)

I am Bai Santigie Kanu a master's student at NLA University College Kristiansand Norway. I am conducting research on the influence of radio broadcasting on citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. I would appreciate it if you could be part of this research by providing the best responses to the following questions. Your response will be held in confidence and used only for academic purposes.

- (1) How has the work of NCD contributed to the democratic process of post-war Sierra Leone?
- (2) Please describe how NCD's election coverage/citizen awareness raising over the years has made the country's democratic process participatory.
- (3) Please explain the thematic issues often discussed in NCD's Hour on Radio
- (4) How participatory are the programs that you run as a commission?
- (5) How would you describe citizens' contribution to your broadcast/radio programs?
- (6) How democratic in nature are the programs you broadcast, and what are some of these programs for example?
- (7) What are the major insights from your audience feedback during your radio engagements?
- (8) What stood out to you as the defining characteristic of your commission when talking about radio broadcasting programs and democratic participation in Sierra Leone?
- (9) Please explain how your commission's coverage of elections has helped the promotion of democratic good governance since its establishment.
- (10) How have your radio broadcasting programs contributed to enhancing citizens' democratic participation?
- (11) How do you feel about working as a communication specialist at NCD in Sierra Leone, is it fulfilling?
 - a. What are your means of feedback from your audience in relation to the programs your network broadcasts especially during elections?
 - b. Who do you often invite as guests?
 - c. How many stations run your broadcast programs country wide as a commission?

Appendix C

Interview guide for the Independent Radio Network (IRN)

I am Bai Santigie Kanu a master's student at NLA University College Kristiansand Norway. I am conducting research on the influence of radio broadcasting on citizens' democratic participation in post-war Sierra Leone. I would appreciate it if you could be part of this research by providing the best responses to the following questions. Your response will be held in confidence and used only for academic purposes.

- (1) How has your radio broadcasting practice and function contributed to the democratic process of post-war Sierra Leone?
- (2) Please describe how IRN's election coverage/broadcasting over the years has made the country's democratic process participatory.
- (3) Can you describe more on how your radio network is performing its democratic function in the country?
- (4) How participatory are the programs that you run as a network?
- (5) How would you describe citizens' contribution to your broadcast programs?
- (6) How democratic in nature are the programs you broadcast, and what are some of these programs for example?
- (7) How often do you broadcast programs that the public could participate in?
- (8) What stood out to you as the defining characteristic of your network when talking about radio broadcasting and democratic participation in Sierra Leone?
- (9) Please explain how your network coverage of elections has helped the promotion of democratic good governance since its establishment.
- (10) How do you feel about working as a broadcasting journalist in Sierra Leone, is it fulfilling?
 - a. What are your means of feedback from your audience in relation to the programs your network broadcasts especially during elections?
 - b. Who do you often invite as guests?
 - c. How many stations constitute the network?

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