



MEDIA MONITORING OF **2020 ELECTIONS IN GHANA**



LIST OF TABLES	- 2
INTRODUCTION	- 3
OVERVIEW OF MEDIA IN GHANA	- 4
MEDIA FRAMING& MEDIA COVERAGE	- 5
METHODOLOGY	- 11
RESULTS	- 14
CROSS TABULATION	- 24
MEDIA AND ETHICAL ISSUES CROSS TABULATION	- 26
MEDIA AND GENDER SOURCE	- 28
MEDIA AND GENDER OF NEWS REPORTER	- 30
MEDIA AND GENERIC FRAME TYPES	- 31
TYPES OF FRAME	- 34
CONCLUSION	- 35
RECOMMENDATIONS	- 36
REFERENCES	- 38

LIST OF TABLES	
Table 1: Types of Media and the amount of Coverage Garnered	- 15
Table 2: Media Houses and the Number of Stories Covered	- 15
Table 3: Ethical Issues	- 16
Table 4: Balance in the use of Sources	- 17
Table 5: Election Standards	- 17
Table 6: Type of Generic Frame	- 18
Table 7: Is the Topic or Issue Gender Related	- 18
Table 8: Major Issues of Coverage in the Elections	- 18
Table 9: Type of Election Coverage	- 20
Table 10: Type of Sources	- 20
Table 11: Gender of Source	- 21
Table 12: Gender of Reporter/News Reader	- 21
Table 13: Party Mentioned	- 21
Table 14: Story Placement 1	- 22
Table 15: Tone of News Reportage (Candidate)	- 22
Table 16: Depth of Stories	- 23
Table 17: Candidate Mentioned * Tone (Candidate) Cross Tabulation	- 24
Table 18: Media * Ethical Issues Cross Tabulation	- 27
Table 19: Media * Gender of Source Cross Tabulation	- 29
Table 20: Media * Gender of Reporter/News Reader Cross Tabulation	- 30
Table 21: Major Topic of Coverage *Type of Generic Frame Cross Tabulation	- 31
Table 22: Type of Election Coverage *Depth of Stories Cross Tabulation	- 34

INTRODUCTION

Ghana has enjoyed rave reviews for her democratic record over the past two decades despite some challenges. Every four years since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992, Ghanaians go to the polls to vote for a new president. The ritual has become a major feature of Ghana's political culture and 2020 was no exception; Ghanaians went to the polls on December 7 2020, yet again, to vote in presidential and parliamentary elections. One of the institutions central to the elections and Ghana's democratic journey in general is the media.

The media's role is wide ranging. They serve as a conduit for information provision, a platform for conversations and discussions, a watchdog over those in authority and a channel for the voiceless. During elections, citizens learn about candidates, their platforms and policy programs through the mass media. For many, their decision making hinges very much on what they learn about candidates through media platforms. This makes the media an extremely important institution in democratic elections. In other words, media coverage and how it is done is central to public knowledge, perception and the overall strength of many democracies including Ghana's.

As one of Africa's leading democracies, it useful to understand how the media covered Ghana's 2020 elections, a unique election which for the first time in the country's history saw a former president contesting for office against a one-term incumbent and was also the first time that one of the two major parties had a female as the Vice-Presidential nominee. This will allow us to gain insights into treatment of news stories and how the media functions. Since there is scholarly agreement on the social shaping role and influence that media has on the public, a first step would be to explore the nature of media content and frames. That is the purpose of this study; to better understand dominant news frames, narratives, journalistic considerations, the cast of sources or characters that were relied upon, how situations were defined or packaged and the overall construction of stories during the 2020 presidential elections in Ghana. Generally, this will help to deepen scholarly understanding of media framing, meaning making, social constructions and the interpretations ascribed to issues within the public space during democratic elections.

Ghana's 2020 elections was unique in the sense that it was the first time a former (one term) president was contesting for office again against a one-term incumbent. It was also the first time that one of the two major parties had a female as the Vice-Presidential nominee

OVERVIEW OF MEDIA IN GHANA

The 1992 constitution guaranteed the place of the media in the multiparty democratic system, and in this respect, Article 162:5 is seminal. It states: “All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana.” Ghana now has a relatively free, pluralistic and competitive media system but freedom and safety of journalists continues to remain an issue. The repeal of the criminal libel law in 2001, which criminalized speech and led to the jailing of many journalists was a welcome development that helped to open up the media system. The recent passage of the Right to Information (RTI) Law will help the media perform its function more effectively especially in the area of accountability.

According to the National Media Commission, there are 575 FM broadcasting stations in Ghana. Out of the total number of authorised FM Broadcasting Stations, 428 stations are currently operational as of June 2020. Of this number, 33 are Public Radio Stations, (all stations owned and operated by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and/or any other station established by the Government of Ghana by statutory enactment.) 5 Public (Foreign) Radio Stations (stations established by Foreign Governments through diplomatic arrangements to rebroadcast/relay content from foreign countries e.g. BBC, RFI, VoA), 81 Community Radio Stations (a non-profit broadcasting service provided for a specific marginalised community by a radio or television station whose ownership and management are representative of the community for which the service is provided), 21 Campus Radio Stations and 437 Commercial Radio Stations (those that are privately owned and operated for-profit and controlled privately by independent commercial groups or individuals).

The commission also states that there are 146 TV stations with a total of 102 stations on-air as of the end of June 2020. The breakdown of the TV Stations are as follows: 2 Analogue Terrestrial Television, 36 Digital Terrestrial Free-To-Air Television Programme Channel (Nationwide Coverage), 6 Digital Terrestrial Free-To-Air Television Programme Channel (Regional Coverage) and 1 Digital Terrestrial Pay Television (Service only). The rest are 5 Digital Terrestrial Pay Television (Service and Frequency), 8 Digital Terrestrial Radio Service on TV Multiplex, 4 Satellite Television Broadcasting (Pay TV Direct-To-Home Bouquet), 9 Satellite Television Broadcasting (Free-To-Air Direct-To-Home Bouquet), 72 Satellite Television Broadcasting (Free-To-Air Direct-To-Home Single Channel), 1 Digital Cable Television, 1 Television over Internet Protocol (Pay TV) and 1 Subscription Management Service for a Satellite Television Broadcasting (Pay TV Direct-To-Home Bouquet)

Media ownership has become a major actor in the performance of the media in Ghana. According to the Media Ownership Monitor Ghana, one-third of all media outlets in the country are owned by politicians or people affiliated with the dominant political parties. And much of the content they produce – particularly news and current affairs – is partisan. Journalists at these outlets dance to the whims and caprices of their owners, who dictate what news is, which stories are killed and how headlines are written to put affiliates of the media house in a positive light or negatively affect their opponents. To avoid conflict or loss of access, editors and journalists resort to superficial “both sides journalism” by reporting partisan truths by the two dominant political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). In this way, the media do not provide the public with reliable information and conclusive ‘truths’ because that would require exposing the allies of media owners. As such, they have become unwitting participants of the collective open secret-keeping culture (Asante, 2020).

This ownership structure also accounts for the number of unethical content broadcast by some media houses. Events leading to the gruesome murder of Ahmed Suale where a media owner and a Member of Parliament, Kennedy Agyapong, revealed Suale's identity was carried out on his television station, Net 2 TV. Due to his advantage as the owner of the station, it was difficult to censor his comments. Also, in the case of the Montie 3 where three discussants issued death threats to judges on live radio, it is possible that the ownership of the station played a key role in that discussion. The FM station, no longer operational, was owned by Harry Zakour, a member of the then ruling NDC therefore it likely that influenced the line of discussion and the use of uncensored and unethical language of radio.

MEDIA FRAMING AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS IN GHANA

Media scholars and analysts have relied on framing as a major approach to studying how the media covers and represents issues. Monitoring the media is an important exercise because it is a major source of information for citizens. Media reportage and coverage of elections has often been on the conceptual foundations of framing. Research in this area has often focused on ascertaining the major ways in which the media covered issues such as sources used, gender dynamics and the major themes or frames employed among others.

Within the field, there have been several explications that have contributed to the grounding and certification of framing as a universally well applied way of unearthing media texts and content. A well quoted and constantly cited definition of framing is provided by Entman (1952) who asserts that to frame is to select “some aspect of

a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in a way that can promote a certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation". What this means is that the media in reporting events such as an election engage in the process of electing certain angles and positions and then publishing or transmitting this to the general public.

One of the most common ways to understand framing is to perceive it as a way of investigating the "selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration" (Gitlin, 1980) that the media engage in when reporting issues. It is important to recognize that when a reporter goes to cover a story decisions are made regarding what is deemed important, newsworthy and in effect, what to include, exclude, highlight or elaborate upon when eventually writing their stories. In order to competently account for how the media covered the elections or any issue at all, one of the best approaches to do this is by adopting the framing approach which helps to take a step back and then scientifically unearthing the media's reportage in order to unearth major frames.

Carragee and Roefs (2004) postulate that "...frames construct particular meaning concerning issues by their pattern of emphasis, interpretation and exclusion (p.17). Since it is impossible for the media to report everything that happens at an event, media houses often tend to sieve the information they receive and then focus on what they deem as most salient. There may be several factors at play including the reporters own training, journalistic or news routines as well as in house policies and guidelines. No matter the situation there is always the expectation that the media will be objective, balanced and fair in their reportage. There is also the expectation that the media will be comprehensive in their reportage, be a voice for the voiceless while also highlighting minority, vulnerable and often under-represented groups.

Goffman is one of the scholars who contributed in a significant way to understanding media framing. He called framing a "central organizing idea" used to comprehend messages. This means that the very nature of journalism requires that a story has a major or central story to tell. The very nature of storytelling requires major narratives or themes woven around a central idea. This central idea is normally seen in the headlines or the news leads. Framing scholars therefore unpack the various components of a story to find out the central idea or storyline.

Goffman's expositions on framing is similar to the ideas espoused by (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 2) who say framing as a way to "organize everyday reality". On a daily basis reporters go out therefore to cover people, event and issues prevailing within the social policy. In doing this they paint a picture or frame of what everyday reality is, what is dominating public discourse, who the major actors are and what the dominant ideologies or positions are. It is worth noting that frames or framing occurs within a social, cultural and political context and the process of framing analysis will help to bring meaning to issues happening around us every day by

accounting for any existing context.

According to Reese (2001), framing helps to “group, categorize and thematize texts in order to get to the heart of issues being discussed and to make for easier understanding” (p. 7). Basically, producers and media workers get large amounts of information on a daily basis. In an election period this situation is even heightened due to the large swath or avalanche of information that voters will be bombarded with. This makes it imperative for journalists to not only be at events where this information is presented but to organize that information in a digestible form for their audiences. In doing this journalists rely on key words, phrases, narratives and storylines which serve as the symbolic devices through which framing is achieved. As Gitlin writes, frames help news producers to “process large amounts of information quickly and routinely and to package the information for effective relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Elections are the backbone of every democracy. It gives the people a chance to express their views about the kind of leadership they are experiencing and what they would want to experience, through the power of the thumb. Akoh and Ahiabenu, (2012) posit that the media has the onus of covering elections impartially and providing balanced and fair coverage of elections and electoral processes. But the effectiveness of this exercise cannot be fully appreciated if it is done without the involvement of the media, the conveyers of information and the channel through which the people convey their grievances to power players and vice versa. “The news media have been an important catalyst in the democratization process”. (Afful, 2016) This is amplified by Strömbäck (2005:332) who agrees that “the media and modern democracy are strongly connected - the media serving as a link between the political leaders and citizens”.

Ghana has had seven successful elections in the fourth republic since 1992 and the role of the media in these elections cannot be downplayed. Afful, (2016) opines that Political messages and actions of politicians get to the public through the media. Perception and voting decisions are made possible by political stories supplied by the media. Although free elections are critical it is not enough for democratic governance. Blumler and Gurevitch (2005:104) observe that to ensure some level of political awareness, public discussions and media participation, a democratic society needs extensive and intelligent news media to report on public affairs.

The media, Strömbäck (2005:332) acknowledges normatively, play three significant roles in democracies namely: (i) ensuring the supply of information in societies (ii) serving as a platform for public discourse of variety of political ideas and (iii) media establishment positioning itself as an effective watchdog overseeing activities of political leaders. Although this assertion by, Strömbäck aligns with the role of the media according to the 1992 constitution of Ghana, the last seven elections have shown that, media coverage of elections in Ghana has varied, largely based on some external factors such as the level of technology available at the time of coverage, the ownership structure of the media, framing and agenda-setting role

and several other factors. Media coverage has also varied over the years in terms of the depth of reportage, gender coverage and many more.

Over the years, the state-owned media have been known to lean towards coverage of the activities of the incumbent government more than they would for the opposition. This has travelled right from the onset of the democratic rule in 1992 up to even in 2020 when the country had its last election. In their analysis of media coverage in the 2000 general elections, Temin & Smith (2002) argue that, in the months before the elections, the state-owned dailies (the Daily Graphic and The Ghanaian Times) 'showed considerable bias in favour of the NDC and its allies of the Progressive Alliance in their coverage of the election campaigns. This is in sharp contrast to what the constitution dictates in such circumstances in Article 55 (sections 11 and 12) of the 1992 Constitution, which stipulates: 'The state shall provide a fair opportunity to all political parties to present their programmes to the public by ensuring equal access to the state-owned media,' and 'All presidential candidates shall be given the same amount of time and space on the state-owned media to present their programmes to the people'. Prior to 1992, not much was seen of the private media mainly because the state media had so much influence and coverage in almost all parts of the country, leaving very little space for the private media to penetrate.

However, before the next election in 1996, a significant improvement had begun to materialize in terms of the operations of private media. Temin & Smith (2002) opine that by 1996, the private media had begun to establish a solid footing. A handful of private FM stations, generally critical of the Rawlings regime, were broadcasting on air. Election coverage by the independent radio stations and newspapers helped to offset favourable coverage of the NDC in the state-owned print and electronic media. Gyimah-Boadi argues that independent media outlets were 'largely responsible for keeping the election somewhat competitive and saving opposition candidates from total despair about their chances against the incumbents, who had ample resources and the vocal support of the state-run media.' However, he laments that 'the independent media continue to struggle with an unfriendly legal system, slender resources and government machinations designed to circumvent constitutional guarantees of free speech.'

According to Gyimah-Boadi, there remained 'a clear pro-NDC bias in news coverage and editorial opinion in the state-controlled print and electronic media, though the opposition parties had equal opportunity to hold press conferences and to broadcast on Ghana television.' Furthermore, Ayei posits that during the 1996 contest, the 'radio and television campaign was blatantly and consistently biased towards Rawlings and the NDC', and 'the situation concerning the newspapers was no better. Clausen also writes that in 1996 the state-owned media were 'heavily biased in favour of the current government', and that 'press freedom is not fully established in Ghana'.

A National Democratic Institute report on the 1996 elections confirms these sentiments. The study found that the state-owned media provided 'largely disproportionate coverage of incumbent political contestants and is overwhelmingly positive, while coverage of other political contestants often is not presented in a positive tone, or not presented at all. In the months leading up to the December elections, coverage of the opposition was 'completely obliterated by the two state-owned papers, the Daily Graphic and The Ghanaian Times. On 28 and 29 November, The Ghanaian Times even ran a picture of the ballot with a thumbprint next to the NDC

Also, as a result of their constitutional duty to provide coverage to the government, the state media is torn between determining what the government's work is and what a party activity is. In the run-up to the 2000 elections, the then Vice- President, Professor John Atta Mills was largely projected by the state-owned media because his party was still in power and He (The Vice President) was contesting as for the presidency against the New Patriotic Party's John Agyekum Kuffuor. Temin & Smith (2002) observed that the number of ribbon-cutting ceremonies and dedications presided over by Vice-President Mills in the months leading up to the election was substantial. Compounding the problem was that many of these choreographed ceremonies were immortalized in colour spreads in the Daily Graphic and covered extensively on GTV's 'Evening News'. In a tongue-in-cheek editorial in the Daily Graphic, of all papers, George Sydney Abugri mused: 'Vice-President Mills, who is running for President, was on television on Tuesday night receiving foreign diplomats in his office. He was not campaigning mark you, but incumbency has its advantages, see? But this is not just a feature of the 2000 elections. Even in the 2016 and 2020 elections, the state-owned media was seen to be projecting the government more than the opposition though it is supposed to give a balanced coverage of both divides.

Perhaps it is the reason the private media is seen to be more critical of the government since most of the work of the state-owned media is done to project the ruling government positively. According to Temin and Smith (2002), the private press could be criticized for being excessively vigilant, as some newspapers seemed to be over-zealous in their attacks on the Rawlings regime, sometimes to the point of printing stories of questionable credibility. Matthew Kainyah, in an editorial appearing in the state-owned Daily Graphic months before the election, wrote: "But frankly, are our private journalists sacredly discharging their constitutional duty without pride and prejudice? That is the big question. Many of our private media men have only one theme — to spite Rawlings and his associates. It is as if disgracing Rawlings and his family will necessarily improve the lot of Ghanaians".

As Hopman argues, 'the coverage of elections by any media platform be it private or public should be free and fair, balanced and imbalanced' (Hopmann et al, 2011). To this end, it is worth noting that despite best practices across the world, the

coverage of elections in the media varies due to the ownership structure.

There is evidence across the world that shows that the coverage of elections about male politicians or contestants differ when it comes to the coverage of females. The time allocated for the coverage of activities of female contestants in elections continues to reduce as more men are given the highlights and are always put in the limelight against their female counterparts. Goodyear-Grant, (2013) argues that the visibility of women candidates is poor, with some women being prominent in news sometimes because of their unique value, or their connection to some powerful men. This makes the political terrain a no-go- area for women and the few who try to push their way through have to work twice harder than their male colleagues. According to Gadzekpo (2011), how the media trivialise women's issues in Ghana is similar to that of women in politics globally. This gives credence to the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2019) which indicates that women make up 24% of subjects seen, heard and read about in the media. Only 16% of the stories focused on women specifically while 48% reinforce gender stereotypes and only 8% of the news stories challenged such stereotypes. According to Anderson, Diabah and Mensah (2011), the media misrepresentation of female politicians in the media make them to be perceived by the public and for that matter the electorates.

Article 6 of the code of ethics of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) (July 27, 1994) urges journalists not to produce journalistic material that is discriminatory to ethnicity, colour, creed, gender or sexual orientation. Article 17, 35(5), (6), Article 36 of the 1992 constitution further buttresses this when it states that a person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status. Given these low numbers, and from the concept of the framing theory, there is a reason to believe that the media did not give much attention to female parliamentary aspirants which Gadzekpo (2011) further explains that the hegemonic function of media is clearer when one examines how the media frame events. Together with news traditions and values, it is that pattern of selective emphasis and interpretation referred to as framing that makes certain representations (often derived from the dominant ideology) seem natural and acceptable.

METHODOLOGY

This report employed content analysis as the main methodological framework. This research approach is deemed to be systematic, objective and replicable through the use of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. It has been traditionally used to analyze communication messages over time. This approach is deemed popular among media researchers because it helps to scientifically and systematically account for the presence of frames, the extent to which these frames exist in different media, generally describe media content, comparing content across different mediums and assessing the portrayal of certain issues or personalities such as presidential candidates.

The steps that were followed in conducting the content analysis include: formulating the research questions, defining the population, selecting the time period, selecting and defining the unit of analysis, constructing the coding scheme, training of coders, code the material according to the scheme constructed, analyzing the data and then drawing conclusions.

The unit of analysis used for the report is the news reports published by the various media houses being studied. A coding scheme was constructed which guided the collection of data. In order to cater for the changing landscape of the media in Ghana this research used both traditional and digital media including radio, online, television and print news media.

Media Studied

In all eight media houses were studied. The common underlying reason was that these can be described as the legacy media. Agenda setters or leading media houses in Ghana. Their profiles are provided below.

Profiles of Media Houses

1. Citi FM(97.3MhZ)

CITI FM is a private radio station in Accra-Ghana. The station started operations with a 1kilowatt transmitter in August 2004, changing to a 5 kilowatt transmitter in November 2004, when it commenced commercial broadcasting. The station has a reach of about 90km radius, with a dominant presence in Greater Accra, Eastern, Central and parts of Volta and Western Regions. CITI 97.3FM presents all its programmes in English language and has a mix of adult contemporary music, news and current affairs programmes. Citi FM partners with key international media houses to bring its audience a global outlook on pertinent issues that occur around the world. Citi FM has been named by the Ghana Journalists Association

(GJA) as the most listened to English radio station in Ghana, for the year 2019 and 2018.

2. Adom FM

Adom FM is a private radio station in Accra, which is owned and run by the media group Multimedia Broadcasting Limited. The station employs Akan as its medium of communication and airs since 2001 under its current name. The station targets lower middle to upper income listeners with a mix of news and current affairs, health programmes, talk and music-based entertaining programming. According to GeoPoll's Media Measurement on radio audience statistics for the 1st Quarter of 2017, Adom FM ranks second nationwide with 9.5% audience share, and is also second in shares in the Greater Accra Region (10.50%). It is especially popular in the Central region where it ranks first and reaches to an audience of 16.7%. Adom FM is part of Multimedia Broadcasting Limited Group of which George Kwesi Twum is the majority shareholder with 92.5% shares and Ghana Broadcasting Corporation is minority shareholder with 7.5% shares, according to the Registrar General Department's official documents.

3. The Daily Graphic

The Daily Graphic is the flagship newspaper of the Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL). GCGL is a state-owned registered media company in Ghana with dominance in the print media. The Daily Graphic commands the largest readership base in the country; an audience share of 36.25% (2,290,000 readers – Q1 2017), according to GeoPoll, a mobile survey provider. GCGL has in fact always been in the hands of the state since its inception. It was established in 1950 in the then Gold Coast by the Daily Mirror Group from the United Kingdom. The most significant change has not necessarily been in change of ownership rather the change of business form. Though established as a corporation it became a limited liability company in 1999 under the companies Code, 1963, Act 179.

4. Daily Guide

The Daily Guide newspaper is one of Ghana's leading private newspapers. According to Geopoll's audience research (for Jan – March 2017), it enjoys the second largest readership of 1,191,000, constituting 18.9% of the total audience share. Its content is predominantly politically related stories. Besides politics, the newspaper coverage highlights issues of business, education, entertainment and sports. Its readership profile, like for most newspapers with high level political focus, include politicians, policy makers, academics and researchers.

The Daily Guide has established itself as the best brand in private press, according to The Centre for Brand Analysis Ghana, a market research agency, which adjudged the newspaper as a 'Top Quality Brand'. The Daily Guide newspaper is run by Western Publications Limited which is owned by Frederick Blay - the current Chairman of

the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP). Little is known of the early beginnings of the newspaper except the fact that it started as a sports paper in Accra. Based on market demands, the paper metamorphosed into politics churning out more of political news stories to meet the needs of its customers.

5. Myjoyonline.com

MyJoyOnline is a commercial portal that was launched in 1996. It was the first Ghana-based news website streaming live radio. It streams content from MultiTV World as well as streaming content from all the radio stations of the Multimedia Group Limited, to which it belongs. According to Alexa, it is ranked 11th amongst the Top Sites in Ghana – while it is the third most popular news websites. The online platform held a trust percentage of 27% and ranked second among online platforms in the country. MyJoyOnline.com is the lead online local news source for international audiences. Currently the undisputed point of reference for news and information which includes campaign and election results. It streams content from Joy FM, Asempa FM, Adom FM, Nhyira FM, Luv FM and Hitz FM. MyJoyOnline is part of the Multimedia Broadcasting Limited, one of Ghana's biggest private media groups that covers radio, digital TV & Online.

6. Ghana Television (GTV)

Ghana Television (GTV) is the first ever television channel to broadcast in Ghana. The TV station was established to propagate the policies and activities of the then colonel government. GTV since its inception has remained in the hands of the state. Today, its coverage is nationwide although faces stiff competition from other privately held television stations like TV3 and Multi TV. GTV, according to Geopoll, a mobile survey platform, has the fifth highest audience share at 9%, measured for the first quarter in 2017 (January – March) in Ghana. GTV's has a variety of programmes including reality shows, current affairs, entertainment, politics, sports, documentaries and live national events. The audience profile of GTV varies from policy makers, academics, rural folks and even children. Ghana television is wholly owned by the state. The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) manages GTV and other media outlets across the ten regions in Ghana. GBC is a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) with the State Enterprise Commission having supervisory responsibility of the organisation. The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation was established in 1954 and was called the Gold Coast Broadcasting System. After Ghana gained independence in 1957, the organisation got its present name till date. Although it positioned itself as medium of education for the populace, its programming often reflects the political ideology of the ruling government of the day.

7. TV3

TV3 is a private free-to-air television station in Ghana. It began on-air transmission on October 1, 1997 with initial coverage in the Greater Accra Region, parts of

Central, Eastern and lower Volta. TV3 Network Limited's coverage was expanded to the Ashanti Region in 2000 and to the Western Region in 2005. Today it has a nationwide coverage in all regional capitals in Ghana. TV3 has the third highest audience share (15.3%) among all TV channels in the country, according to Geopoll, a mobile survey platform (Jan – March 2017). Even though they proclaim in their tagline 'First in News, Best in Entertainment', TV3 competes for audience especially with UTV and Adom TV during political events such as the election 2020. The station broadcasts diverse programmes from current affairs, news, musical variety shows, drama, reality and entertainment shows, religious broadcasts and sports. TV3 Network Limited is owned by Media General Ghana Limited (90% of shares) with another Ghanaian company, Winmat Ghana Limited (10% of shares), as a minority shareholder. The company profile at the Registrar General only listed Media General Ghana Limited.

RESULT

The main objective of this research project was to ascertain how the media in Ghana covered the 2020 general elections. Results from data collected are presented and analyzed in this chapter. The first table presents a general overview of data collected for the project. It also gives insights into the frequency distribution of the media and the amount of coverage garnered. Data was collected in the period before the election, during the election and in the immediate aftermath of the election. This was between November 2020 and January 2021. This was the period which was deemed rich with data and information as well as heightened activities among the various political parties and the election process in general.

As previously mentioned, in order to account for the full spectrum of the media in Ghana, both traditional and new media was examined spanning radio, television, print and online news. The results indicate that in terms of the amount of stories published, radio had the highest frequency (n=1421, 50.3%) accounting for about half of the stories. Television accounted for the next highest (n=890, 31.5%) while print and online sources followed respectively. This is not surprising at all since it has been well noted that radio is the most common and popular source of news in most African countries. In fact radio dominates in the nation as many people find it an easy and accessible source of news. In Ghana, there's a running joke that when issues crop up in society, people call the radio station and not the police station. The point is that radio is seemingly ubiquitous. It is pervasive. During elections, we observe the heightened sense of radio's importance as they are everywhere covering the candidates, the issues and transmitting stories or reports on a multitude of issues before, during and after the election. Many remain glued to their radio sets in order to follow the election and keep up to date. The lesson

here is that radio remains such an important and dominant source of news during Ghana's elections. Efforts must be made to develop the industry and to strengthen its work and presence further.

Table 1: Types of Media and the amount of Coverage Garnered

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
RADIO	1421	50.3	50.3
TELEVISION	890	31.5	81.8
ONLINE	142	5.0	86.8
PRINT	373	13.2	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

The second table represents a detailed breakdown of the frequency distribution among the specific media houses. CITI FM had the highest number of stories. The rest follow in descending order: Adom FM, Daily Graphic, Daily Guide, myjoyonline, peacefmonline, GTV and TV3. CITI FM has for some time now seen an upsurge in their fortunes as a leading radio station challenging JOY FM. It is therefore not surprising to see them dominate the table here. The same scenario exists between Adom FM and peacefmonline with Adom FM registering more stories. Once again the print papers have lagged way behind the radio stations. Perhaps due to limitations in terms of space and the struggling newspaper industry they are no longer the preeminent source of news and this seems to have affected their work and sustainability as well. The two television stations are also behind both print and radio. Television production has always been difficult and television news is yet to take a strong foothold in Ghana in the same manner as we have it for radio or as it exists in other countries.

Table 2: Media Houses and the Number of Stories Covered

MEDIA HOUSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
CITIFM	682	24.1	24.1
ADOMFM	739	26.2	50.3
DAILY GRAPHIC	199	7.0	57.3
DAILY GUIDE	174	6.2	63.5
MYJOYONLINE.COM	97	3.4	66.9
PEACEFMONLINE.COM	45	1.6	68.5
GTV	411	14.5	83.1
TV3	479	16.9	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

A major issue when it comes to journalism in general and coverage of elections is the ethical nature of the work of the media. The literature revealed certain major ethical issues when it comes to coverage of elections and politics particularly related to the Ghanaian situation. Coding categories were generated and then used to guide the data collection process. The results show that most of the news stories adhered to broad ethical expectations when it came to news coverage. Of the ethical violation recorded, opinionated news stories were the highest. This is an issue of major concern as audiences are sometimes unable to tell the difference between opinion and fact especially when the media and presenters tend to mix the two in a way that is not easily decipherable. What needs to be noted is that training programs are needed in order to help journalists walk that thin line between opinion and news reportage. For the audiences, it goes to show that media literacy is needed in order to make Ghanaian voters more discerning when consuming news and media content. The other major ethical issue of concern is partisan bias. This has got to do with journalists who present new stories in a way that is seen as slanted towards one side or the other. Obviously, this is an unwelcome situation as it does not give voters an objective way of assessing the parties. This is followed by incitement to violence and then the use of insults or intemperate language. Taken together, these constitute the major ethical violations among the media. Clearly there is the need for further training and refresher courses for the media to help curb these developments.

Table 3: Ethical Issues

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
INSULTS/ INTEMPERATE LANGUAGE	4	.1	.1
ETHNOCENTRICM	1	.0	.2
OPINIONATED	153	5.4	5.6
INCITEMENT	5	.2	5.8
PARTISAN BIAS	22	.8	6.5
NONE	2641	93.5	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

A major concern regarding journalism in general and election coverage in particular is the issue of balance in terms of the use of sources. As the traditional and well-worn usage in journalism goes, a story is as good as the source. From a framing perspective, sources have such a major imprint on the nature, tone and form a story and invariably the shaping of public minds and attitudes. The results indicate that single sourced stories dominate (n=1600) in Ghana's media. The frequency of single sourced stories is higher than well balanced stories (n=1028).

This development is highly worrying as it tends to taint the credibility and integrity of stories covered.

Table 4: Balance in the use of Sources

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
SOURCES BALANCED	1028	36.4	36.4
SOURCES NOT BALANCED/LACK OF BALANCE	55	1.9	38.3
NO SOURCES	143	5.1	43.4
SINGLE PARTY SOURCE	1600	56.6	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

Journalists are expected to be professional in their reportage at all times. The study examined professional conduct of journalism as it was observed within the final product which is the news stories. The results as analyzed are as follows: professional (83.1%), trivialised/marginalized (1.1%), disparaged (0.2%) and sensationalism (n=15.6%). This means that by and large from a broad perspective Ghana's media system, though with present issues for concern, is still very much a professional one. The biggest issue of concern in this area has to do with sensationalism. For whatever reasons, sensational stories continue to be an albatross for the Ghanaian media and therefore something that needs to be addressed by the media houses.

Table 5: Election Standards

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
PROFESSIONALISM	2349	83.1	83.1
TRIVIALISED/MARGINALISED	30	1.1	84.2
DISPARAGED	5	.2	84.4
SENSATIONALISM	442	15.6	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

The study was also concerned with the types of frames present in news coverage. Episodic frames refer to stories that we covered as straight news or breaking news stories. This means immediacy and informing the public about an event was the major consideration. There's little or no attention to providing context, details and critical coverage. Thematic stories are longer stories with much depth and context to enhance understanding. The results indicate that episodic stories were more than thematic stories. This is problematic in the sense that fewer stories provide broader insights.

Table 6: Type of Generic Frame

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
EPISODIC	1905	67.4	67.4
THEMATIC	921	32.6	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

Gender is a major issue of concern when it comes to tracking electoral coverage because of concerns over underrepresentation and visibility. At the first instance, we tested for how many of the stories, from a general point of view were gender related. The analysis indicate that only about 1.4% of the stories were gender related. This is a disproportionately low number and further cements the already existing idea that gender issues remain maligned if not marginalized.

Table 7: Is the Topic or Issue Gender Related

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
YES	40	1.4	1.4
NO	2786	98.6	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

One of the interesting aspects of the data collection process is ascertaining the major issues of coverage in the election by the media. The data below represents the results. Issues directly related to democracy and the elections accounted for the higher number of stories. This is not surprising as this was the election season and as such the elections themselves were a major issue of concern. However beyond that, there were concerns about security as well. Security issues was the next issue of concern. During elections, the anxiety concerning the peace and security of the nation is always heightened. This is what led to the creation of the peace council. The results speak to the wider concern in Africa where peace and security become major issues of concern during election. It perhaps, speaks to the need for serious efforts to be made to address violence and conflict during elections. Crime and Justice as well as corruption scandals came up really big as well. Again crime is related to violations and infringements and greater civic education efforts have to be made to improve the knowledge of citizens especially during such critical periods of elections. It needs to be mentioned that former President Rawlings unfortunately lost his life around this period in the run up to the elections. At some point, coverage was dominated by his demise.

Table 8: Major Issues of Coverage in the Elections

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
PARTY POLITICS	117	4.1	4.1
ELECTION LOGISTICS	88	3.1	7.3

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	78	2.8	10.0
ELECTIONS	1549	54.8	64.8
DISASTER OR ACCIDENTS	41	1.5	66.3
ECONOMIC OR BUSINESS	50	1.8	68.0
INFORMAL SECTOR	1	.0	68.1
LABOUR	3	.1	68.2
CORRUPTION/SCANDALS/ CONTROVERCIES	150	5.3	73.5
CRIME/JUSTICE SYSTEM	186	6.6	80.1
EDUCATION	41	1.5	81.5
HOUSING	2	.1	81.6
DEVELOPMENT	34	1.2	82.8
ENVIRONMENT	6	.2	83.0
MEDIA, ICT AND TECHNOLOGY	18	.6	83.7
RELIGION	19	.7	84.3
SOCIAL	3	.1	84.4
ENTERTAINMENT/ LIFESTYLE	3	.1	84.5
SECURITY	223	7.9	92.4
HEALTH	27	1.0	93.4
CONFLICT	11	.4	93.8
HUMANITARIAN	8	.3	94.1
WOMEN OR GENDER ISSUES	1	.0	94.1
CHILDREN	5	.2	94.3
VULNERABLE	7	.2	94.5
SPORTS	2	.1	94.6
INFRASTRUCTURE	26	.9	95.5
AGRICULTURE	5	.2	95.7
RAWLINGS DEATH COVERAGE	122	4.3	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

Every election coverage analysis should account for the nature of coverage in terms of whether it was horse race coverage, strategy issue based or character based. This is a staple of the framing and election coverage literature. It helps to ascertain the nature in terms of the tenor and strategies of coverage. To Ghana's credit, issue-based reporting dominated coverage.

Table 9: Type of Election Coverage

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
HORSERACE	127	4.5	4.5
STRATEGY	645	22.8	27.3
ISSUE-BASED/POLICY	1840	65.1	92.4
CHARACTER/PERSONALITY	214	7.6	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

To further account for the type of sources used a distinct category was created. This breakdown gives a much clearer picture of sources used in reportage. True to the expectation of journalism, non-partisan experts were used in a major way. Sources from the two major parties dominated as well and were used in a manner that was not widely distinct although the NDC sources were used more than NPP party sources. This shows that the media was not necessarily ignoring the opposition party though we realise that government sources could also go favourably for the NPP.

Table 10: Type of Sources

SOURCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
NGO's	77	2.7	2.7
ORDINARY CITIZENS	294	10.4	13.1
GOVERNMENT	482	17.1	30.2
NPP PARTY SOURCE	649	23.0	53.1
NON-PARTISAN EXPERT	300	10.6	63.8
NDC PARTY SOURCE	689	24.4	88.1
SELF-REFERENTIAL	187	6.6	94.8
OTHER PARTY	148	5.2	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

The gender breakdown of sources is also presented below.

Table 11: Gender of Source

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
MALE	1766	62.5	62.5
FEMALE	567	20.1	82.6
UNCLEAR	186	6.6	89.1
MIXED	307	10.9	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

In terms of the gender of reporters assigned for election news stories, males had the advantage. It has been explained in the literature that females are usually given soft news stories to cover compared to males. Also, there is the likelihood that females are more likely to be gender sensitive in their reportage. It is therefore important to account for gender breakdown in studies. The results are indicated below;

Table 12: Gender of Reporter/News Reader

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
MALE	1632	57.7	57.7
FEMALE	1005	35.6	93.3
MIXED	61	2.2	95.5
UNCLEAR	128	4.5	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

This research also examined how much representations or mentions the political parties gained individually. Here it can be seen that, quite naturally, both the NPP and the NDC had the highest mentions although the NPP had an edge over the NDC.

Table 13: Party Mentioned

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
NPP	973	34.4	34.4
NDC	916	32.4	66.8
CPP	27	1.0	67.8
PNC	18	.6	68.4
PPP	17	.6	69.0
NDP	17	.6	69.6

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
APC	17	.6	70.2
GENERAL	524	18.5	88.8
OTHER	37	1.3	90.1
NONE	280	9.9	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

In the current age of information overload, it was necessary to ascertain the positioning and priority that was given to election related stories. Results are presented in the next table for the print newspapers examined. These include The Daily Graphic and the Daily Guide.

Table 14: Story Placement 1

MEDIA HOUSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
TOP STORY/ HEADLINE STORY	777	27.5	27.5
MIDDLE STORY	1470	52.0	79.5
LAST STORY BULLETIN	66	2.3	81.8
FULL PAGE	74	2.6	84.5
HALF PAGE	189	6.7	91.2
QUARTER PAGE	108	3.8	95.0
HOMEPAGE	46	1.6	96.6
OTHER STORIES	96	3.4	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

A major staple among media monitoring projects or the literature on media coverage is the consideration of the tone of news reportage. The tone of the reportage is normally represented by three indicators: favourable, unfavourable and neutral. As expected in journalism, stories are expected to be neutral and not favourable or unfavourable in any way or to any side.

Table 15: Tone of News Reportage (Candidate)

TYPE OF TONE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
FAVOURABLE	520	18.4	18.4
UNFAVOURABLE	305	10.8	29.2
NEUTRAL	2001	70.8	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

This report was also interested in the nature of the depth of reportage. The idea is that stories with much depth and explanatory power tend to lend greater understanding and contextualization of issues. The results indicate that, a majority of stories from the media in general had depth.

Table 16: Depth of Stories

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
INDEPTH	2630	93.1	93.1
LACK OF DEPTH	196	6.9	100.0
Total	2826	100.0	

CROSS TABULATION

In order to get more insights from the quantitative data collected, a further cross tabulation of the data was conducted using different variables. The first cross tabulation considered media coverage in relation to the tone of the candidate. When we look at the major candidates for instance, Nana Akufo Addo received more favourable media coverage than the rest of the candidates. Incumbents normally receive positive media coverage even as they combine their partisan roles as candidates and national role as head of state. This is part of the reason it is often difficult for incumbents to lose. This however doesn't mean the media should throw caution to the wind.

Table 17: Candidate Mentioned * Tone (Candidate) Cross Tabulation

CANDIDATE MENTIONED * TONE (CANDIDATE) CROSS TABULATION				
CANDIDATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVOURABLE	NEUTRAL	TOTAL
NANA ADDO DDNKWA AKUFFO ADDO	100	25	938	1063
	51.0%	41.7%	36.5%	37.6%
JOHN MAHAMA	68	22	820	910
	34.3%	36.7%	31.9%	32.2%
ALFRED WALKER	4	1	3	8
	2.0%	1.7%	0.1%	0.3%
CHRISTIAN ANDREWS	1	2	14	17
	0.5%	3.3%	0.5%	0.6%
BRIDGETTE DZOGBENUKU	5	2	10	17
	2.6%	3.3%	0.4%	0.6%
AKUA DONKOR	7	1	9	17
	3.6%	1.7%	0.4%	0.6%
NANA KONADU AGYEMANG RAWLINGS	2	0	8	10
	1.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%
HASSAN AYARIGA	1	1	20	22
	0.5%	1.7%	0.8%	0.8%
IVOR GREENSTREET	5	2	20	27
	2.6%	3.3%	0.8%	1.0%

CANDIDATE MENTIONED * TONE (CANDIDATE) CROSS TABULATION				
CANDIDATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVOURABLE	NEUTRAL	TOTAL
KOFI AKPALOO	1	0	5	6
	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
DAVID APASIRA	1	3	7	11
	0.5%	5.0%	0.3%	0.4%
HENRY HERBERT LARTEY	1	1	4	6
	0.5%	1.7%	0.2%	0.2%
GENERAL	0	0	524	524
	0.0%	0.0%	20.4%	18.5%
NONE	0	0	188	188
	0.0%	0.0%	7.3%	6.7%
Total	196	60	2570	2826
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

MEDIA AND ETHICAL ISSUES CROSS TABULATION

Beyond the broad representations, the report put media coverage against ethical consideration to get some detailed insights. Adom FM and Peace FM were the only radio stations found to contain insults. In fact the results are equally split-50% for Adom FM and 50% for Peace FM. This observation, though troubling is not surprising. It has generally been known that the local radio stations are mostly prone to using insulting and intemperate language. It must be a cause for concern especially because a large section of Ghanaians like to tune in to the local language-speaking radio stations for their news. This report is a pivotal contribution because it presents scholarly evidence of the insulting language that has become characteristic of some local radio stations. The next ethical issue of concern was the introduction of opinion or the extent to which news stories were opinionated. The biggest culprit here was Adom FM, a Twi speaking radio station followed by Daily Graphic, Daily Guide and Peace FM. Daily Graphic's results are a bit surprising since they're a national and state owned newspaper but the growing thin line between opinion and news is an observable feature of Ghana's democracy. Adom FM had the highest instance of this case. If one listens to a typical news bulletin from the station, the extent of conflation between news and opinion is just so disturbing. The cases for incitement to violence were not a lot, a welcome development for the Ghanaian media. However, even for those that were recorded on Adom FM alone provided about 50% of such cases. Partisan bias is one of the worst form of ethical violations that can be found in election reporting. This is because it contributes to an uneven playing field for the various parties since it tends to present the news in such a way that furthers the partisan interests of one party over the other. Here, the biggest culprits are the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. This revelation is timely for the media in Ghana since the Daily Graphic is expected to be a national or state owned newspaper and not supposed to tilt towards any political party. However, as is often the case historically, these state owned media most often tend to tilt the way of government. The Daily Guide is the biggest private newspaper in Ghana but it does not really serve as an objective foil to the other partisan papers. This is because the paper has continuously taken an ideological bend in favour of the NPP. It is not only ideological imperatives that are informing the position of the Daily Guide. We only have to take a look at the ownership of the newspaper to get some clues and some answers. The owner of the paper is Freddy Blay, the current national chairman of the New Patriotic Party. This is enough to make any statement or offer explanations to the partisan biases of the paper. Once again, we find Adom FM in the same category with their partisan bias tilting towards the NPP. One of the other findings from the results is that GTV which has really not had

MEDIA AND GENDER SOURCE

Sourcing is such an important issue in electoral coverage. This research investigated the nature of the sources used in terms of gender relative to the media houses. Citi FM and Adom FM are the leaders here. The Daily Graphic doesn't perform well here. The third best performance comes from TV3 followed by GTV. It is rather unfortunate that the biggest private newspaper the Daily Guide does not do much in this respect. Also, one of the two biggest private English speaking radio stations Joy FM performs woefully here as well. As a leader in the news business, this calls for some attention and reform at such institutions. As has been noted over the years, female sources are disproportionately used compared to male sources, yet the diversity, balanced and difference in perspectives are needed in national discourse.

Awall (2015) states that the media landscape in Ghana is mainly dominated by males. He also notes that Ghana has fallen below the regional percentage of 40 women vis-a-vis 60 men who are in regular work within the newsroom. Secher (2010) also argues that as a result of the male-domination among top executives of media houses, it makes job progression gender-based promotions. She argues that as a result of this, women in media have to work harder than their male counterparts to be promoted while distinguishing themselves professionally to enable them to compete with their male counterparts for such position. (P, 32).

Starting a family becomes a daunting task for most female journalists as no media policy protects them from losing their jobs after maternity. Aside from that, the domestic responsibilities of women do not allow a woman to excel in a time-consuming profession like journalism. There is also the social construction of the low level of a woman's strength to chase hard stories or political stories hence they are relegated to the soft stories which editors believe may not require a lot of effort. In light of this, Awall (2015) calls for the need for women movements to mount pressure on owners and managers of the various media house to consider the plight of women journalist in the media space.

Table 19: Media * Gender of Source Cross Tabulation

GENDER OF SOURCE					
MEDIA	MALE	FEMALE	UNCLEAR	MIXED	
CITIFM	367	225	1	89	682
	24.1%	25.9%	20.0%	20.1%	24.1%
ADOMFM	369	204	2	164	739
	24.2%	23.5%	40.0%	38.1%	26.2%
DAILY GRAPHIC	102	50	0	47	199
	6.7%	5.8%	0.0%	10.9%	7.0%
DAILY GUIDE	116	48	0	10	174
	7.6%	5.5%	0.0%	2.3%	6.2%
MYJOYONLINE.COM	65	27	0	5	97
	4.3%	3.1%	0.0%	1.2%	3.4%
PEACEFMONLINE.COM	30	12	0	3	45
	2.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.7%	1.6%
GTV	265	119	2	25	411
	17.4%	13.7%	40.0%	5.8%	14.5%
TV3	208	183	0	88	479
	13.7%	21.1%	0.0%	20.0%	16.9%
Total	1522	868	5	431	2826
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

MEDIA AND GENDER OF NEWS REPORTER

One of the important things to observe is the gender of the reporters. This is because reporter background and gender can sometimes affect their understanding and treatment of stories. Also, it has generally been assumed that female reporters are not given the hard hitting beat of electoral reportage and often consigned to fluff and other so called less demanding beats. This is something that has always been of concern among observers, practitioners, scholars and civil society. The results here indicate that the station that had the highest amount of female reporters was Adom FM as well as Joy FM. This shows that as much as Adom FM was guilty of some of the less desirable aspects of news reportage they have not done badly at when it comes to gender. CITI FM has been the shining example because they have not been guilty of any of the ethical violations but have rather given a good account of themselves in the more desirable aspects of news reportage such as empowering females when it comes to election reporting by assigning an appreciable proportion of female reporters to the beat.

Table 20: Media * Gender of Reporter/News Reader Cross Tabulation

GENDER OF REPORTER /NEWS READER					
MEDIA	MALE	FEMALE	UNCLEAR	MIXED	
CITIFM	344	302	46	0	682
	24.1%	23.8%	29.1%	0.0%	24.1%
ADOMFM	420	309	25	0	739
	29.5%	24.4%	15.8%	0.0%	26.2%
DAILY GRAPHIC	144	55	0	0	199
	10.1%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%
DAILY GUIDE	109	65	0	0	174
	7.6%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	6.2%
MYJOYONLINE.COM	65	32	0	0	97
	4.6%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
PEACEFMONLINE.COM	30	15	0	0	45
	2.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%
GTV	185	200	26	0	411
	13.0%	15.8%	16.5%	0.0%	14.5%

GENDER OF REPORTER /NEWS READER					
MEDIA	MALE	FEMALE	UNCLEAR	MIXED	
TV3	128	290	61	0	479
	9.0%	22.9%	38.6%	0.0%	16.9%
Total	1425	1268	158	0	2826
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

MEDIA AND GENERIC FRAME TYPES

Generic frames are generated from previous media coverage of elections and sometimes modified to suit a particular research. In the cross tabs below we consider how various issues were covered in the election. Episodic frames presuppose that issues were covered as spot news with no in-depth reportage, background and context. Thematic frames are broader and much more comprehensive. Party politics issues were mostly thematically covered as were election logistics issues. This means that partisan issues were delved into much deeper as well as the larger issue regarding elections rules, procedures and preparations for the elections. Local government and election related issues are more episodic based meaning that these stories were reported as part of the snap news routine with little comprehensive dimensions. Disaster recorded as episodic while economic issues were thematic. By their very nature disaster require breaking news reportage with very little room for explanatory reporting. However economic issues were more thematic than episodic. Economic issues are of concern to everyone in society and need detailed reportage. Also normally budgetary and financial issues happen to come in complex format necessitating further exposition. Informal, labour, crime, education, housing and corruption issues were all thematic—these are all key sectors of the economy requiring necessary explanation.

Table 21: Major Topic of Coverage * Type of Generic Frame Cross Tabulation

MEDIA	EPISODIC	THEMATIC	TOTAL
PARTY POLITICS	87	30	117
	3.9%	4.1%	4.1%
ELECTION LOGISTICS	68	20	88
	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%
STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	68	10	78
	3.1%	1.6%	2.8%

MEDIA	EPISODIC	THEMATIC	TOTAL
ELECTIONS	1396	153	1549
	63.0%	25.0%	54.8%
DISASTER OR ACCIDENTS	33	8	41
	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%
ECONOMIC OR BUSINESS	32	18	50
	1.4%	2.9%	1.8%
INFORMAL SECTOR	0	1	1
	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
LABOUR	0	3	3
	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
CORRUPTION/SCANDALS/ CONTROVERCIES	40	110	150
	1.8%	18.0%	5.3%
CRIME/JUSTICE SYSTEM	0	1	1
	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
EDUCATION	120	66	186
	5.4%	10.8%	6.6%
HOUSING	31	10	41
	1.4%	1.6%	1.5%
SCIENCE	0	2	2
	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
DEVELOPMENT	29	5	34
	1.3%	0.8%	1.2%
ENVIRONMENT	5	1	6
	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
MEDIAI, ICT AND TECHNOLOGY	12	6	18
	0.5%	1.0%	0.6%
RELIGION	16	3	19
	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%
SOCIAL	3	0	3
	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%

MEDIA	EPISODIC	THEMATIC	TOTAL
ENTERTAINMENT/LIFESTYLE	1	2	3
	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
SECURITY	185	38	223
	8.4%	6.2%	7.9%
HEALTH	22	5	27
	1.0%	0.8%	1.0%
CONFLICT	4	7	11
	0.2%	1.1%	0.4%
HUMANITARIAN	5	3	8
	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%
WOMEN OR GENDER ISSUES	1	0	1
	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
CHILDREN	3	2	5
	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%
VULNERABLE	5	2	7
	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%
SPORTS	0	2	2
	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%
INFRASTRUCTURE	20	5	25
	0.9%	0.8%	0.9%
AGRICULTURE	4	1	5
	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
RAWLINGS DEATH COVERAGE	25	97	122
	1.1%	15.9%	4.3%
Total	2215	611	2826
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TYPES OF FRAME

The type of frame under this section investigated if coverage was horserace, strategy, issue-based, character and personality based. Horse race stories lacked depth. These were stories which simply focused on who is ahead and who is behind. This confirms the long held view by scholars that horse race reportage is not helpful for democratic discourse. The focus is narrow and does not help to educate citizens on the important issues of the day. Strategy frames also face the same problem. This calls for better political and election reporting to enable reporters to focus more on substantive issues rather on the very simplistic issues of competition and strategy. When we move to the issue based and policy frames, the results bare credence to the fact that such issues are more worthwhile as the cross tabs indicate these stories have more depth meaning they are expository and contribute more to the knowledge of citizens. It is also not surprising that the character based stories also seem to lack depth but this doesn't need to be the case. However Ghanaian news reportage on the personality of candidates focused on very narrow aspects of the candidates profile without the attempt to probe further with various linkages and interconnections to other aspects of the persons policy and possible governance positions. Again, more writing workshops and journalistic training is needed in long form reporting to make such reportage useful to voters.

Table 22: Type of Election Coverage *Depth of Stories Cross Tabulation

DEPTH OF STORIES			
MEDIA	INDEPTH	LACK OF DEPTH	TOTAL
HORSERACE	107	20	127
	3.9%	21.7%	4.5%
STRATEGY	623	22	645
	22.8%	23.9%	22.8%
ISSUE-BASED/POLICY	1795	45	1840
	65.7%	48.9%	65.1%
CHARACTER/PERSONALITY	209	5	214
	7.6%	5.4%	7.6%
Total	2734	92	2826
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

CONCLUSION

Several notable conclusions can be reached. First, that the Ghanaian media were largely ethical in their reportage but concerns still exist about the partisan bias of news reportage, the use of intemperate language as well as opinion-laced journalism. Although stories were balanced in terms of sources, there was a large number of them that were single sources. Journalists from certain media houses also had issues with non-sourced stories; this is worth noting. Since election coverage is within the realm of political journalism, the report also sought to unearth how committed articles were to election standards. The stories were largely professional although as much as 15.6% of them were sensational. This is worrying considering how even the least amount of sensationalism could disturb the peace and security of the nation including other potentially volatile effects.

Episodic frames were way higher than thematic frames revealing a focus on spot news reportage rather than long form reporting, something that needs to be addressed. Only 1.4 % percent of the stories were gender related revealing a huge focus on the horse race nature of reporting rather than attention being paid to issues of gender. This confirms perceptions that gender based reportage is still a problem during election coverage. The procedural aspect of the elections and issues surrounding voting dominated coverage rather than partisan politics. This might be because of the very unusual nature of the election—happening within the period of an unprecedented pandemic. Stories were also coded to ascertain whether they were dominated by horse race reporting, strategy, issue based or character portrayals. A key finding here was that issue based reportage dominated. When the data was coded strictly for which of party was sourced in the media, it is surprising to note that the NDC sources were used more than NPP sources. This is surprising because usually the incumbent party has more of its party sources normally dominate media coverage. However when we include government officials such as ministers, the NPP and government sources jump higher. From the strictly political point of view though it could mean that the NDC most likely had a much tighter and stronger campaign communication and media strategy than the NPP. In terms of the gendered nature of the sources, males dominated with about 60% presence.

Reportage was professional but sensational stories still constitute some of the most ethical infringements. It was also noted that local language speaking radio stations were likely to exaggerate, trivialize and misrepresent issues. CITI FM had the most in-depth stories compared to the rest of the media houses. It must be noted that only 1.4% of the stories were gender related. Partisan sources were used more than non-party related sources meaning the coverage was hyper political. In

addition, male sources were contacted more than female sources, meaning the diversity that females bring was further suppressed. Another issue of concern was that state media tended to cover the ruling party more. In linkage with this official or government sources were also depended on. This is something that the Ghanaian media takes for granted and which needs to be addressed. Adom FM had the highest ethical infringements. This may be a problem that local language radio stations might be facing. In addition opinionated stories are sometimes presented knowing or unknowingly as general straight news. All this could affect the quality of information.

Perhaps the whole scenario where owners of some media houses have political ties with the major political parties could explain the polarized and partisan nature of coverage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is the need for serious training and engagement of journalists to know how to distinguish between opinionated and straight news reportage.
- Journalists in local language radio stations need to be engaged in refresher courses to understand even the most basic of journalistic reportage.
- Perhaps one of the areas that needs to be seriously looked at is the pay and remuneration of journalists. Journalists' wages remain one of the worst in Ghana and this may explain some of the poor performance.
- Resources and equipment to perform their duties constitutes another important area of concern. Once these areas are looked into it is likely that media development and practice will see progress.
- Frequent monitoring of the media in between terms is also necessary instead of waiting until election period.
- Media houses must hire well qualified individuals in order to get the best of the best in the field.
- An important element of media reportage is the depth of coverage. The use of new media and other tools can help to engage in explanatory and in-depth reportage.
- Journalists must acquire higher education in order to engage in critical news reportage
- Gender sensitive reporting is one of the most immediate areas where training is needed
- In addition there should be serious training in political and election reportage.

Journalists need to be aware that the tone of their reportage alone can affect the nature of the news coverage.

- One of the key recommendations from this report is that journalists must engage in more specialists' reportage so that people with a long pedigree in particular areas are assigned to report and report well.
- The use of official sources can sometimes lead to narrow and homogeneity in reportage. Diversity of sourcing is recommended.

REFERENCES

- Afful, E. (2016). Journalism, Election Campaigns and Democracy in Ghana
- Akapule S.A (2020) Media Coverage of Female Parliamentary Candidates in Ghana: Case Study of the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times Newspapers (July 2016 –December 2016)
- Akoh, B., & Ahiabenu, K. (2012). A Journey Through 10 Countries: Online election coverage in Africa. *Journalism Practice*, 6(3), 349-365.
- Amanor-Ofori(2019) Content Analysis of www.myjoyonline.com And www.graphic.com.Gh Coverage Of The 2016 General Elections Of Ghana.
- Anderson, JA, Diabah, G., & Mensa, PA (2011). Powerful woman in powerless language: media misrepresentation of African women in politics (the case of Liberia). *ELSEVIER: Journal of Pragmatics*. 43(10), 2509-2518.
- Aryani, HS (2015). Centre for Democratic Development, (2005). A report on Media Coverage of Election 2004. What the Observers say, Accra CDD-Ghana and Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO).
- Asante, NA (2020) How free is Ghana's media, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism
- Awall, M., I. (2015). Beijing +20: Women, Media and Local Governance in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Nabil Centre for Collaborative Development Research & Advocacy.
- Boafo, K., S., T. (1988). Journalism Profession and Training in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Case Study of Ghana. *Africa Media Review* Vol. 2 No. 3 1988.
- Boafo-Arthur, K. (2007). Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State. In Boafo-Arthur, K. (Ed), *Ghana: One decade of the liberal state*. (Chapter 1: pp 1 -20). Zed Books.
- Centre for Democratic Development, (2005). A report on Media Coverage of Election 2004. What the Observers say, Accra CDD-Ghana and Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO).
- Cissel, M. (2012). Media Framing: a comparative content analysis of mainstream and alternative news coverage of Occupy Wall Street. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communication*. Vol. 3, No. 1.
- Daily Graphic, 'Correction', 13 September 2000, p. 16. 35.
- Daily Graphic, 25 September 2000, p. 11.
- David Nicolas Hopmann, Claes H de Vreese, Erik Albæk(2011) Incumbency bonus

in election news coverage explained: The logics of political power and the media market

Druckman, D. C. (2007). Framing Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 103-266.

E, Afful (2016) "Journalism, Election Campaigns and Democracy in Ghana"

E. Gyimah-Boadi, (1994), 'Ghana's uncertain political opening', *Journal of Democracy* 5 p. 79.

E. Gyimah-Boadi, 'Ghana: the challenges of consolidating democracy', in Richard Joseph (ed.), *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa* (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 1999), p. 174. 12. Ibid. pp. 174, 414.

Entman, R.M. (2004). *Projections of power: Framing news, public opinion and US foreign policy*. University of Chicago Press.

Gadzekpo, A. (2011). "Battling Old Ghosts in Gender and African Media Research". *African Communication Research*, Vol. 4. No 3. 399-410).

GeoPol (2017) *Ghana Media Measurement Report: Top TV, Radio, And Print Outlets In 2017*

George Sydney Abugri, 'The fifth chief', *Daily Graphic*, 18 August 2000, p. 7.

GF, Eshun (2018) "Promoting Free and Fair Elections in Ghana-A Comparative Study of the Media in the 2008 and 2016 Elections".

Ghana, T. G. (1992). *The Constitution of Ghana*. Accra: The Government of Ghana.

GMMP (2019). *Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*. London: World Association for Christian Communication.

Goodyear-Grant, E. (2013). *Gendered News: Media Coverage and Electoral Politics in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1719 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2863 (Online) Vol.3, No.2, 2013-39.

Gunther, R., & Mughan, A. (2000). *The political impact of the media: A reassessment. Democracy and the media: A comparative perspective*, 402-447.

Hasty, J. (2005). *The press and political culture in Ghana*. Bloomington: IN Indiana University Press.

IREX, (2012) *Media Sustainability Index*

Jonathan Temin and Daniel A. Smith (2002) "Media Matters: Evaluating the Role of the Media in Ghana's 2000 Elections"

Joseph R. A. Ayee, 'The December 1996 general elections in Ghana', *Electoral Studies* 16 (1997), pp. 416.

Joseph R. A. Ayee, 'The December 1996 general elections in Ghana', *Electoral Studies* 16 (1997), pp. 416–27.

K, Atengble (2014) *Social Media and Ghana's 2012 Election Petition*

Matthew Kainyah, 'Do our journalists understand their mission?' *Daily Graphic*, 27 July 2000, p. 7.

Media Coverage of the 2000 Election: A report on the media coverage of election 2000 (May 2000–January 2001) (Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, Accra, 2001). Media monitors were placed throughout the country and monitored coverage of the election; their reports were relayed to CDD-Ghana where they were aggregated, analyzed and published.

Mfwa (2019) *Critical Times for Press Freedom in Ghana as Violations near Alarming Proportions*

Mfwa Report, (2014) *Women's Participation in Media Discourse Dips Further*

Moyo, D. (2010). The new media as monitors of democracy: mobile phones and Zimbabwe's 2008 election. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa*, 29(Special Edition 1), 71-85.

National Media Commission (2020) *Medium Term Expenditure Framework (Mtef) For 2020-2023 Programme Based Budget Estimates For 2020*

National Media Commission (2020). *List of Authorised TV Broadcasting Stations in Ghana as at Second Quarter, 2020*

National Media Commission (2020). *List of Authorised Vhf-FM Radio Stations in Ghana as at Second Quarter, 2020*

Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* (Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, 1992). Michael Oquaye, 'Human rights and the 1996 elections in Ghana', in Joseph Ayee (ed.), *The 1996 General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana* (University of Ghana Department of Political Science, Legon, n.d.) p. 104.

SA, Akapule(2020) "Media Coverage Of Female Parliamentary Candidates In Ghana: Case Study Of The Daily Graphic And The Ghanaian Times Newspapers (July 2016 –December, 2016)"

Scheufele, D.A. & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication* 57, 9-20.

Secher, A. (2010). *To make a mark: A Qualitative Study of Female Journalist's Working Conditions in Ghana*. Stockholm University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMK).

Strömbäck, J. (2005). "In search of a standard: Four models of democracy and their normative implications for journalism". *Journalism Studies*, 6 (3), 331-345.

Temin, J., & Smith, D. A. (2002). Media matters: evaluating the role of the media in Ghana's 2000 Elections. *African Affairs*, 101(405), 585-605. doi:10.1093/afraf/101.405.585

Thomas Clausen, 'State-civil society relations in Ghana's Fourth Republic', in Ayee, *The 1996 General Elections*, p. 193.

Thomas Clausen, 'State-civil society relations in Ghana's Fourth Republic', in Ayee, *The 1996 General Elections*, p. 193.

UNDP (2015). *Localizing the MDGs for Effective Integrated Local Development: An Overview of Practices and Lessons Learned*. United Nations Development Program

