

**Mediating gendered politics: Ghanaian politicians and news  
discourse**

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the  
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Philosophy by Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor**

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## **Dedication**

To:

**God**, who proved faithful and in whose strength I soared;

**My father**, Moses Kwame Donkor who funded my dreams and realities with his support, service and money;

**My mother**, Nana Afia Sarpong who has been my spiritual matriarch and with her spirit, has watched the gates of my success;

**Family**, who believed and were not worth disappointing;

**Me**, who kept faith, remained strong and hopeful.

**Karen**, who carried me through with tact, empathy and skill, and to every **situation**, which pushed me forward or constrained me: I've got the lessons and I have grown. So, I am grateful. It could have been worse.

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## ABSTRACT

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Mediating gendered politics: Ghanaian politicians and news discourse

Research has shown that there are gendered differences in media coverage of political candidates. Kittilson and Fridkin (2008) have shown that women, irrespective of what countries they live in, tend to be systematically stereotyped. Female candidates receive less coverage and the content of the coverage often focuses on their age, style, appearance and family status (Ross, 2010). Over the past decades, several studies have also shown that because of the media's agenda-setting role, slanted coverage helps create and maintain barriers to the political aspirations of female electoral candidates (Bystrom & Dimitrova, 2014).

This research considers the extent to which these patterns and trends can be found in African contexts where rather less research has been undertaken on this particular set of mediated relations, taking a case study approach by focusing on the coverage of mixed gender election campaigns in Ghana. In particular, this study explores how the news media in Ghana frame women candidates and what women candidates and elected representatives say about their relationships with and portrayal by the media. Coverage of three election campaigns were analysed and generated a series of related, comparative datasets which focused on both national and party election campaigns, which took place between 2008 and 2011. Eighteen women candidates who stood in the 2012 parliamentary elections were also interviewed across all main parties. The methods of data analysis were a synthesis of content, frame and discourse. The analyses of both data (news stories and interviews) were framed and interrogated from a feminist perspective.

Findings from the analysis of 198 news items suggest that viable women<sup>1</sup> were covered more frequently than men in terms of visibility and less viable women trailed; in terms of tone, coverage tended to be generally more negative for some of the women than the men and it increased with the level of authority of the office. Coverage focused on the women's personal attributes, especially their familial relationships and novelty, and for the men, their professional attributes. Again, the focus of coverage was mainly, gendered and prejudicial against women, especially in terms of their character traits, familial relationship and professional (expertise) attributes. The interview findings, also, demonstrated that women were covered more negatively in sexualised and familial frames, compared to their male colleagues. Some women themselves seem to also have very negative attitudes towards the media. Largely, these findings corroborate many other studies on women candidates.

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<sup>1</sup> Viable women meaning that women candidates who are able to succeed. Used interchangeably with viable candidates.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**AFRC:** Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

**CPP:** Convention People's Party

**GMBS:** Global Media Baseline Study

**GNA:** Ghana News Agency

**GPBB:** Gender Protocol Baseline Barometer

**GSS:** Ghana Statistical Service

**MCE:** Municipal Chief Executive

**NDC:** National Democratic Congress

**NMC:** National Media Commission

**NPP:** New Patriotic Party

**PNDC:** Provisional National Defence Council **UGCC:** United Gold Coast Party

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

Politics and media are two sites in which women compete within a lot of socio-economic and cultural constraints. Compared to men, research has shown that women have difficulties in securing a candidacy status or in generally achieving their political aspirations, and they, also, experience challenges in accessing the media and receiving favourable coverage (Ross, 2002). The restrictions which seem to mediate women's successful participation in politics and their access to the media are, on one hand, as a result of notions around their unsuitability to politics because of gender stereotypes, and on the other, media's propensity to overlook them as equally important sources as men. First, women are heavily underrepresented in politics and are continuously required to make a case for their suitability in order to secure the bid to represent their parties as candidates. Second, women are generally also underrepresented in media content because they are less likely to be engaged by the media, and when they are visible, they are normally portrayed negatively (Gidengil & Everitt, 1999, 2000; Byerly, 2004). Both situations constrain women's successful participation in politics and in accessing the media. In this manner, how politics and media work, therefore pose as a double whammy to women's aspirations. This is because, to begin with, politics is a stage where its performers or actors rely on the media to shine: popularity is important to a successful political career in both party and national contexts, for which one is likely to achieve through the instrumentation of media platforms. Scholars such as Aalberg and Stromback (2010) admonished, it is crucial for politicians to remain visible in news media. In addition, being an important figure within a political party is an attraction for media, because of the possibility of privileged information from such a source.

Women are less likely to become these important figures in their parties or national context and they are also then, less likely, to receive the necessary media attention that builds successful political careers. This then works its way back into the opportunities that may (not) be available to them. For instance, prominent scholars, such as Ross (2002) have demonstrated that female politicians themselves recognise the importance of the media for their electoral viability. Against the backdrop that both political and media terrains pose limitations for women, in securing bids to represent their parties, and also attracting media attention, women walk a tightrope to become successful candidates and politicians. Political parties in their selection processes, especially for national offices consider the marketability of a candidate. The reverse is, also true that one is considered marketable or is with a higher electoral chance to represent a political party when that individual is visible in the media space. Within their parties, the less fortunate positions in accessing media attention normally regulate the impression around women's political marketability and vice versa. In addition to stereotypes of their unsuitability and inadequate skills for political office, women therefore are less likely to secure, even for a start, their party's bids because of media's failure to be their important allies and therefore, neglect their campaigns or candidatures in favour of men. As Kahn (1994) and Everitt (2003) noted, women's electoral success may be considerably influenced by the quantity and quality of coverage they receive as women.

Previous research has shown that the media treats female and male politicians differently. Often, females are likely to face sexism, objectification and stereotyping of different kinds. While these studies have contributed to our knowledge of the challenges female politicians face in elections, I have also had personal experience with this issue. In 2007, I contested and won an election to make me the first female elected president

of the University of Ghana's highest student government body: the Students' Representative Council. As an influential student union, both within the university and Ghana's wider socio-political landscape, the election had been historically fierce. Although, I won the election, which was closely fought between 10 males and me, I faced sexism, objectification and stereotyping during the election process. The compendium of existing literature and my personal experience in this race have combined to foster a palpable awareness in me concerning the challenges, especially, female politicians face in running for elected office in terms of their representation, and therefore substantiate a need for inquiries into this subject.

Over the past decades, several studies across the world have shown that, because of the media's agenda setting role, their slanted coverage serves as barriers to the political aspirations of female electoral candidates (Kahn, 1992). That the news media play a significant role in national discourse is without contest. A constellation of research studies suggests that, in general, the media differ in form, content, and manner in which male and female candidates are represented. From a sociological, communicative and political perspective, paying attention to such coverage is important because media depictions constitute part of the social construction of reality. Recent cross-national research by Kittilson & Fridkin (2008) has shown that women, irrespective of the countries in which they live, tend to be systematically stereotyped. Other studies also show that their coverage also differs in terms of issues. Differences in coverage therefore exist not only in terms of volume and the kind of coverage but, also, in terms of the type of issues associated with both genders. For instance, while male candidates have been associated with issues such as taxation and fiscal policy, female candidates have been tagged with issues that have to do with welfare. Comparatively, female

candidates are more likely to receive lesser amounts of coverage and may, also, be quoted less (Ross 2002, 2004). In addition, female candidates are more likely to receive less issue coverage and more focus on their personal attributes. Ross (2004) confirmed in her extensive research that media coverage of women tends to be gendered with women having to worry about their “outward appearance” (p. 64). In her work, she mentioned other factors affecting or present in female coverage, which differ from their male counterparts. For example, females have to be concerned about age, their appearance, marital and family status and judgements on their clothes or fashion style. Furthermore, some of the frames or ways in which female politicians have been represented in different parts of the world have included slighted petty or insignificant coverage, persistent marginalization and disparagement by the media (Devitt, 2002; Byerly & Ross, 2006) and undue criticism, mostly, based on their gender (Ross, 2002). In November 2010, Betty Mould Iddrisu, Ghanaian government official and former Attorney- General called the media’s attack on female politicians as “media terrorism” and an attack on “womanhood”. Such outburst from a high-ranking politician provides another reason for systematic and academic inquiry into media representation of women in Ghana.

The issue of female empowerment has had historical precedence globally with the UN’s launch of the global decade of women (in 1975) bringing this issue most prominently to worldwide attention (Geisler, 1994). In most African countries, the issues of equality between women and men have moved to the forefront of national life, especially, with the continuous entrenchment of a democratic culture since the early 1990s. Gender mainstreaming<sup>2</sup> has therefore become a common and popular goal of national policy,

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<sup>2</sup> Gender mainstreaming is an approach in promoting gender equality by assessing the different implications of any planned policy action including legislation and programmes for both women and men.

although it has mainly remained at just as a goal. However, the success (or not) of such aspirations is not dependent on the government alone but a cross section of relevant players including the media. Several scholars such as Assibey-Mensah (1998) and Donkor (2002) have addressed the issue of women's equality not just in the political realm, but also, in general areas such as education and national development. Inglehart, Norris & Welzel (2002) investigated the issue of women representation in local and national offices with cognisance of developing countries. More directly related to my proposed study, Kutufam, (2005), also, researched into coverage of women and found that coverage of women in Ghana at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is still biased and based on class differentiations. Using data from pilot studies in a cross-section of countries including Ghana, this research showed that cultural factors serve as one of the most prominent delimiting factors affecting women's opportunities in competitive elections. That these cultural factors are replicated in the media and reinforced in voters' minds is even more important to note. Several studies have implicated the media in the recycling of societal attitudes to women in their coverage. It is therefore important to study the various aspects of media. According to Baran and Davies (2012)

One can argue that the media is seen to perform some obvious functions such as inform the public, serve as a watchdog and fourth estate. The other side is the latent messages media transmit which are not so obvious and careful study needs to reveal, for instance, in the case of this research and many others about how media frames minorities and the disadvantage in society. (p. 178)

## **Overview of Ghana's Political and Media Structure, and Gender Norms**

### **Overview of the political system**

Ghana is a West African country located on the Gulf of Guinea and covers an area of 238,535 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana has a population of approximately 27 million (GSS, 2014), and within which, it is estimated that 90 different ethnic groups exist with 49 languages. The official language of Ghana, however is English but “local languages are widely spoken and used in national life and on audio-visual media” among the population (Gadzekpo, 2013, p. 372).

Ghana has enjoyed the practice of a multi-party democracy. However the Fourth Republic has witnessed an emergence of a de facto two-party state. Elections are held for the office of president and members of parliament every four years by a universal adult suffrage. An independent Electoral Commission of Ghana conducts elections. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana divides power among the Head of State (commander-in-chief of the Ghana Armed Forces), the Legislature (Parliament of Ghana), Cabinet Ministers, Council of State and a Judiciary that is independent among all the branches. Ghana's democracy is a mixture of Washington and Westminster democracy. The president is the executive president. MPs can also serve as ministers in the government.

Ghana has been touted as the cradle of democracy in the West African sub-region because it has since 1992 been able to hold six successful multiparty elections (the 7<sup>th</sup> would be in November, 2016) and in the event been able to transfer power from a legitimately elected government of one political party to another and avoided any form of conflict on a large scale, a phenomenon which has characterised elections in many

countries in Africa. This feat as many like to consider it earned the country a visit by the President of the United States, Barack Obama in 2009.

Ghana was the first country to gain independence in sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana declared independence from the British colonial power on March 6, 1957 and became a Republic on July 1, 1960. The first coup d'état happened in 1966 with the overthrow of the first president of Ghana, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah. Ghana's post-independence history and before the promulgation of the 1992 constitution has been characterised by alternating military interventions and very brief interludes of civilian governments. (Abdulai, 2009). There were presidential elections in 1969 and 1979.

Ghanaians enjoy such constitutional liberties such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Ghana has ratified many international human rights conventions including those on women and children. Ghanaians seem to enjoy civil liberties comparable to its neighbouring countries. However "few will disagree that 'the democratic development of Ghana is still very much work in progress', as a number of democratic deficits still persist at all levels of governance" (Abdulai, 2009, P. 2) . Ghana's elections, for instance, has been sometimes marred by spots of violence and poor civic education on the voting process and a cancerous political clientelism.

### **Women in Politics in Ghana**

Women constitute 51.2 percent of Ghana's total population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The global Gender Gap Report ranks Ghana 70<sup>th</sup> out of the 134 countries (Hausman, Tyson & Zahidi, 2011). Ghana has a unicameral legislature and parliamentarians are voted for a term of four years. There are 275 members (30 are

women) who each represent a single constituency. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic - 1992 Constitution, women have hardly exceeded 10% of the total membership of parliament. According to a report commissioned by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), majority of Ghanaian women vote in elections but are hardly members of political parties or political office holders (Manuh, IEA report, 2011).

At the moment on average, only 1 in 5 representatives in national legislatures are women. According to Women In Parliament (WIP) women are still very much alone in politics. The share of women in parliaments has steadily increased in the last 15 years. They were 13.1% in 2000 and they are now almost 22% (Rosenbluth, Kalla & Teele, WIP report, January 2015). In the December 2012 parliamentary elections, 134 women out of 1,332 men filed their nominations with the Electoral Commission to contest as parliamentarians representing a number of parties and some as independent candidates (Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU, 2013). Thirty women (10.91 % of 275) of the 134 aspirants won their seats. In 2004 and 2008, the total number of parliamentarians was 230. The number of women parliamentarians, at the time, was 25 and 20, respectively.

Women are seen to have different political aspirations and political usefulness. Women's participation in politics in Ghana seems to always be characterised by side-lined positions to concentrate on women and have proven to be tokenism. In political parties, their roles are mainly to take on the position/office of women's organiser in charge of mobilising women or treasurer position. Over the years, this role seems to just be a peck to get women to concentrate on their "constituency" and "practise" their passion for politics and talent for leadership with women only and to get off the backs of mainstream politics. In the national and local governance contexts, specialty roles are

given to women as they are appointed to gender committees or ministries deemed to be handling women's issues. Scholars such as Bawa and Sanyare (2013) confirmed this. According to them "women's political participation is conceptualized within the narrow confines of exercising voting privileges and more recently, in participating in the electioneering process; either as candidates to be elected into office or as members of campaign teams for election candidates. ... women's active participation in decision-making positions in political parties and Ghana's public sector is abysmal" (p. 284)

### **Overview of cultural and historical attitudes to gender in Ghana**

Women are characterised in ways in the society that portray that they are inherently more moral than men (Bawa and Sanyare, 2013). Such notions are prevalent in Ghana and instrumental in the election of women to public offices. Women are normally constructed and women themselves self-frame that they are more ethical than men. Scholars such as Goetz (2007) and Bawa and Sanyare (2013) have criticised campaigns by the international community working on advancing increased political participation for women based on notions that women are less corrupt than men. As Goetz (2007) argued, 'Women are seen as instruments to achieve a broader development goal, not welcomed to public office as a matter of their democratic and employment rights. The new emphasis on women's gender as a useful instrument for good governance is another example of the dangers of using the notion of 'women' as a single category in social analysis and in development policy' (p. 87).

Women in Ghana are mostly, therefore appended to political tickets as the moralists to the leading men and their role is to sanitise the office whiles the "men" do business as

usual and create the mess and loot. With these notions, women's competences are less stressed and as such perpetuate ideas around women not being fit for politics. Regrettably, Sossou's (2011) study on the perceptions of women in Ghana on the political participation of women confirmed that "politics is viewed by most men and women as the quintessential male sphere of action, one in which women are both unwelcome and ineffective" (P. 2), unless as moral appendages.

Ghana seems to be in many ways similar with the general gendered norms of other societies where men and their ideas dominate and the status of women is second to men even if not by legislative instruments. In the Ghanaian society, ethnic groups are either patrilineal or matrilineal. Matrilineal systems are considered to be more respectful of women in Ghana than patrilineal ones. They also seem to have women as important figures in traditional governance structures and in the family groups which apparently, is the evidence supporting the status of women and the perception around women in those societies. In most of these matrilineal systems women are queen mothers whereas in patrilineal ones, their traditional governance systems largely have men as Chiefs and priests. In matrilineal societies as well, the queen mother is instrumental in the approval processes in the selection of a chief or king. When the kingmakers in the family go through the process of selecting and vetting qualified candidates, the chosen candidate they decide on is presented to the queen mother for approval. The queen mother is said to be with the power to approve or disapprove their choice. Women are more involved, active and have a voice in their families and societies than those in patrilineal systems in Ghana. Despite the picture this diversity presents, there are broad commonalities in terms of values and gender norms that persist. Generally, as women, the larger experience of being subordinate to men and being restricted to their domestic

assignments is not lost on women from both societies. According to Bawa and Sanyare (2013),

Ghana appears to be gendered along the classic lines of the public and private spheres; the macro sector (representing the state and state-related politics and macro-economic policy planning) is perceived to be the domain of males while the micro and private spheres remain the preserve of women (p. 282)

Some scholars, especially post-colonial theorists have argued that gender relations in Africa were more respectable of women until the west invaded the continent (Oyewumi 2000; Graham, 1971; Steady 2007; Bawa & Sanayre, 2013). These scholars accused the patriarchal colonial establishment of stripping women of their roles and handed them over to men – “women who hitherto held important public positions” were thus disempowered as the structures of colonialism side-lined them. Bawa and Sanyare (2013) for instance alleged (hardly a new claim), “British colonial administrators, in particular, not only disregarded existing gender political arrangements where women occupied key public roles, they also conferred political power to native-males and eventually valued male labor higher, and in monetary terms than women’s labor” (p. 282). Even more strikingly, it thus appear that what many colonised countries in Africa including Ghana have inherited is a continuation of the capitalist patriarchal structures and laws which seems to be true considering the colonial legacy in Ghana (Graham, 1971; Steady, 2007).

## **Overview of the media structure**

The media in Ghana is acknowledged as a useful tool in furtherance of democratic principles and public policy making. Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees freedom of the press and independence of the media has been judged by several media performance monitoring organisations as one of the very few which are most free in Africa; Ghana ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> when it comes to Africa on the Freedom of the Press Index by Freedom House (2012). Ghana has a very vibrant media sector. There are minimum 10 dailies, which are regular in Ghana, and over a 1000 newspapers and magazines authorised by the National Media Commission which doubles as the custodian of media freedoms. With the deregulation of the airwaves in 1995-1996, the regulatory body for the broadcast division has licensed 30 TV stations and over 240 radio stations to go on air (The National Communications Authority, 2012). The media in Ghana is one of the freest in Africa (Freedom House, 2015). The 1992 constitution guarantees press freedom and independence of the media, however it wasn't until the year 2001 in August when the new government of the New Patriotic Party came into power that the criminal libel law was repealed and there was liberalisation of the media environment. According to Owusu (2013), "Ghana, probably experienced its best time in its constitutional history for freedom of the media" with the repeal of the criminal libel law. Before 1992, the media was constantly state manipulated especially the state-owned ones and there was somehow friction between the few private and state owned media. Even up until the year 2000, and since 2008, there has been media abuse by the government of the National Democratic Congress – which has sustained anti-democratic, authoritarian and anti-media impulses which had transformed itself from a military government to a civilian one. Since the year 2000, when the new government of

the New Patriotic Party liberalised the media environment, there has been a proliferation of media outlets both broadcast and press all over the country.

With Ghana's post-independence history especially after the 1992 Constitution, the media has increasingly played important roles in national life in safeguarding the constitution and the liberties it guarantees the people. However, Ghanaians have begun to question the ethical nature of the media since they have found many acts by the media irresponsible. The sensationalism of political news, the hollowness of its presentation, politically polarised nature (as labelled as "rented press" by former Ghanaian Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Martin Amidu) and its corruption. Many Ghanaians until the period of the *culture of silence* couldn't call into media stations to speak to government policies and actions, but now, it is the order of the day. Ghana enjoys a very participatory democracy on the airwaves with loads of political shows with phone-call in sessions. Ghanaians openly and publicly discuss issues without having to fear arrest. The culture of silence had dominated the 1980s under the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC, military junta) now the NDC (National Democratic Congress, civilian political party) due to its tight-fisted control of media either state or privately owned. Professor Albert Adu Boahen, politician and historian broke the 'culture of silence' when he delivered a lecture at the British Council hall in Accra in 1987 condemning it.

The media has been variously accused by sections of the populace to be one instrumental fanner of conflict if it were to happen because of their reportage. And some have called for regulation of media reportage in this manner. This is captured in the address of the chairman of the NMC speaking at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the repeal of the criminal Libel and Seditious Libel Laws (Amendment Act 2001). He

stated, “ The same society that voted for the freedoms of the media is speaking out loud today that journalists have to be held in check” (Owusu, 2012, p.7).

Summarily, the media in Ghana with the exception of the state-owned has a commercial focus. Media houses are generally un-aligned although there are some which are seriously aligned and so political allegiances are mostly subtly played out. With high illiteracy levels and a high number of a gullible population, many people take media reports as the gospel truth but sometimes, those reports which they normally agree with already, that notwithstanding, the Ghanaian media has an appreciable weight of credibility among the general population.

In the findings and discussion chapter, I explore how these variables (media structure, political parties and gender norms) may impact coverage of the candidates or explain the character of the media and their reports, mainly, surveying the role of gender within political news reporting alongside these other explanatory factors and deciphering how much of bias is shaped by political partiality more generally and how much by attitudes to gender.

## **Why Ghana?**

Literature on women in electoral politics, particularly in media portrayal of political women is regrettably scant in Ghana. A considerable number of studies and reports exist on the participation and representation of women politically (Manuh, 1991; Tsikata, 1999; Bawa & Sanyare, 2013) and economically (Allah-Mensah, 2004; Gedzi, 2014). A handful of others continue to emerge on women in media (Owusu & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2010; Gadzekpo, 2013; Ofori-Birikorang & Donkor, 2014). Commonly in the Ghanaian context, while there has been a stockpile of both scholarly and non-scholarly studies on gender and education (Owusu, 2013), gender and the economy (Darkwah, 2005) and gender and health (Ghana Aids Commission, 2005) for policy formulation processes and purposes, there is a dearth of research investigating gender and media, and gender and politics. Of these, particularly related to (a) the relationship of journalists and politicians (b) how media is affecting any given area of society and people and (c) media coverage of women and men politicians and political campaigns. Any existing electoral studies related to media coverage of political events or candidates are yet to take any shape or form.

While looking specifically at Ghana, media representation could play an important role in facilitating increased political representation for women. It also has global implications in helping to increase women's participation and representation in politics. Due to this important role, it is imperative that the study of specific national contexts, such as Ghana's, investigate barriers to this goal of increased women's political participation, one of which is gendered mediation. Research in this area is inevitably dominated by North America that has a long-standing democracy with several decades of scholarly work, interrogating the relationship between politicians and the media.

With this centuries-long of democracy comes an enormous amount of data on political campaigns spanning the years, coupled with a political system which has several tiers of governance, all of which are competitively contested in the media - be it mayoral, gubernatorial, senate or presidential level campaigns. It is therefore not surprising that they have amassed the wealth of knowledge inquiry in this area. Some studies also exist in European contexts, and others with emerging and appreciable focus on Australasia and Latin America. In Africa, countries like Rwanda and South Africa have attracted both local and foreign scholars for some form of study related to this subject due to their comparatively higher proportions of women in their parliaments than most countries in the African sub-region. However, even such research, including media monitoring studies, has heavily focused on women's political participation, and generally, women's portrayal in the media, rather than, specifically, political women's framing in the media. Again, the struggle to find literature of relevance to the national and the broader African context for this study reinforces the significance and timeliness of this research in adding to existing knowledge in this area. This study, therefore, will contribute to existing knowledge on how the media represent females within the political milieu in a part of the developing world, bearing in mind the unique context of Ghana, regarding demographic, cultural, media, political and gender specifics. Moreover, this research may be seen as original in offering an insight into the West African sub-region and the wider context of sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, existing research in this field have, mostly, focused on candidates of either a legislative or an executive campaign. Focus on legislative positions concerns the gubernatorial, senatorial, parliamentary, and mayoral, while in terms of executive campaigns, specific focus concerns presidential, vice presidential, prime ministerial, or party leadership positions. Most of these studies, also, by way of methods, have been content and frame analysed, very often qualitatively, either, by using newspapers or by

conducting interviews. This study is uniquely comprehensive as it a) combines the data sources of enquiry i.e. newspapers and interviews, and b) utilises a range of data analytical methods - content, frame and discourse. The study is also unique and wide-ranging as it, again, brings under its umbrella a consideration of both a) executive (party leadership, presidential and running mate) and b) legislative races in Ghana. Per the use of different cases, the study lends itself to comparing and contrasting within executive campaigns, and between those and the legislative campaign. Relevant to this study, scholars such as Jalalzai (2006), Murray (2010), and Meeks (2012) have observed differences in the likelihood of women gaining power, and they posited that the public and sections of them as delegates of political parties are more willing to consider women for less masculinised offices which normally tend to be legislative in nature rather than executive. Beyond reflecting on the chances of women as executive or legislative candidates, looking at this broad spectrum of cases would be informative in exploring, particularly, whether gender persisted as the major influence on coverage throughout the cases or to what extent it did, among other things.

The significance of this study derives not only from its originality, comprehensiveness, and extending the literature, but also, its potential for influence on public policy in Ghana where media at the moment is notoriously influential among a growing gullible, uneducated, and illiterate population. Past studies have shown that media agenda can influence (a) the general public (Oates, 2008) and (b) other media networks (Sikanku, 2011). Media coverage also affects how female politicians are viewed which can, in turn; affect the political fortunes of female candidates (Ross, 2002). This research topic is therefore important for these several other reasons, as it will help uncover various features in the Ghanaian media's coverage of female politicians. In the general scheme of things such outcomes could (i) form the basis for potential public policy decisions on gender

mainstreaming, (ii) help address issues of gender coverage in Ghana's media, (iii) serve as useful information for future female candidates and existing female politicians, and (iv) serve a useful resource for further study for scholars. I return to these issues in the conclusion.

### **Research Problematic**

As already mentioned, generally in the Ghanaian context, while there have been a variety of scholarly studies on the necessity for female education, employment, and poverty reduction, even mostly, from a public policy viewpoint, there is scant if not, almost, non-existent research in the area of gendered mediation of political women. This study will contribute to existing knowledge on how the media represent females within the political milieu in Ghana.

The primary research aim is therefore, to explore the relationship between women, politics, and media in the Ghanaian context. The objectives are first, through newspaper analysis, to unearth the various attributes or areas of focus in the Ghanaian news media's coverage of women and men candidates, in order to assess for gendered differences. Second, through interviews, to learn the perceptions of female politicians of how they are portrayed by the media, and lastly, to explore the (non-) alignment of women's perspectives and content of news stories.

Against the backdrop of contextual considerations of existing literature and the objectives of the research, the proposed study seeks to answer the main research question: How do the news media in Ghana frame women politicians? The aim is to contribute findings to

empirical knowledge in this area from a cultural and political media system very under-researched.

### **Overview of Methodology**

I followed both critical (feminist) and pragmatic paradigms in relation to methodological choices. It seemed imperative to have considered a critical paradigm in researching into how media influence women's experiences, by mirroring bias in society. This was because a critical perspective was effective in its use in exploring how knowledge is perceived and the power embedded in them and whose. Also, following a pragmatic intent was able to facilitate openness to multiplicity of perspectives (that of the women and media's), and even in methodological choices. The strategy for the research was exploratory and inductive to boost the chances of theory building around women's experiences and media in society. The methodological approach – mixed -methods -- for this study was equally complementary as it offered room to gain breadth (quantitative) and also understand in depth and richly; and more importantly, discover underlying meanings of the experiences of women politicians with the media (qualitative). The latter was important from a feminist goal as well.

Equally important in feminist methodological considerations for this study was the idea of empowering women by giving them voice; something which is normally denied them by society and media (Rakow and Wackwitz, 2004). Combining interviews with studying news content gave women the chance to share their experiences in their own voices and address how they perceived the media represented them in a profundity which news stories may not demonstrate. As the interview findings show, women had their own interpretation and sense to what they considered the dominant frames in which media

depicted them which were more negative than the findings from news content. As a feminist researcher, feminist methodological reflexions have been thus instructive to the conduct of this study. Much feminist research has largely had a qualitative methodological approach. They seem to be in sync with offering alternatives to quantitatively focused studies, which have normally been used to project patriarchal interests, and excluded women (Chimba, 2005). A growing number of feminist research uses mixed-methods (Ross & Comrie, 2012) in counting news features and looking at news discourse, thereby, synthesising data collection and mostly data analytical methods; both being my approach for this study.

This study combines analysis of newspaper content on and interviews with political women in Ghana. First, this study considers three different case studies of mixed-gender races in Ghana between 2008 and 2011, where women campaigned for their party's presidential and vice presidential nominations, and party leadership position. These cases were selected for their novelty and the sufficient amount of coverage given by the media, giving a statistically significant sample for analysis. The first case was the coverage of the vice presidential aspirants of The New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 2008. The second case was the coverage of the party leadership candidates of The Convention People's Party in 2011 and the third was coverage of the presidential primary candidates of the National Democratic Congress in 2011. Also, there were 18 women candidates of the December 2012 parliamentary election who were interviewed. Most studies of women, politics and media look at either how women are framed during election campaigns as incumbents or candidates, or how women are framed when they compete for the top job. However, like two of the cases under study, there are also a number of studies which look at Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin when they campaigned for their parties' presidential or vice-presidential nomination. As the three case studies considered in this study are all 'internal'

competitions and as I was in Ghana during the 2012 elections, I also looked at news coverage of women and men as candidates in the general election itself. News coverage of women and men candidates of the 2012 parliamentary election were gathered, but almost all the stories were very short profiles of women and were, mainly sponsored by governmental and non-governmental organisations to promote women. Without these profile stories and affirmative action gestures, there were a statistically insignificant number of stories for women and men to be analysed. This situation is a finding in itself that women candidates are less likely to be visible, if left to the media.

This study is based on the premise that there are age long gender stereotypes in society affecting women's acceptance in the political space that the media may mirror in their coverage of women. Given the informative and agenda-setting role of the media in our democratic processes and the coverage of gender stereotypes, how they cover candidates may inform the perspectives of voters in a way that may normally affect women candidates' viability. Hence, this study explores the ways in which sex-differentiated coverage may have taken place by analysing news stories on the female and male candidates, and also, by interviewing women for their perceptions on their media depiction.

I undertook the fieldwork phase in Ghana between September 19, 2012 and January 11, 2013, analysing newspaper articles from the archives of the Ghana News Agency (GNA) in Accra and conducting interviews with women politicians. Four newspapers were selected based on their reputation, circulation, readership, frequency, geographical focus and ownership, for analyses for potential gendered mediation, which were *The Daily Graphic*, *The Daily Guide*, *The Ghanaian Times* and *The Chronicle*. For the interview phase, the lists of parliamentary candidates for the 2012 elections were collected from the secretariat of the two main parties. I made an effort to contact all the women on the list through a variety of

ways. In the end, women candidates who were interviewed were those who responded to the invitation and were available for interviews. In all, I interviewed 18 women, representing both parties.

The analytical approach that I adopted borrowed from critical discourse, content and frame analyses and used a feminist perspective to both intensify and interrogate the gendered frames used in news discourse. In undertaking a frame analysis of the news stories, I identified which frames the media gave salience to. Frames were quantified in terms of frequency and then analysed in depth. In conducting a thematic frame analysis on the interviews, I also explored the frequency of themes and concepts mentioned by the interview subjects, in order to identify the most salient themes to most women, while also exploring those themes that were particular to each woman. A feminist frame analysis considers the ways in which focus of coverage was different for men and women. Broader framing theory considers which issues are made salient, and in the case of this study, feminist frame analysis considered a gendered salience of issues (Trimble, Sampert, Wagner, Raphael & Gerrits, 2012). The study was broadly framed and interpreted using a Critical feminist Analysis relative to the notion that systems of knowledge and power within a society are unequal and are produced and maintained through texts and interactions, and in the feminist viewpoint, in a way that privileges men against women (Lazar, 2005). I relied on concepts of gender stereotypes and patriarchy to provide explanation, facilitating the use of a feminist analysis in explaining any gendered power dynamic in the interactions of women and men in the Ghanaian cultural practice. Also the political economy of the media (Yates, 2004) was equally important in understanding media coverage of the women.

This study extends the literature on gendered mediation as it helps to explore the subject of study by answering the research questions in an alternative electoral system and a

range of political, media and cultural contexts. Furthermore, politics remains a gendered space with extreme presence and privileges for men (Ross, 2002; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Meeks, 2012). It is therefore imperative to constantly and continuously research into this space to track progress of women as many more enter and open this closed space. Research into mixed-gender campaigns at various levels, as this study has done, would offer more learning from and for gendered political landscape, and how gender is (may not be) changing or evolving.

### **Organisation of Thesis**

The study is composed of nine chapters including the “Introduction”. The second chapter is entitled “Media and politics”. In this chapter, I begin a discussion of the notions that underpin the media-politics relationship. I contend that media as a fourth estate and a watchdog influence their approach to the coverage of politics. I explore other notions around how the state and media used to work together and how this relationship has evolved over the years. Media models follow this, which explain the approaches and effects of the media-politics relationship. I argue that the different political systems inform the work of the media. I add that the commercial and public interests and the global goals of the media, if any, mediate the principles the particular media may subscribe to guide their work. Following from this, I explain how the media and politics relationship converges and diverges; that, politicians and journalists are locked in a complex set of transactions, and they both appear indispensable to each other. The chapter further discusses perspectives on media framing as a tool for telling political news and goes on to discuss the game and strategy frames in political news reporting.

The third chapter is entitled “Women, Media and Politics”. In this chapter, I begin by laying a theoretical framework in which to discuss the relationship between women, media and politics, outlining a feminist scope of concerns around gendered mediation. Gender stereotypes and their influence on both media and voters are tackled within this chapter. I discuss how gender stereotypes inform voters and media perceptions on traits and expertise women are deemed to have, and the issues that they are deemed to be interested in. The main argument is that there tends to be gendered media framing where media show bias against political women. I mention that stereotypes, depending on what is focused on, may either create or deny women opportunities in being elected to public offices. Subsequently, I present a discourse on the three main areas of feminist scholarly work on women’s (in)visiblity in the media, tone of their coverage and the areas of focus in their coverage by the media. Lastly, I discuss how women navigate the tightropes in their relationship with and their coverage by the media.

The fourth chapter of the study discusses the methodologies and methods used in the study. I explain my use of a mixed method’s approach to investigate the relationship between women, media, and politics in Ghana. In this chapter, I also mention my use of a synthesis of content, frame and discourse analyses in interrogating the data, and I show how I combined these methods on both newspaper and interview data. I offer a self-reflection section where I narrated the background events that influenced the choices I arrived at.

The four subsequent chapters constitute findings and discussions of the study. Chapters five, six, and seven discuss both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the news coverage of the three different campaigns that were considered. Chapter eight discusses findings on the interviews with women candidates. I present analysis of the newspaper findings along two areas that are the gendered differences in amount of coverage, and

areas of media focus (coverage on personal and professional attributes). The interview findings also present a thematic analysis of women's responses to perceptions around their portrayal. I argue that there is a set of competing factors mediating media framing of political women in Ghana and that gender is a complicit element.

The final chapter is the "Conclusion", which among other things provides a synthesis of the findings and discussions chapters. Apart from summing up the study, it also offers some reflections and thoughts around further research. As there seems to be a dearth of research on political communication in general in Ghana and specifically to the relationship between women, media, and politics, I hope this thesis offers a good introduction to this subject area, and inspires further work to be done to continue to shape the emerging knowledge of this relationship.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the media politics relationship informs each other.

## **Chapter II: Media and Politics**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this first literature review chapter is to give a broad background to news and politics, the body of work within which the study conducted, broadly, is situated. The main areas that are covered include the roles of the media in the state and how these roles are likely to impact the representation of politics in news. In addition, the linkages and areas of departure in the relationship of journalists and politicians are covered for understanding of effects on media coverage of politics, and understanding the relationship between journalists and politicians. Moreover, the chapter surveys arguments on the rationale for media framing and concludes by exploring some established frames used for covering politics as well as how these frames have been used mainly in election news coverage around the world.

### **Notions underpinning Media-Politics Relationship**

To begin with, certain notions underlie the media-politics relationship in a sense that the media are considered a “fourth estate” of the state and a “watchdog” over the branches of government. According to Louw (2010), by the media being a fourth estate, they assume for themselves the same authority as the other three branches of government which are the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, however, they are autonomous from the system of checks and balances practised within those three branches of government. This is because the media are supposed to enjoy freedom of the press without fear or favour. In addition, the media assume the position of a watchdog with ‘additional rights’, which they accord

themselves to oversee the works of everyone in the society except themselves, including holding governments to account. Lord Justice Leveson equally shares this opinion when at the opening of the Leveson Inquiry hearings on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (United Kingdom), he stated:

The press provides an essential check on all aspects of public life. That is why any failure within the media affects all of us. At the heart of this Inquiry, therefore, may be one simple question: who guards the guardians? (levesoninquiry.org.uk)

Curran (2000, p. 28) confirms Louw's assertion as he advocated that the media's role in the state should be to watch both public and private power, where public power may be considered to refer to the branches of government. However, as we see from the Leveson inquiry, the media often do not execute their assumed role with all diligence (levesoninquiry.org.uk). According to Louw (2010), the media's view of their role as fourth estate and watchdogs in the political processes impels their adversarial nature to politics as journalists assume that being adversarial, they are being effective watchdogs.

Related to the adversarial posture of journalists to politicians is the notion of "Junkyard Journalism". In 1998 and 2010, Schultz and Louw respectively described this notion as having a focus on negative news and the personal lives of politicians with the purpose of enraging audiences about the character of politicians. Surely, the practice of journalism is rather more diverse and varied than this very particular view. Just maybe, the media's idea, is to sell newspapers with the assumption that the public 'like' reading such material. Such coverage has been observed to deflect voters' attention from pertinent governing issues which the media should be encouraging politicians to tackle (Iyengar, Norpoth & Hahn., 2004). For instance in Ghana, development issues don't stay on the airwaves for long, as the media quickly lose interest and constantly chase after more spectacular news. In the

last three years, for instance, every quarter has been marked by corruption scandals involving government officials and their cronies, but the media hurriedly moved on from such stories and did not come back to them until another scandal came up, hardly, getting to the bottom of the issues than the mere coverage of them. The media's attention span seems, therefore, to be short. This has been one of the key criticisms against the Ghanaian media by its active citizen journalists and sections of the public. Journalists like to focus on scandals and also move on too quickly from one to the other which dilutes the quality of public education and also frustrate any accountability the public may want to get from the politicians as the media quickly discard issues.

Another notion that is believed to impact media-politics relationship at large, but more particularly media's representation of politics is the degree of commercialisation of many media organisations. The media have shifted gears from being mere purveyors of information to something which was not part of their primordial DNA that is to commercialise, in ways that have the potential to adulterate public interest. According to Negrine (2008), currently, the media are increasingly tilting towards commercialism, where having to keep market share requires an ability to produce entertaining stories and sometimes, sensational headlines (Shaefer, Weimann & Tsfati, 2008). This is a situation very much prevalent at its extremes in the American media. Schultz (1998) and Louw (2010) on their notion of "muckraking" intimated that there is a pursuit for spectacular news on politicians to catch mass audiences for commercial gains i.e., commercialism has become a compelling force behind the strategic coverage of politics (Patterson, 2000). This is also particularly true for Ghana's media landscape where with the comparative exception of the state-owned media houses, media budgets are heavily funded by advertising revenues, of which the share the media house attracts is determined by its audience share in the market. Broadcast and print media stations in Ghana, especially, in

their bid to secure huge advertising revenue to their side are all in a scramble for the most popular and loudest politicians and political commentators on their shows and airwaves, in order to attract a large audience following. In Ghana, these politicians have carved a niche for themselves in, especially, the political media landscape and many of them have attained political idol statuses among sections of the masses that see themselves as members of their fan club. This section of political celebrities are chased for the entertainment they bring to the audience who are, also, constantly tuning in to the frequencies or channels these groups of people might be hosted in the course of the day. In Ghana, radio, television and newspapers are mainly, about politics, and also, news seems to be synonymous to politics, indicating that politics has a huge space in Ghana's media and its icons are major agents to attract revenue to the print and broadcast stations because of their idol statuses and consequent audience following. Arguably, media organisations, like all businesses, have always been interested in profits but the issue now is the associated tabloidization and the badmouthing of political coverage to achieve that. This is where the media seem to cover up with an argument that it is in the public's interest (their watchdog function) to know about "sleaze" where they can show its existence and not that they (media) are equally driven by the desire for profit making, and so focus on scandals and sensationalism. The drive to stay in the market therefore in Louw's opinion has added to the media's character of being watchdogs, where their assumed role as watchdogs and as fourth estate conveniently lay before them the platforms to represent politics as an entertaining game with added commercial benefits, as the Ghanaian case suggests. Consequently, media's focus on political competition, character and conflicts in political news reporting (Iyengar et al., 2004; Tiffen, 2008; Darras, 2008; Aalberg, Strömback & de Vreese, 2012). In fact, Bennett and Serrin (2005) contended that most news organizations

in the U.S., as it is, increasingly also, in Ghana (Owusu, 2012) have reduced the democratic standards in their practice by being highly business driven.

Additionally, the media-politics relationship has been influenced by the dynamics of power which over the years has culminated in more independence for the media, i.e., being a fourth estate, although enjoying a watchdog role. Again, according to Negrine (2008), politics has adapted to every generation of media technology that has ever been introduced. As media landscape changes, politicians have had to keep up. But the relationships between journalists and politicians, and between media owners and political leaders have become more linked, although the situation potentially might be differently nuanced across different countries and in different parts of the world. First, politicians use newspapers, radio, television and the internet to reach their voters, and hardly, have any of the media types been entirely abandoned for a new generation. Thereby, the old media technologies linger on and are equally employed alongside newer forms by politicians (see also, Kuhn, 2007, p. 239). The evolutions of the different forms of media have been instructive therefore for politicians on how they approach their audience. In the second instance, the media seem to have largely moved away from the manipulation of political parties, and vice versa, especially in liberal democracies, and although media houses may still have some inclination towards certain political ideologies and follow the same line as government during some critical moments, it stems from, mostly, the political affiliation of their owners. For instance in Ghana, political parties do not necessarily own media houses but some members of political parties do, and some run them as appendages to their parties. Regardless, and unlike before, those in the media, largely, now decide which politician can walk into their studios and which story to cover (Negrine, 2008). In these respects: first, politics adapting to newer forms of media; and second, the gradual loss of control over media by political parties, Schudson (1999) suggested, they form some basis

for increased media independence which has correspondingly increased media's power of agenda-setting. In essence, the media has more room for manoeuvre by way of their increased independence to frame politics for what they believe politics is, whereas formerly, it was not entirely the case as political party funding and ownership of media organisations interfered with which opinions and programs media organisations held. Especially for Ghana, the situation is even more compelling when in 2001, the criminal libel law was repealed which led to a proliferation of media houses and a floodgate of opinions via the excuse of free speech. Nonetheless, both media and politics need each other and they are both controlling and complicit in their functions and relationship with each other for their survival. The ideas of media control and media complicity still arrive at the fact that media and politics would continue to work with each other, but there is always a battle for the agenda where sometimes media win and sometimes politicians win, but this battle is an on-going game, rather than continuous domination by one over the other. On the Ghanaian political media scene for instance, the revenues of political campaigns adverts seem to subtly instruct media houses to work with political parties. This may influence the agenda-setting role of the media and bring politicians in sharing this role. The Ghanaian media's penchant for sensational news also seem to make them susceptible to the manipulation of politicians, who know how to give the kind of news media would like to cover. To this end, at least in contemporary political media setting in Ghana and most likely, elsewhere, politicians and journalists seem to share the agenda-setting role.

Nevertheless, there are notions that enjoin the media to collaborate with the state. In 1991, Sabato identified the "Partisan Journalism" (pre-watchdog) as the first media-politics relationship where the media actually aligned themselves with political parties and ideologies to effect political changes in the system. A contemporary example would be the attitude of *The Sun*, which at a point backed Labour and then the Tories, in accordance with

the desires of Rupert Murdoch. Also, radio stations like *Radio Gold* in Ghana for the social democratic party and *Choice FM* for the liberal democrats in Ghana, consistent with the party affiliation of their owners.

Next, another concept that underpins media-politics relationship is what Schulz (1998) and Louw (2010) described as “Lapdog” which, they explained, fosters a non-partisan collaboration between journalists and politicians for the good of the state. This appears to correspond to the “Democratic Corporatist” model developed by Hallin and Mancini in 2003 where there were similar collaborations between the state and media for the good of the state. *The New Crusading Guide* Newspaper and *Peace FM* both in Ghana are examples of media outlets whose operations seem mainly un-aligned and still work collaboratively with political parties on both sides: where one is government in power and the other, the opposition or government in waiting.

### **Media Models: Approaches and Effects**

Oates (2008) in her multinational study proposed that it is useful to consider the relationship between media and politics separately or comparatively by looking at either what shapes media content or how an audience reacts to political news.

Hallin and Mancini (2003) realized in their comparative study that the world was moving along market and global lines and thus increasing the convergence of media systems in various countries, therefore, it was difficult to have a straightjacket model where specific models were for specific countries.

In Hallin and Mancini’s comparative study, they produced three media models based on North American and western European democracies. Apparently, their models were

informed by trends across countries, making it more reflective of actual media systems. Their three models are: 1) “Liberal” –media systems are commercially oriented and the state would normally not have any role, 2) “Democratic Corporatist” – a combination of support for commercial and political activities. Here, the media are not bound to the state, and 3) “Polarized Pluralist” –the media are highly politically oriented with strong state influence.

Hallin and Mancini’s (2003) models indicated that the level of state involvement (media’s commitment to state values) or degree of media’s commercialisation (media’s commitment to commercial values) guide media’s cooperation or otherwise with the state, as well as, their responsibilities to the civil society. These factors determine the relationship between reporters and politicians and ultimately, the tone and the latitude the media have in their representation of politics and politicians.

Furthermore, in 2005, Graber presented one model with four different ways in which media work. In her “mirror” model, the media reflect situations on the ground exactly. Her “organizational” model describes a situation where the media produce news as a result of pressures within the organisation and based on the goals of the organisation. Graber’s last two models on media’s approach to news are “political” and “professional”. In the political model, the news is influenced by the ideological inclinations of the journalists and the media organisations. With the professional model, professionals think news is for both citizens and consumers, and hence, tailor their writing in this regard to produce news. Perhaps, that news should just not be with political interest and always mediated by political actors. It is worth noting that in the first model which is “mirror”, for Graber to presuppose that journalists could present information just as it is, seems to hinge on a wrong assumption. In the first place, journalists don’t just point cameras at events and show exact content to the public. Even if they pointed cameras and covered extensively all

aspects of events, they edit the videos. Even with reporting, journalists run commentaries. These actions show media's interest in telling a certain narrative as they see fit. Again, for journalists who write, they just don't sit down to write. They decide how to construct the event for the audience's easy consumption, as Goffman (1974) and Mendelsohn (1993) established that journalists frame news to aid public comprehension. Even further, Graber's supposition appears unrealistic since no human institution can reach such perfection in how work is carried out.

Tuchman (1978) and Curran (2000) dispute notions that describe media in all positive terms. They stressed that what the media is defined by is not what it does. In addition, extensive research on media coverage has confirmed that media reportage is driven by commercial motivations and not necessarily the idea to represent issues for what they are (see, McChesney, 1999; Patterson, 2000; Paletz, 2005; Stromback and Dimitrova, 2006; Aalberg et al., 2012). Again, other studies have established that the media are interpretive of political events and politicians' actions (Kerbel, 1998; Lichter, Noyes and Kaid, 1999; Owen, 2002; Semetko and Schoenbach, 2003) and reporters make efforts to slant these issues (Tumber and Waisboard, 2004; Stanyer and Wring, 2004; Schudson, 2005; Canel and Sanders, 2006; Sanders, 2009). In confirmation also, Van Zoonen (2005) and Street (2011) stated that the media create narratives and represent issues in non-exact formats (see also, Farnsworth and Lichter, 2008).

However, the remainder of Graber's models; Organisational, Political and Professional, seem to resonate with work done by Oates (2008) where she suggested that the media organisation and the journalists themselves impact how news is produced (see also, Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Schiffer, 2008). It is likely that different colourisation can be given to the same story once different polar media cover it. Even, in places where it is expected that the variations may not be too wide, political mind-sets infused in editor's

minds can affect the output of a story or poll. For example, opinion polls conducted shortly after the second leaders' debates between PM Gordon Brown, MP David Cameron and Nick Clegg during the British general election in 2010 saw various media houses fronting their candidates ahead of the others (UK Polling Report). These are also repeated occurrences in Ghana, especially for the 2008 and 2012 elections where politically aligned think tanks and media stations were all calling polls in favour of their political parties. One would wonder whether the rules for scientific opinion polling were employed.

The four models Graber presented point to how the characteristics and unique predispositions of journalists and the media organisation affect political news, whereas, Hallin and Mancini's (2003) weigh the degree of state or commercial influence on the media and how they impact news contents.

### **The Convergence and Divergence of Media-Politics Relationship**

Clearly, politicians and journalists are locked in a complex set of transactions (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995). Reporters and politicians appear both indispensable to and at variance with each other. The objectives, practices and institutional needs of journalists and politicians are normally the source of collaboration, as well as, contentions in their relationship (Swanson, 1997; Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999). Even though the public is their common denominator, this very commonality can serve as a source of their contention as well. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) explained that journalists and politicians' target of the audience and their desire to maintain credibility in their eyes add to the wear and tear of their relationship. Normally, eyebrows are raised on the actions of politicians. However, in the structuralists' critique, they posit that the media also do not fully advance the highest tenets of democracy in market democracies as Lord Leveson queried in one of the

preceding paragraphs, asking the question of who watches over the media (See also McChesney, 1999; Curran, 2000; Sparks, 2000). Bennett and Serrin (2005) admitted that most news organisations in the U.S. have unimpressive democratic standards in their practice by being business driven.

To begin with, Swanson (1997) demonstrated an area of tension in the media-politics relationship where he posited that politicians look for ways in their relationship with the media to manipulate and thwart their interpretive efforts so as to gain direct access to the public. While the politicians are working on gaining access to the public, journalists insist on their independence by refusing to work with the exact information politicians have given them. According to Swanson the media launch their protests through interpretive styles of reporting on politicians, where reporters allocate more time for their own views than they give for politicians even when politicians deliver messages.

Research before and after Swanson's by Patterson in 1993 on the *New York Times*, and Kerbel in 1998 on both broadcast and cable network televisions confirmed the above assertion that reporters dictate the tone of news and voters hear them more often than the candidates. To Patterson (1993), the media could have left the interpretive bit to the audience as he captured,

the older, descriptive model of reporting was more modest in its aims' adding that 'the journalists (only) sought to tell the reader what had happened; the larger meaning was left for the audience to determine (p. 180).

Dornan and Pyman in 2001, in their study of election coverage of four newspapers in Toronto indicated a progressive inclination from descriptive reporting to more interpretive and analytical coverage. So did Owen (2002) acknowledge more reporter voices than those of politicians.

Farnsworth and Lichter (2008) in their research on sound bites and airtime of the U.S. general elections from 1988 to 2004 found from the trend that the average sound bite has decreased from 9.8 seconds in 1988 to 7.8 seconds in 2004. Lichter, Noyes, and Kaid (1999), also found in their study of negative news coverage in the 1996 campaign in the U.S. that campaign coverage time of 73 per cent was taken by journalists on the networks. In confirmation, De Vreese (2008) reported that journalists continuously make their interpretations and their experience of the political process the centre of their reporting of political issues rather than the candidates' actual words.

Moreover, both in 2007 and 2010 Salgado found that 20 per cent of all election news stories in daily newspapers in Portugal showed the potential for interpretive reporting. These trends established by the research conducted and presented here indicate that over time, little has changed. By media employing interpretive words the representation of politics is greatly affected.

According to Sanders (2009), journalists and politicians exercise different authority and have different motivations which inform their actions. She offered three broad perspectives on these differing motivations. First, she explained that, whereas, politicians have the power to regulate systems in the state, including the media, and is a source of crucial information for the media's operations, the media in turn have the ability to form an image of politics and highlight those issues in politics to direct public discourse. Second, politicians have one basic aim and that is to win elections and use power to deliver on their promises. However, the media are inspired by high commercial morals and the desire to be powerful. Third, Sanders explained that the information the media presented are guided by values within their practice and by guidelines defined by their sources, especially when it comes to particular information. With politics though, information delivered is often meant to influence the audience. The mutually dependent and equally conflicting

relationship is demonstrated in what Sanders (2009) described as “the tense tango” (p. 38). Here, the politician is a source of news for the media and the media are avenues for the politicians to make news; politicians are very calculating in their actions and the information they provide, whereas, the media run with speed to divulge information. Furthermore, politicians seek to control negative information and guide the positive to arrive at the information doorstep of the public. The media on the other hand seek to reveal information about politicians that they have access to and seem to be particularly interested in the negatives the politicians wish to hide. Moreover, politicians remain relatively steady in what they do and remaining consistent is a good image to carry, unlike the media, having to churn out original and fresh stories each time is key to attracting and keeping an audience share and remaining in business. This need to remain relevant is deemed to have increased the rate at which media churn out sensational headlines, and cover the game of politics and the appeal, rather than, the substance of policies (Farnsworth and Lichter, 2008), the former being a prominent characteristic of Ghanaian media (Owusu, 2012).

In a related development, Sanders explored more of the contrasting relationship between journalists and politicians. According to Sanders (2009), the politician aims to be visible, especially to the public – an indication of her/his clout, influence and relevance in the political system. As for the media practitioners, their public credibility comes from their ability to fiercely examine the actions of politicians. These contrasts in the relationship between journalists and politicians have contributed to interpretive journalism where journalists assume that politicians are insincere and that they need to probe their words and action for the truth they hardly tell (Semetko & Schoenback, 2003).

## **Media Framing as a Tool For Telling Political News**

It has been suggested that the media cover politics as they see fit (see, Graber, 2005) but Street (2011) holds a different view. Street (2011) stated,

When media report politics, they are telling stories about the world [and that] they are not just holding up a mirror to events or pointing a telescope at them'. [According to him, the media is guilty of the fact that they] '... do not simply describe what happens; [but] they create narratives with plots and actors. ....[and as story tellers], they recount the pursuit of political ambition, the rivalries and pacts, the human frailties and strengths' [and that the media also make] 'political careers sometimes assume epic form, ending in tragedy or triumph; (and) more often they take the guise of [a] soap opera (p. 49).

With these words, Street argued in no uncertain terms against the media, in respect of the fact that, the media are indeed interested in and conscious about framing politics. Conceivably, to Street (2011), the media cover politics in game, strategy and scandal frames. Van Zoonen (2005), corroborated that indeed political stories have narratives which govern how they are told, whether in fact or in fiction. Nonetheless, Van Zoonen believed that the narratives are essential for making sense of politics and that each narrative elucidates how politics works. In this regard, she confirmed the journalists' defence given by Goffman (1974) and Mendelsohn (1993), which argued that frames render news comprehensible to the audience. Given the assertions by Van Zoonen (2005) and Street (2011) regarding the statements that reporters are very motivated to frame politics as a game, then, it is likely that reporters, as critics have levelled against them, do this, because framing is considered as a tool for setting agenda and it points people in which directions to think, even though they (critics) likewise admit that people are likely to deconstruct news items differently (Gamson, 1992; Entman, 1993; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997).

Entman (1993) defines framing as “to select some aspects of perceived reality and make more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretations, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.”

Also, Cappella and Jamieson (1997, p. 38) using the analogy of how a photographer frames a picture, also added: “the act of framing determines what is included and excluded, what is salient and what is unimportant”, and that framing “focuses the viewer’s attention on its subjects in specific ways”, importing how journalists are likely to draw attention of the public to certain attributes of politicians when they frame them in news. In addition to the above definitions, Gamson (1992) also shared his view of frames which he described as the “central organising themes in news accounts”. In line with Gamson, Street (2011) argued in his second chapter that reporters give a context within which political events take place. Consequently, for journalists, to set political news within a context is to make conscious efforts to guide the audience as to how they may interpret the news or perceive those represented in news (Gamson, 1992; Entman, 1993; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). In essence, reporters use or omit keywords to point an audience to pay attention to certain aspects of the information being carried on politics and politicians. For instance, in 1997, Cappella and Jamieson pointed out that the strategic news frame is set against the backdrop that politicians are self-seeking and insincere individuals who portray to do well, but their motives are only to serve their political ends.

Aside the fact that frames set contexts within which news is likely to be interpreted, Pan and Kosicki (1993) thought of frames as tools employed in writing a news story. In agreement, Cappella and Jamieson (1997), in their chapter on “framing news”, made a statement to the effect: “news frames are those rhetorical and stylistic choices, reliably identified in news that alter the interpretations of the topics treated and are a consistent part of the news environment” (p. 40).

In other words, because frames can come in the form of the way a narrative is written, frames should therefore be considered as those patterns that have persistently characterised news items for a considerable period and for which there are verifiable consequences in order to minimise the possibilities of any differences in writing style from posing as a frame.

To this end, Cappella and Jamieson suggested three criteria by which a frame should be identified. First, they proposed that the conceptual and linguistic features of a frame should be recognised from the text and not through its effects; most probably because consumers' reception of frames is likely to be subjective. Second, that it should be widely acknowledged in journalistic circles, and third, it should have very reliable distinguishing features from others.

There is a large body of research which support claims that political processes are predominantly framed as a game (Mendelsohn, 1993; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Lawrence 2000; Iyengar et al., 2004; Shaefer et al., 2008; Tiffen, 2008; Darras, 2008; de Vreese and Elenbaas, 2008; Jackson, 2011; Aalberg et al, 2012). Cappella and Jamieson (1997) discovered that the strategy coverage is almost assuming a dominant frame for media coverage of politics where a politician's position on an issue is viewed as a strategic way of wanting a gain over his opponents, and also, of drawing a constituency to herself/himself and not that those opinions are what s(he) believes would serve the public good.

## **The Game and Strategy Frames in Political News Reporting**

Mainly, research has distinguished between the issue frame and the strategy frame (D'Angelo et al, 2005). Generically, politics and particularly elections have been covered on one hand in terms of issue frame, interchangeably used with policy and substantive frames, and on the other hand, as a game/horserace frame or strategy frame (Iyengar et al, 2004; Farnsworth and Lichter, 2008; De Vreese and Elenbaas, 2008; Scammell and Semetko, 2008; De Vreese, 2008; Aalberg et al., 2012). Invariably, political news either focuses on the issues (or so-called) issues of governance, public policy debates or a contest for power.

There appears to be conceptual and operational disagreements regarding the interchangeability of the concepts of game frame, horserace frame and the strategy frame. However, many of the literature have used these concepts without expressed distinctions of each other and have used one to mean the other. Scholars such as Joslyn (1984); Mendelsohn (1993); Patterson (1993); Cappella and Jamieson (1997); Valentino et al. (2001); and De Vreese and Elenbaas (2008) used for example the game, horserace and strategy frames interchangeably, to refer to a focus on poll ratings, and the strategies and tactics employed by politicians. According to Joslyn (1984), the horserace coverage is concerned with “who is ahead, who is behind, who is gaining, who is losing, what campaign strategy is being followed, and what the impact of campaign activities is on the candidate's chances of winning” (p. 133). Also, Mendelsohn's (1993) usage of the term horserace doesn't distinguish between the game and strategy frame either. According to Mendelsohn the horserace also referred to as game frame focuses on

first, a concern with polls, standing, momentum, and the prediction of winners; second, questions of strategy, insider information, backroom disputes, and hidden tactical motivations; and third, campaign events--the 'show'--and judgments about whether these events and performances were successful.

On the other hand, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) characterised the strategy frame to be inclusive of the game/horserace frames. They did as follows; (1) winning and losing as the central concern; (2) the language of wars, games, and competition; (3) a story with performers, critics, and audience (voters); (4) centrality of performance, style, and perception of the candidate; (5) heavy weighting of polls and the candidate's standing in them. What these scholars have portrayed is that they have similar conceptions of what the game, horserace or strategy frames are.

But, scholars such as Aalberg, Stromback and De Vreese (2012), distinguished between the game frame and strategy frame. They posited that the two frames are at best different dimensions of a larger frame which they coined as the strategic game frame. Aalberg and his colleagues (2012) use the game frame to comprise the sub frames of opinion polling, language of sports and war, winners and losers and interest in election outcomes. On the other hand, the strategy frame according to them indicated an interest to the approach, style, personality, actions and motives of the candidate, as well as, strategies and tactics of the campaign.

In brief, scholars such as, Joslyn (1984), Mendelsohn (1993), Cappella and Jamieson (1997), Lawrence (2000), De Vreese and Elenbaas (2008), believe the horserace/game frame or the strategy frame is constitutive of polls rating and the tactics employed by politicians in their campaigns, whereas, Aalberg and his colleagues define the game frame to be based on polls and without the tactics and the strategies employed by politicians, and that the tactics and strategies politicians adopt can be separately defined as the strategy frame.

What is interesting to note, however, is that, polling can be done on the strategies employed by the candidates in elections, hence, the strategy frame could be considered under the game frame. It appears therefore that strategy could be found in the game of politics; hence a strategy frame considered under a game frame should not be that difficult to conceptualise. It would as well mean that the distinction between the game and strategy frames might not, likely, have a big conceptual gap contrary to what Aalberg and friends claim. In view of this, it is likely that these scholars, (Joslyn, 1984; Mendelsohn, 1993; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Lawrence, 2000; De Vreese and Elenbaas, 2008), who are not particular to differentiate between the two frames might have thought along these lines.

On the other hand, the distinction between the game and strategy frame might, as well, be in the right direction as some scholars have identified that each frame, either, the game or the strategy is likely to yield different effects. Iyengar, Norporth and Hahn (2004) subsequently, argued that the game frame coverage is likely to spur on political engagement of citizens since it makes politics exciting, and consequently, attracts public attention, but they admitted that it has the potential to take attention off the substance of issues. Other scholars such as Cappella and Jamieson (1997) confirmed the latter but argued otherwise on the former point of Iyengar and his colleagues. They contended that the strategy frame which portrayed political parties and politicians as entities motivated by their own selfish interest, was rather likely to stimulate cynicism and disengagement from politics. Also, Cappella and Jamieson stated that the game frame indeed takes away attention from substantive political issues as well as inhibit the making of a politically educated population. According to Mendelsohn (1993),

the fact that the press favours personality over issues, events over content, official positions over popular grievances, the atypical and sensational over the modal and systemic, is a conscious choice made by news organizations to withhold from citizens the informational and ideological tools which they need to question elite consensus.

In essence, by their strategic coverage, reporters deny voters, the political empowerment and the right information to confront politicians whose decisions they are not pleased with. In addition, McChesney (1999) stipulated that media game framing inspired by commercialism, in most cases, is likely to influence political apathy. Moreover, Esser, Stromback and De Vreese (2011) added that media's indulgence in excessive "watchdogism" is likely to lead to increased negativity and alienates voters from the political system, although, for Valentino, Beckmann and Buhr (2001) the game or horse race frame doesn't necessarily yield negative response to politics.

## **Conclusion**

With respect to the explanations given above, about the mutually dependent, as well as, conflicting relationship between media and politics, it is evident that, politicians' ultimate aim is to influence the public's view of them with direct messages. However, with the intention of exposing the intentions of politicians, journalists, on the other hand, seize every opportunity to inhibit the direct flow of messages from politicians to the public by employing interpretive styles of reporting accompanied by dramatic slants. Whatever the tensions in the relationship between media and politics, politicians need the channels of news controlled by the mass media to reach their prized audience and the media need news from politicians for their content. Consequently, politicians have to meet the requirements of formats and styles for news given to them by the mass media while on the other hand, the mass media must manage their relationship with politicians to gain access to authoritative sources (politicians and their employees) that provide information and give comments on pertinent issues. The roles and interests underpinning the work of

politicians and journalists will constantly impact the content of news and the image of politics.

In the next chapter, I discuss the relationship between women, media and politics. It constitutes the primary thesis and theoretical framework of this research.

## **Chapter III: Women, Media and Politics**

### **Introduction**

Media's coverage is one way, by which, they offer interpretation and evaluation of political events and their actors. Through this elucidation and valuation the media offer, we can also learn about society and the prevailing culture and norms. Consequently, through media coverage, we learn about (a) political processes, (b) their players and (c) the society. Media coverage of political events involving women therefore, poses an interesting site of learning and to exploring women's treatment, as well as reviewing their status in society.

Earlier scholarship such as Cantor's (1978) confirmed that the way and manner in which women were portrayed in the United States shaped the outlook of the society towards women and such portrayal also revealed their status. She argued "that the portrayal of women and girls through the media is both a dynamic force influencing attitudes about women and a reflection of the position of women in American Society" (p. 78). Also, two decades later, Gandy (1998) alluded to cognitive research and demonstrated that the media were indeed instrumental in the formation of audience beliefs and opinions. He stated that audiences integrated the suggestions of the media into their cognitive structures. Other scholars ratified the views of earlier scholars, and added that, for instance in political periods, voters learnt about politics in news (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997; Gunther & Mughan, 2000): by extension, voters learnt about political actors including women in news, and according to Khan (1992), voters were more likely to apply such information in voting. Scholars such as Byerly and Ross (2006) persisted in the conviction of earlier scholarship and also argued, "the ways in which women are represented in news media

send important messages to the viewing, listening, and reading publics about women's place, women's role, and women's lives" (p. 40).

It suffices to say that across four decades of research, the news media is shown to be influential in shaping societal perceptions and reflecting same, amidst guiding voters to arrive at their decisions, choices and preferences (Cantor, 1978; Kahn, 1992; Gandy, 1998 Gunther & Mughan, 2000; Graber, 2009; Meeks & Domke, 2011).

The instrumental ability of the media in carving, reflecting and affecting the image of women in society underlies the need to study media coverage. For instance, Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross (1996) have pressed that scholars should consider "the manner in which the mediated presentation of politics is gendered" (p. 103) as media mirrored society (Graber, 2009) and would potentially reflect the gendered biases pertaining to society. In this regard, some scholars have confirmed that indeed stereotypes against women politicians in the society are emphasized in the media's coverage of them (Witt, Paget & Mathews, 1994; Braden, 1996). Hence, aside the role of the media in constructing social reality, scholars confirmed that the media potentially reflected same, and as a result, consider it important to study this site. The media themselves acknowledged the potential presence of reflecting bias in their coverage. In the 1997 study by Norris, she reported that according to some editors "the media functions as a "mirror of society" (and according to them) few women leaders are featured on the front pages because there are few women in power" (p. 152). This perspective portrays that the media have got a stake in our lives, and according to Baran and Davis (2012) in our democracy as well, and their posture in covering political news is therefore instructive and "their resolution is no less significant" (p. 97). It is therefore important to continuously study and track media coverage in aid of feminist activism towards achieving parity in political participation of women, as media representation of women could affect their political representation. In fact, Sreberny-

Mohammadi and Ross (1996) urged scholars to analyse both and suggested, “the double gendering at work – in both the gendered nature of representational politics as well as the gendered nature of media coverage – must be analysed together” (p. 103).

In this chapter - being the second and the last of literature review, the relationship between media and society would be explored, and how such interaction affects the media representation of political actors. In this regard, the chapter discusses literature and issues around gender stereotypes in society, their influences on media and the influence of these stereotypes on one hand, and the media on the other, and both collectively, on voters via other studies that have researched into potential effects of the interplay of stereotypes, media and voters. The chapter also explores and discusses media bias and in ways, and otherwise, they have reflected in the coverage of political women, exploring gendered media framing among others. Also, literature zones in on how the media depicts political women, covering the quantity of coverage - (in)visibility of women; and the areas of focus in media’s coverage of female and male politicians, mentioning (non-)issue coverage and a focus on the private personas of women to their public: familial relationship, looks and clothing to the detriment of their academic and political qualifications. There is, also, a discussion on gendered traits and issue association in media coverage of female and male candidates. Along these sections, the effects of coverage on women’s campaigns are explored. Lastly, the work of scholars around how women are able to navigate the tightropes on their coverage and depiction are presented.

### **Gender Stereotypes, Media, and Voters**

A grammar of frustration and disbelief underpinned feminist scholars’ writings, regarding progress made on gendered mediation. According to Trimble and Treiberg (2010),

“mediation is gendered when the news reflects sex-based norms and assumptions by, for instance, using masculine metaphors to describe political events or by highlighting the sex or personal life of a political actor despite its irrelevance to the issue at hand” (p. 117). Ross in an earlier study (2004) had suggested that such coverage trivialised the ambitions of political women. Research has indicated that media depictions of political women, mostly, have a personal focus and that they centre on the women’s looks, their marital status and their familial roles (Ross, 2002; Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003; Bystrom, 2006; 2010). Particularly, Trimble and Treiberg (2010) had considered more worrying “the most overt type of gendered mediation (which) makes explicit reference to a politician’s sex, often suggesting it is as important as her political accomplishments” (p. 117). Accordingly, when women have received less issue-related coverage, the impression seems to be created that what the media focuses on instead: in terms of their appearance, and other trivial concerns constitute the ‘credentials’ of women for political office.

Broadly, feminist concerns with the media have ranged from first, the persistent relative absence/invisibility of women; Second, their portrayal in news coverage; and third, the underrepresentation of female journalists in some news genre. Rhode (1995) has expanded on these concerns and added that women’s issues are also underrepresented in mainstream media. She stated that, again, women themselves are underrepresented as staff or sources and even their voices as quotes or references. Such generally poor treatment of women has rippled to political coverage of women’s campaigns as feminist media studies show.

According to Trimble, Sampert, Wagner, Raphael and Gerrit (2012), the concept of mediation presents barriers to women’s political participation. Research has contended that these challenges are founded in gender stereotypes. On one hand of women’s challenges are voters’ perceptions, and on the other, is media framing; that, gender

stereotypes are likely to influence both voters and media to potentially abate women's political aspirations. According to Norris (1997), "Stereotyping means describing individuals positively or negatively on the basis of characteristics seen as common to their group" (p. 153). For instance, voters and media alike are regarded to hold stereotypically gendered opinions about women which are informed by age long perspectives on women and men's roles in the private and public spheres, as well as, gendered binaries of emotional and rational. On stereotypes, later study by Ross (2002) criticised that although inequalities clearly existed, "the insistence on using dichotomous sets such as public-private, rational-emotional to exemplify the masculine-feminine divide is forever to seek differences rather than similarities, continuously to set up conflicts rather than find resolutions" (p. 13). To this end, gendered perceptions and mediation of political candidates may be disingenuous to women whose typical traits are considered as outside of the masculine-public terrain of politics.

First, a cross section of past studies found that not only do voters hold stereotypical opinions about women and men, but also they use gender stereotypes in assessing women and men candidates (Sapiro 1982; Leeper 1991; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a; Burrell 1994; Kahn 1994; Norris & Lovenduski 1995). Second, these same stereotypes have been known to be circulated by the media, which have given credence to feminist concerns that the stories of reporters are as much a reflection of their own beliefs as they are of the society they inhabit (Anderson, Diabah & Mensah, 2011). Bell (1991) made a case for this plausibility earlier, when he noted that not only is media coverage wrought on news values, but also, it is as much fashioned out on "preconceptions about the social group ... from which the news actors come" (p. 158). It is therefore to be expected that the fact that journalists are within cultural norms, they are equally exposed to view female and male with similar prejudices and presumptions of society which may subsequently shape

coverage of women and men. The implication is that “reporting which relies upon group stereotypes may present inaccurate portrayal of individual leaders, since it ascribes characteristics to them which may not be true” (Norris, 1997, p.153), entirely true, slanted or prejudicial. Thus, Norris cautioned that although “we all have some views about groups ... we lack perfect information about individuals.” Regarding media coverage of women therefore, “these preconceptions are likely to reflect stereotypical conceptions of sex roles” (Gidengil and Everitt, 2000, p.110) and where sex roles are focused on in media coverage, they would less likely inure to women’s political benefit. This is because the feminine and the private sphere are not celebrated attributes in politics. Also and evidently, the effect of a gendered opinion and coverage has underpinned how women have been perceived as viable or not, which has held repercussions (mainly negative) for their political success.

Consequently, through the stereotypical assessments, voters and sometimes media perceive women and men bring different qualities to the political table (Murray, 2010). According to Huddy and Terkildsen (2006), an archetypal woman was viewed as warm, gentle, kind, and passive, whereas a typical man was seen as tough, aggressive, and assertive. Dolan (2004) described similar merits for women and men as well, and stated that women were seen as with these qualities: warmth, expressiveness, gentleness, compassion, and emotion, and men were viewed as strong, competent, rational, aggressive, and knowledgeable. As a result, it is not surprising that voters expect each gender to act gender appropriate and do penalise for any gender incongruence on the part of candidates during the political process. Also, when the media highlights issues dubbed women’s issues, women get to be portrayed more positively to voters. The latter is the case because it is assumed that women are also best suited in handling those women’s issues. Therefore, ingrained in gender stereotyping are perceptions of traits women are deemed to possess and their correlation to the skills and competences women are assumed to have.

It is obvious that by these earlier traits mentioned (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, b; Dolan, 2004), women and men are recognised with strengths, but different ones, and these qualities seem neither negative for women nor positive for men (Murray, 2010), except for how they are applied by the media and voters. According to Murray (2010), women are mostly disadvantaged because the characteristic traits of women do not work well for them in the political field. Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross (1996) offered an illumination and posited that this is because “the way in which politics is reported is significantly determined by an orientation which privileges the practice of politics as an essentially male pursuit” (p. 112). (See also, Kahn, 1996; Lithgow, 2000; Gidengil and Everitt, 2000; Everitt, 2005)

However in some instances, scholars have found that traits associated with women have worked to the advantage and promotion of some of their candidatures. In the experiments of Iyengar, Valentino, Ansolabehere & Simon (1997), they found that “female candidates do best when their advertising exposes voters to the sponsor’s stereotypical strengths. .... (and that) when voters see female candidates promoting messages which resonate with their pre-existing beliefs about the strengths of women, the effects can be even larger” (p. 91). Implying that women who seek to move out of the ‘feminine’ stereotypical strength and issues domain are less likely to be viewed favourably, as it has been dominantly the case in the US in the studies focusing on the portrayal of Hillary Clinton (McKinnon and Chaney, 1999; Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Bystrom, 2010; Bystrom & Dimitrova, 2013; Meeks 2014). Based on the findings of Iyengar et. al (1997), some scholars have advised that given the incessant media emphasis on feminine traits and feminine issues to subvert female candidates viability (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Kahn, 1994a), women political candidates may take advantage to point attention to the positive attributes of warmth and honesty to spur favourable responses to them (Kahn 1994b; Bystrom, 2005). Other scholars have

suggested also that because the media is a powerful tool in shaping public standpoints about women's role in society, women should thus be equipped to be able to utilise these platforms (Byerly 1995; Byerly and Ross, 2006). For instance, Adams' (2010) study saw candidate Sirleaf Johnson self-framing by drawing on her stereotypical feminine qualities of warmth and compassion to portray herself as the right candidate for war torn Liberia. Also, Sirleaf Johnson framed that by being mother and grandmother, she was capable of tending compassionately to the fragility of the nation (Adams, 2010). Earlier, Kahn (1996) had observed that women were appreciated as better able to uphold integrity in public office. Sirleaf, also self-framed that being a woman, she was sincere to fight corruption; depictions and claims which echoed with the aspirations and expectations of Liberians (Adams, 2010). The advantages of emphasizing feminine traits and issues in some instances would not necessarily exclude the media of gender bias (Conroy, 2015) as coverage still involves stereotypes and bias being emphasized anyway.

Therefore, regardless of alluding to feminine traits for some amount of gain where possible, electoral losses are potentially probable because politics takes on a masculine posture and appreciates male values and traits (Ross 2002; Dolan, 2004; Anderson, Diabah & Mensah, 2011). Consequently, especially for women who are contesting for higher-level offices, breaking the barriers could be even more problematic (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010). Murray (2010) had suggested as a result "the male norms which underpin executive office make it very difficult for women to succeed in executive elections" and that "the women who have succeeded have often benefited from a particular set of circumstances, such as a political crisis which have made qualities perceived as "feminine" (like honesty and renewal) more attractive to the electorate" (p. 8) as we see in the cases of Sirleaf Johnson and Michelle Bachelet (Adams 2010; Franceschet & Thomas, 2010; Jalalzai & Krook, 2010). Again, coupled with the dominance of subjects such as the economy, fiscal policy, arms

control and wars in the politics of especially developed western nations, women in western nations may still struggle to effectively compete. This may be as a result of being both gender-incongruent and politically incongruent (McGinley, 2009; Meeks & Domke, 2011). Therefore, the gains of 'feminising' are very much contextualized and very much restrictive.

Kahn (1994a) has recommended that women could invalidate stereotypes on their abilities by taking jobs tipped as men, while she blamed the media as a source for blocking women's rise to political offices. Kahn's position seems not to address the fact that women have taken on jobs considered masculine and still continue to compete for it; however, the gains being made in doing away with stereotypes has rather been small and slow.

### **Gendered Media Framing: Media Bias Against Political Women**

Several scholars have noted that women's electoral success is considerably determined by the quantity and quality of coverage media gives women (Kahn, 1994; Gidengil & Everitt, 1999, 2000; Ross, 1995b; 2002; Everitt 2003; Trimble, Sampert, Wagner et al, 2012; Dan & Iorgoveanu, 2013).

Just like voters, the media reinforce traditional stereotypes in a number of ways. One of such ways is in the amount of coverage women and men candidates receive and another is in gender framing (Gidengil and Everitt, 1999, 2000; Trimble et al, 2012). Media coverage of female politicians has been based on sex-based norms (Conroy, 2015). According to Trimble and Treiberg (2010), gendered framing even goes beyond the sex of political actors and encapsulates a focus on "gender specific attributes and behaviours, including stereotypically feminine roles, characteristics, and bodily attributes" (p. 117). Gender

framing therefore seems to reflect all the differences in coverage related to the gender and sex of politicians. Consequently, media coverage of political women has involved sex differences in amount of coverage: where women are largely less represented; sex differences in tone of coverage: where women are generally negatively evaluated; and sex differences in type of coverage: where women mostly receive less issue- coverage but more coverage have focused on the personal and the feminine rather than professional, and even when coverage focused on issues, there were attempts to keep them in feminine domains (Conroy, 2015).

Consistent with the above, feminist criticisms of political news have recognized two broad areas where women are disadvantaged. Feminist researchers have identified that women are largely absent in serious news content, and when they are visible they are also misrepresented (Byerly, 2004). These two main issues have translated into the problems facing political women. Similarly, they are generally covered less and are also portrayed, mostly differently and negatively, from their male counterparts. Atkeson and Krebs (2008) also categorised the areas of research focus on media treatment of female and male candidates and stated that, scholars have focused on four areas encompassing: “volume of coverage, candidates’ viability, candidates’ issues, and candidates’ traits” (p. 240). The last three could be considered to relate to the sex differences in media’s tone of coverage and areas of focus.

### **Media Coverage – (In)visibility of Political Women**

On women’s visibility, considerable research has found that women as ordinary citizens, experts or public figures have featured less in news in Europe and America. Scholars have expressed that women have been invisible or featured a quiet presence in news since the

1970s with men used as newsmakers a lot more than women. Early studies documented that women were almost invisible in news and that when they appeared in news were victims, wives or mothers (Tuchman, Daniels & Benét, 1978; Cantor, 1978).

Cantor's (1978) seminal work compared the visibility of males and females in public television in 1975 and reported that women were absent in public affairs programmes. With 11 public affairs programs out of 28 programs in total, 7 had no woman at all on it. The rest had 11 women and 90 men. She confirmed, "thus, programming directed to timely issues and events of major importance... almost completely ignored women" (p. 81). Similar studies by Tuchman (1978) led to her popular declaration of a "symbolic annihilation" of women in news.

Likewise, the status quo seems to have abided even if it has improved. On the political communications front as well, a collection of studies has found that women were comparatively covered less to their male competitors for political offices. Other earlier studies such as Kahn and Goldenberg's (1991) and Kahn's (1994) also discovered similar results that female politicians in the US were covered less than their male counterparts. So did other research after, in both Europe and the U.S. upheld these earlier findings (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Kahn, 1994, 1996; Devitt, 2002; Niven, 2005; Bystrom 2005; Heldman, Carroll, & Olson, 2005; Semetko & Boomgaarden, 2007; Falk, 2008, 2010; Adcock, 2010; Vos, 2013). In Norris' (1997) study, she found that "women leaders were covered in slightly fewer stories ... (but) men usually receive slightly more press attention than women" (p. 158).

In her research to assess media coverage of Elizabeth Dole against her two male leading contenders in the 2000 presidential nomination campaign of the Republicans in Iowa, Bystrom (2005) confirmed her assumptions. She found that Dole received less media

coverage and was quoted less than any of the contenders although in polls, she placed a consistent strong second. Other researchers on the same topic of Dole's coverage confirmed similar results (See for e.g. Anderson, 2002; Heldman, Carroll & Olson, 2005; Anderson & Sheeler, 2005). In the study of Heldman, Carroll & Olson (2005), they noted that in the 2000 Republican presidential primary, both George Bush and John McCain received an overall higher media coverage than Elisabeth Dole, although Dole did significantly well in polls. Vos' (2013) recent study of television news coverage of female politicians in Belgium also indicated that overall, women politicians received less television news coverage compared to their male counterparts, even in instances of comparable status in officialdom.

These scholars revealed through their studies on news media coverage that women politicians enjoyed less coverage and what Kahn posited in 1994 that the little they enjoyed was dedicated to questioning their viability still seems to be prevalent in current media dispensation.

Furthermore, on the continent of Africa, the Global Media Baseline Study (GMBS, 2003) has also reported a higher rate of absence for women politicians, plus even, on matters considered their strengths in parliaments, indicating that political women outside of a candidacy status and who were in a political office were also covered less. Moreover, the study reported that although women constituted an average of 18% of the members of parliament in the region at the time of study, nevertheless when it came to the politician category for news sources, women formed only 6%. In addition, the study stated that even for countries in the region with highest representation of women in parliament – South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania, the women still featured a discreet presence. It continued to detail that South Africa for instance with 31% of women in parliament had women constituting only 8% of the politicians quoted in the media which were monitored.

Meyers (2013) corroborated that in the news coverage of the 2012 US elections, “men overwhelmingly outnumbered women as quoted news sources, even about issues that primarily affect women, such as birth control and abortion” (p. 9).

The implications for the minimal coverage of women is that voters would likely read less about the women and learn less about their issue positions and how they would likely perform compared to their male opponents (Bystrom, 2005; Trimble, Sampert, Wagner et al., 2012). Also, less visibility of women potentially indicates that they are taken less seriously comparable to the male candidates (Sreberny-Mohamadi & Ross, 1996; Ross 2002; Bystrom, 2005; Conroy, 2015). Ross and Comrie (2012) warned thus, “where women are seen as weak contenders, not only will their media visibility be diminished but their framing as ‘also rans’ further consolidates their position, producing a self-perpetuating cycle of negative coverage” (p. 971).

### **The Invisibility Gender Gap, Closing?**

In more recent times, the gender gap has been noted to reduce and women and men candidates are getting in between equally being covered to being covered more (Smith, 1997; Kittilson & Fridkin, 2008; Atkeson & Krebs, 2008; Miller, Peake & Boulton, 2010; Lawrence & Rose, 2010; Conroy, 2015). It seems that as women’s numbers have increased in competition for public offices and in more high-level positions, women candidates have been found to appear as much in news if not more. Thus, new data shows an improvement for women going for executive positions where they received a higher coverage than male counterparts. Smith’s (1997) study since Khan’s (1992, 1994a, 1994b) of male and female U.S. Senate and gubernatorial candidates for 1994 carefully points to a positive

improvement in equal opportunities in terms of quality and quantity of coverage offered males and females by journalists.

Further study by Devitt (1999) focusing on 1998 gubernatorial candidates of the U.S. found out that, there was parity in terms of media coverage between the men and the women candidates. However, the former received more issue-related coverage than the latter. In a cross-country study, researchers found almost the absence of gender bias when it came to the amount of coverage executive female candidates received (Murray, 2010). For instance in the US with studies involving Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin (Byström, 2006, 2010; Lawrence and Rose, 2010; Conroy, 2015); in New Zealand, with study on Helen Clark in Trimble and Treiberg (2010); in Argentina, with study on Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Piscopo, 2010) and lastly, in Venezuela, with study on Irene Sáez (Hinojosa, 2010).

### **Quantity of Coverage: (In)visibility Coverage and Effects.**

Conroy (2015) warned that increased coverage might not necessarily imply positive tone coverage (See coverage for Palin, Fernández and Sáez in Conroy, 2015; Piscopo, 2010; Hinojosa, 2010 respectively). Especially when research has found that women receive more negative tone coverage (Kahn and Goldenberg, 1991; Kahn 1994, 1996; Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003). For instance, Gidengil and Everitt (1999) postulated under gendered mediation that women would likely receive more coverage if they acted counter stereotypically, explaining that female candidates may be more focused on in news than their male competitors because news coverage may evaluate them more as females and also, coverage may frame them as non-conventional.

Other scholars have related improvements in amounts of coverage also to the women's novelty value (Byström et al., 2001, 2004; Ross 2002; Trimble, 2007; Murray 2010; Trimble & Wagner, 2010). However, increase in novelty coverage carries the potential for presenting women politicians as inexperienced and thus, increased coverage could produce sour electoral consequences regardless, especially also, when coverage focuses on non- issue related attributes for women. In terms of novelty coverage, one would have expected that women in distant and not recent decades would have enjoyed higher amounts of coverage because of their higher novelty value. As this has not proved to be the case as the literature shows, as much as media coverage of these women may be considered novelty, it may also be that the near consistency in the surge of women for political positions may be causing media to pay more attention, although the attention may be a negative one because women seem to be evaluated more often. Again, increased coverage may mean that recent women are considered more viable comparable to their female counterparts in the past: as many more women can be considered to have gained more political experience since passing laws for women's adult suffrage in some western countries and the feminist movements which have created more awareness to open society to accept women in politics. In addition, stereotypes that once held women back may be fading in our contemporary setting (Brooks 2013).

Some scholars have also explored the potential factors determining any variations in the amounts of coverage received by women. According to these scholars, candidates visibility then does not seem to have been regulated by gender only via novelty and non-conventional frames but also by the viability of the office seeker (Trimble 2007; Trimble et al, 2012), the level of the position being sought (Falks 2010; Meeks & Domke, 2011), characteristics of politicians and news features (Vos 2013). Although Trimble (2007) also found that especially in terms of the viability of the office seeker factor, the

competitiveness of a female candidate does not always positively correlate with level of visibility. Nonetheless, new scholarship such as Murray's (2010) where women were more covered than their male competitors point to an underlying coverage of their novelty as key and instrumental to their increased coverage, because those political offices have been executive positions where women in the specific settings were yet to ascend. Hence the women's gender still seems to be the persisting influence of coverage via novelty frames.

What appears to be happening may be that with the importunity of women in shattering the glass ceilings around the world, the framing of women as firsts or novelties potentially increases their coverage. Since increased coverage hasn't necessarily translated in women winning their elections and coming to power, it is more suggestive that increased coverage may not have necessarily been positive or geared towards aiding women's ambitions for political office. Hence, although coverage has improved, not many of these women have been elected into these higher offices. At best, the consistent focus on their novelty makes more visible their oddity which could have voters struggling with doubts about women's suitability and preparation for the office. Murray (2010) confirmed that in instances where women won their seats or presidential office, coverage was not steeply in favour of women.

Where women were way ahead in terms of coverage, they lost woefully because coverage had concentrated on trivial things such as their appearance and their family over their substance (Piscopo, 2010; Hinojosa, 2010). When women were incumbents, coverage consistently decreased over the period (Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Helen Clark). No longer being novelties their reduced coverage was most likely as a result of voter fatigue with their presence (Murray, 2010) and the absence of their novelty.

### **Quality of Coverage: (Non-)Issue Coverage of Political Women.**

Numerous empirical studies show another gender-related variation in the coverage of female and male candidates. Some of these research concluded that women more often received less issue coverage in addition to being less visible (Aday and Devitt 2001; Byström 2006; Woodall and Fridkin, 2007; Ross and Comrie 2012; Dunaway et al, 2013).

Kahn and Gordon (1997) found in their study that “women are more likely to make issues a major focus of their electoral bids” (p. 66) however, news media tend to focus less on what and where the campaigns place emphasis which is on issues when compared. Norris (1997) also confirmed that women leaders were usually covered in gendered frames by the news media. According to Norris, news frames are “the ‘peg’ which is used to structure stories of women leaders” and that “news frames guide the selection, presentation, and evaluation of information, for journalists and readers, by slotting news events, issues, or actors into familiar categories” (p. 155).

Also, Vos (2013) found that the news media in Belgium as well focused less on issues comparatively for female candidates than their male counterparts and reiterated that instead, “news media emphasize more often the personal characteristics of women politicians and portray them along traditional gender stereotypes” (p. 391). So have other scholars made similar discoveries (Ross, 2002; Everitt, 2003; Heldman et al 2005; Niven 2005; Murray, 2010; Adams; 2010; Piscopo, 2010).

Consequently, women coming to the political scenes for public offices seem to make great effort for legitimacy and media coverage (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991; Kahn, 1992, 1994a, 1994b; Witt, Paget & Mathews, 1994; Braden, 1996; Byström, 2005). Women mostly have to do and prove more for the same things they contest for with men just to subvert stereotypical notions about them and their ability to handle political offices (Ross, 2002).

Unlike women, men are generally accepted as leaders and therefore have more room to be themselves and receive less of negative stereotypes (Braden, 1996). For instance, Braden (1996) pointed out that, journalists “often ask women politicians questions they don’t ask men” and describe them “in ways and with words that emphasize women’s traditional roles and focus on their appearance and behaviour” (p. 1) whereas, men have more latitude on their choice of cloths because of general tolerance and acceptance in politics (Braden, 1996). Sreberny-mohammadi and Ross (1996) reported that women politicians themselves “believed that their outward appearance is the focus of considerably more media attention than befalls their male colleagues (and that) women reported the way in which the media always includes the age of women politicians, what they look like, their domestic and family circumstances, their fashion sense and so on.” (p. 110)

Furthermore, according to Braden (1996) the media use ‘gender-specific terms’ to describe and trivialize women’s leadership and candidature. Aside the imbalance in amount of coverage; the sex differences in tone, in issue positions, and in traits against women candidates, the media use a number of gendered frames which include appearance, family relationships, use of first names, novelty coverage and “framing of women candidates as more emotional and irrational than their male counterparts” (Murray, 2010, p.12).

Besides, Byström (2001) also noted female politicians are usually examined on the basis of their maternal or marital roles, instead of highlighting their academic attainment, professional background, or experience (See also Adams, 2010; Anderson, Diabah & Mensah, 2011). Moreover, Everitt (2005) found that media reports still focused on traditional attributes of women which domesticate them, for instance, on their personal features and relationships (daughter of, mother of) instead of their personal accomplishments, goals and drive.

These frames are mostly inspired by gender stereotypes. Byström (2010) argued that the media accentuates gender stereotypes against women candidates through these gendered framing by “focusing on their appearance, families, and personality; associating them with their husbands; referring to them by their first names; and emphasizing the novelty of their candidacy as the ‘first woman’” (p. 77)

### **Implications of Non-Issue and Gendered Coverage Against Women**

The constellation of past and recent research therefore pointed to incessant gendered framing by the media where women’s domestic personas and personality traits were highlighted when and where needless to their electoral disadvantage. Anderson, Diabah & Mensah’s (2011) study confirmed that especially by the western media, comparatively, Sirleaf-Johnson’s appearance - her dressing style, fashion sense, figure – attracted some media attention while her Harvard education and resume were least mentioned and when mentioned, it was used to suggest her deviation from societal expectations of a woman. Their findings reported that she was constructed as an *iron lady* to have nurtured ambition to be president of Liberia. Anderson et. al reported that knowing societal expectations of her, Sirleaf was subtly called upon to reassure her people that she would be feminine in ruling and her “iron ladiness” won’t be applied.

Scholars such as Byström, McKinnon, and Chaney’s (1999) study which focused on newspaper and television coverage of Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Clinton as presidential candidates’ wives, also brought an interesting twist to the gender argument as they confirmed by their study that even women leaders who are not necessarily candidates for political positions are also more likely to be covered in terms of their personal qualities, how well-groomed they appear among others.

Murray (2010) also noted, “the media objectify women and frame them as sexual and visual rather than powerful and intellectual” (p. 13). In addition, earlier, Poole (1993) had found that the media report on women with loaded adjectives such as pretty, slender, and focus on their appearance. What’s more, Heflick and Goldenberg (2009) found in their experimental study in the US that subjects “who view Governor Palin as attractive were far less likely to view her as intelligent and competent for the job, and thus, were less likely to vote for the McCain-Palin ticket” (p. 102). According to Murray (2010), appearance has become a double bind and “women are either trivialized for being pretty or ostracized for being plain” (p. 13). Media coverage of Irene Sáez (Hinojosa, 2010) and Cristina Fernández (Piscopo, 2010) on one hand, and on the other, Merkel (Wiliarty, 2010) reflects these adjectives respectively.

These previous collection of research has shown that the appearance of women receive more prominence than men. When this happens, unlike most men, women’s professional and political experiences, as well as, their policy positions are less likely to be highlighted by the media. This may present women as unserious contenders and make them less viable because coverage focuses on unserious issues.

### **Gendered Frames: Influences of Women’s Familial Roles**

One of the areas of focus for media, as the literature already mentioned, is women’s familial role. A Key findings of the GMBS (2003) on gender in media content across the 12 southern African countries found that 11% of women were identified by their marital or family status. The SADC Gender Protocol Baseline Barometer (GPBB, 2009) reported “subtle and more blatant stereotypes” (p. 196) indicating, “Women in the media still carry their private identity more than men” (p. 196). The reports found that in all countries, women are much

more likely to be identified as a wife, daughter or mother than a man is likely to be identified as a husband, son or father. Murray (2010) corroborated this finding as her cross-country research found that women were also more likely to be framed as mothers, whereas male candidates would less likely be framed as fathers.

According to the report, the regional average for women being identified by their familial relationship was 11%, compared to 2% for men (GMBS, 2003; GPBB, 2009). The report further stated that the proportion of women likely to be identified according to their family status in Southern Africa doubled from 11% in the GMBS to 22% (higher than the global average of 17%) while that for men increased from 2% to 6% (also higher than the global average of 5%) (GPBS, pp. 196 -197)

We know through scholarship which focuses on media bias against women in politics that the focus on women's familial obligations does not normally serve as a political advantage unlike men. Murray (2010) and Conroy (2015) have suggested that women are regarded as with primary responsibility for the home and not men. Accordingly, this has presented a picture that women may not be prepared for political office but that, men have time on their hands to do so. Where women have found the need to be silent on their families, men candidates seem to have found the need to incorporate family on their campaign platforms because the implication seem to be different for the genders, and mostly negative for women.

Another aspect of women's familial association focuses on their relationship to important male figures, some husbands and others mentors (Angela Merkel and Michelle Bachelet had the latter). According to Byström (2010), "women political candidates with ties to powerful men are often covered by the media in the 'wife of' frame which questions their capacity to be competent and autonomous individuals" (p. 81). Earlier studies such as

Lang's (1978) had noted that for women to become newsworthy in the '70s, they had to have "mothered, married, or been sired by a man of achievement" (p. 148).

Women's association with important male figures have not always come at a cost, although fundamentally, such associations seem to invalidate women's competence and personal achievements to rise to power (Byström, 2010), they also seem to have propelled others to power (Merkel, Bachelet, Bhutto). Other case in point was Samia Nkrumah, who media covered (she also self-framed) as 'daughter of' first president of Ghana to successfully ascend the party chairpersonship office of her father's party (Newspaper Findings, Chapter VI). Another case was that of Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, former first lady of Ghana who although lost her bid for nomination to the presidency, was heavily framed by media to be rising on the political capital of President Rawlings with "wife of" frame, while it was actually public knowledge that she was and has always been a competent force even when she was first lady 'behind' her husband (Newspaper findings, Chapter VII). The story of Agyemang is similar to Cristina Fernandez of Argentina and Hillary Clinton of the U.S.

Scholars such as Peake (1997) and Lithgow (2000) on the other hand also have found that media coverage of men has focused on their professional and political attainment whereas for women it has been about relationships and connections to others': men's political experience. These findings confirm that the "wife of" and 'daughter of' frames and if one likes 'mentee of' silence women's professional and political achievements.

The effect of the concentration of the media on the sexuality, appearance and familial ties and relationships of women is mainly that, it undercuts women's viability as it places them in narratives unbecoming for conceiving them as effective public office holders. A further implication is that they are presented as unqualified for political duty because coverage of women fails to concentrate on the right qualifications perceived for political campaigns.

Especially, when we know from Heldman, Carroll & Olson (2005) that differences in election coverage along the lines of gender can shape public perceptions and, ultimately, influence the fate of a candidate's campaign. Falk (2008) also corroborated that women would eventually lose interest in running for offices given gendered media coverage which would then perpetuate women as novelty in politics.

However, other studies have also found minimal focus on women's personal personas comparable to their male counterparts (Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Clark). Trimble, Sampert, Wagner et al (2012) suggested that perhaps this was so because "the privatizing tropes of husbands, hairdos and wardrobes are incongruent with the dominant news frame for political competitions, the game frame which emphasizes the horse race and strategic aspects of the campaign". Suggesting here, therefore that, competitive women may be placed "in the game" to compete with male competitors and consequently, engineer a switch from their private lives to their public achievements and leadership abilities (Trimble and Wagner, 2010).

### **Media Focus of Coverage: Traits and Issue positions**

Studies on media coverage of women politicians also found that women were framed in stereotypically feminine terms with regards to their traits and issue positions (Kahn and Goldenberg, 1991; Kahn, 1994; Jamieson 1995; Ross, 1995, 2002). Other studies confirmed that both media and voters view female and male political candidates in stereotypical terms especially related to their attributes as persons, their likely issue positions, issue preferences and issue expertise (Byström, 2010). In this is an interconnectedness, where the traits associated with women seem to influence what media and voters perceive as

issues women care about and what they believe women have expertise for (Murray, 2010; Byström, 2010).

Generally, there are specific traits and issue positions associated with women candidates that get them to be perceived as either better or less qualified for any political task or office. Socialisation based on gender appropriate behaviours maintains sex stereotypes (Jalalzai and Krook, 2010). According to Jalalzai and Krook (2010), sex encapsulates the biological differences between women and men and gender captures the “social meanings given to these differences which may vary both cross-culturally and over time” (p. 6)

To Kahn and Goldenberg (1997) sex stereotypes offer people a way of perceiving women as with “expressive strengths such as being emotional, understanding, gentle, warm, compassionate”, and men with “instrumental strengths for example, being independent, objective, ambitious, acting as a leader, aggressive, knowledgeable” (p. 61). Conceptually, it is problematic to view so called expressive strengths as opposites of so called instrumental strengths when women are presented as either opposites or complementary to men, and not that they are equal, although there may be some differences., women are neither completely or opposite to men Even so, these differences in traits have informed society of what roles and spheres women are deemed suitable to play in. These traits have therefore informed perceptions where women are deemed as active in the private sphere; being the home and the family, and men as key to the public sphere and made to play the role in economics and politics (Elshtain, 1981). This private-public dichotomy has had historical implications with women’s suffrage and now takes on new manifestations when women seek public office in the public sphere (Ross, 2002).

As numerous research have reported through analyses of poll data and media coverage on viability of women candidates, at least, in the US example, men candidates are seen as

better able to handle issues such as foreign policy, military and the economy better and women associated with what is considered softer issues on health, education, welfare and other forms of social policy (Byström, 2010). As a result, Conroy (2015) confirmed that when media do focus on issues, for females, they emphasise the stereotypical feminine policy areas (see also Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003) although political women running for office have made conscious efforts to communicate masculine issues on their campaigns (Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003). Ross (2002) has suggested from her interviews with women politicians from the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa that “there are differences in style and approach which are gender-sensitive but that policy differences based on gender are as likely to be rhetorical as real” (p. 190) implying that women are in a position to speak to both, it has depended on what media largely focused on. Gidengil and Everitt (2003) agreed that female politicians are known to receive more horse race coverage, are mostly visible and with voice for mainly female issues and therefore are set in stereotypical gendered settings to perform. Vos (2013) also found that women speak less or are given less speaking time on male issues. Again, Vos (2013) has shown that male themes were covered more than female themes and male journalists gave less speaking opportunity to female politicians and vice versa although difference was, however minimal.

### **Women and Traits: Never past the feminine?**

Furthermore, research has shown that, not only are women associated with specific policy areas because of their traits, but also in their portrayal, female traits are focused on more for women candidates and male traits for their male counterparts (Kahn, 1996; Kittilson &

Fridkin, 2008; Woodall, Fridkin & Carle, 2010) engineering an outsider status for women during political competitions.

Even worse, according to Ross (2002), is the media's astute interest to highlight the attributes of the personality of the women candidates rather than their campaign messages, for which according to Conroy (2015) would likely affect negatively women's chances at the ballot. Before Ross, Kahn (1994) in her study of senate races found gendered trait coverage where female traits were focused on for female candidates and males received more masculine trait coverage than their female opponents. Current study by Vos (2013) as well demonstrated that female and male candidates seemed to have highlighted similar traits in their campaigns, although, coverage on their policy positions differed. This suggests that women are likely to speak on so called feminine issues but maybe more prone to "incorporate" (assuming without admitting that for women they always had to perform masculinity) masculine traits and issues.

Some studies have found, although not on a large scale that when specific women executive candidates featured rather un-hypothetically, as in the case of Hillary Clinton and other women candidates for state governor races, they were rated higher on some roles and attributes considered masculine and appropriate for executive office, and especially for Clinton, Merkel and Clark, they scored less on some attributes considered feminine (Byström 2010; Wiliarty, 2010; Trimble and Treiberg, 2010). Also, work by Norris on press coverage of women world leaders (1997) was less indicative of the use of feminine stereotypes. Trimble et al (2012) also found some evidence that some female candidates were treated more like their male competitors, so did Gidengil and Everitt (1999).

This seems to indicate the potential that women on their campaign platforms do not necessarily isolate male traits and issues as much as media may have us believe. It is also

evidenced, regardless of mixed research outcomes that the media represent women in typically feminine terms.

From the above paragraphs, stereotypes about females and males seem to have dictated what behaviours, personalities and competencies women and men are associated with and these impose “artificial boundaries” on these areas (Newton & Williams, 2011; Dan & Iorgoveanu 2013, p.225). Dan and Iorgoveanu (2013) suggested, “exclusive constructs should be replaced by inclusive archetypes of politicians, regardless of their gender” (p. 225).

The implication here though is that, in patriarchal societies, acting feminine for a female seems to be required and proves to be suitable in enhancing likability (Meeks & Domke, 2011; Dan and Iorgoveanu, 2013). However, women candidates should carefully walk the tightrope as Murray (2010) warned, “women candidates have benefitted from feminine traits only when they have been used to offset a perception of being too masculine; (and that) feminine traits alone are not considered sufficient qualification for executive office” (p. 225).

Media coverage of female candidates in stereotypically feminine terms by highlighting feminine traits, associating them with feminine issues whereas covering their male competitors with frames consistent with the political field seeks to isolate women from perceptions of competence and preparedness in the political field. Regardless of the advantages in some instances when media associate women with feminine issues and traits, media bias in reporting still suffices (Conroy, 2015) and electoral losses almost seem inevitable.

## **Navigating the Tightropes: The Traits Women “Don’t” Have and the Jobs they “Can’t” Do.**

The challenge of acting feminine to be likable but risking being viewed as less competent seem to have led some political women to speak more to stereotypically male issues and incorporate, so to say, male traits. Scholars such as Dan and Iorgoveanu (2013) found a predominance of male issues and male traits in the coverage of both female and male candidates, suggesting that the female candidates showed as much male traits and spoke about male issues as the men. Although political women do speak about stereotypically feminine issues, so would men and vice versa. Political women have also confirmed that they do not do so at the expense of stereotypical male issues either (Banwart, Bystrom, Robertson, 2003). What this point to be is that, first, media potentially has an affinity for focusing on feminine traits and issues for women even when women clearly demonstrate interest in masculine issues or show masculine traits, and second, questions media will particularly ask women seem to be targeted to elicit stereotypical responses.

Considerably, whatever traits are significant in politics can’t be possibly sequestered from any particular gender. On a continuum therefore, women and men would demonstrate and could have any particular traits, regardless of instances, where especially, some women engage in ‘performing’ male traits in order to attract political media attention. However, the need for women, who rather may wish not, to assume stereotypically masculine stances to give the impression of competence continuously place so called male traits and issues as more important and significant when really they are mostly not, but may only be equal to the others which are categorized under feminine traits and issues. Some scholars have argued that, in such instances, it is possible that male issues and traits may be considered significant and that these may be used to evaluate candidates (male and female) (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991). Dan and Iorgoveanu

(2013) concluded that the engagement of female politicians with what is thus considered male traits and male issues further normalizes those attributes as “human” rather than male (p. 225).

With these traits, research indicate that some jobs or offices may be harder for women to attain than others although politics in general is a masculinised field, with respect for masculine attributes which are expected to be found in men and not women necessarily.

Some scholars help us to understand that executive offices tend to have this posture even though women do not necessarily find it any easier in lower level offices in the legislature or others such as gubernatorial and mayoral (Atkeson and Krebs, 2008; Murray, 2010; Jalalzai and Krook, 2010). Scholars have found that voters have a preference when it comes to leadership for masculine and not feminine traits (Rossenwasser and Dean 1989; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a, b; McGinley, 2009), and rightly so, because there is clearly more importance placed on masculine issues for which it is believed that masculine traits can match.

Unfortunately, according to Woodall, Fridkin & Carle (2010), “traits associated with women generally do not coincide with standard leadership traits. Therefore, women are not perceived as being effective leaders, regardless of the traits they stress in their campaign” (p. 95) and when they even incorporate masculine traits in theirs, are not seen as necessarily authentic. Politics as a masculinised field becomes harder a ground for women the more, because of the established knowledge of what is befitting as a gender role for a woman (Hitchon and Chang, 1995) and this now poses a challenge where voters may have to consider reconciling or rejecting the new emerging powerful woman. Khan (1996) posited that women might therefore be limited by people’s stereotypical views of them regarding their abilities.

In line with this, Atkeson and Krebs (2007) suggested that voters are potentially flexible to consider women for low-lying offices which may well be considered quite feminine, and also, because women are associated with 'soft' policy areas, which are favourable for lower level positions/races and not executive ones (Murray, 2010; Meeks & Domke, 2011). This is because; according to Murray (2010) "demands of executive office are incompatible with social expectations about women's abilities and duties" (p. 8). Thereby, the potential consequence of holding a specific trait set constant for women seems to be the denominator and the drive for perceptions around women's abilities. This potentially constrains their ambitions which voters and media may set within their gendered traits (Kahn 1996; Ross 2002).

Meeks & Domke (2011) has therefore suggested that for women "to be seen as more competent, women need to accentuate at least some masculinity, via traits or issues, into a gender-balanced identity" (p. 17) which may tend to be more successful.

As McGinley (2009) argued, a sole performance of feminine identity by women candidates acquires the risk of being seen as politically incongruent and hence not with the right competency for the job at hand. Consequently, "women seeking to be politically viable need to construct an image- more than men do - that emphasizes a mix of masculinity and competency with femininity and likeability. ... in short, women need to develop a dual-gendered subtype that blends masculinity and femininity" (Meeks & Domke, 2011, p.11).

According to Jamieson (1995), the femininity and masculinity double bind dictates that a woman can't be both feminine and competent. Women who therefore perform a gender-balanced identity are more likely to be electable, as they would have likely broken the "femininity/competence double bind".

There are challenges associated with the pressure on women to perform masculinity. Murray (2010) noted that the implication for women negotiating masculinity complicates women's ambition in three ways: first, those women are seen as with the wrong skill set for the job, which enjoins to Jamieson's (1995) "competence/femininity" double bind. Second, those women who naturally come with masculine traits or even seek to become it may still risk being accepted because the skills are still considered to be a masculine reserve. Third, women risk making electoral losses if they are seen as encroaching too much on masculine traits and away from the feminine.

It is worthy of mention that not only is women likely to be electorally punished for treading beyond appropriate barriers, but men as well. Duerst-Lahti (2007) mentioned that men who proved less to be 'manly' could be penalised for executive office. She indicated that men like Al Gore and Kerry have been equally punished, electorally, for deviating from the typical male. However, not in the too distant past Barack Obama negotiating the new man subtypes when contesting Hillary Clinton was rewarded (Lawrence and Rose, 2010). The "new man" frame depicting Obama seem to have been a likeable one via his portrayal as a family oriented person, whereas the others (Al Gore and Kerry) it was likely that their challenge was the perception that they were softer on masculine traits for an American presidency. Conroy (2015) argued an interesting point that positive bias in media coverage for men is rather for masculine men.

## **Conclusion**

Overall the literature considerably is denser on the fact that "women tend to receive more non-policy, personal coverage than issue coverage; (and) there still appears to be a slight tendency for coverage of women to focus on compassion issues and for coverage of men to

focus on hard issues” (Akeson and Krebs, 2008, p.240). Also, that quality of coverage tends to be negative, and gendered frames that focus on appearance, novelty, family among others damage the quality of the coverage of these women, even though, it may in some instances increase amount of coverage for them (Murray, 2010). The gender bias “is also a consequence of how media works” (Vos, 2013, p.404) although “the construction of political news is a co-production between political actors and political journalists” (p. 403). However, one may conveniently argue that media’s commercial focus also drives what rather makes news, and who features in it. Tuchman (1978) had contended that there are implications of socio- political and economic significance when the mass media constantly persists in traditional sex role coverage. Even more, with regards to the fact that there is a predetermined interpretation expected of audiences when it comes to the news they encounter, news therefore seems to serve the political, social and economic interests of the dominant (capitalist) elite. As Meyers (2013) argued, “news role legitimises the dominant power structure through its claim to represent an objective reality .....and as such the news acts to support the values, ideas and points of view that keep this elite in power by creating ideological consensus” (p. 4).

The general impression created by media narratives of political women evidently suggest, “women are represented in an unfavourable light and that men are characterised by mentions of occupational and political success” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Ross, 1996, p.110). Media coverage from the literature poses barriers to women. What is being argued though is that media bias may not necessarily be a conscious attempt by the media but they exist (Gidengil & Everitt, 1999) and also news coverage of political women “is not always blatantly sexist, but subtle discrimination persists” (Braden, 1996, p.1), however unintentional. Such portrayal also have consequences for the women because news shapes public discourse and attitudes, as Meyers (2013) has urged, “representation matters, that

the cumulative effect of mediated popular imagery on the public imagination is to instil certain understandings and beliefs that have specific and anticipated outcomes” (p. 2)

As Dan and Iorgoveanu 2013 stated “although women may no longer be symbolically annihilated in the media, it is still too early to proclaim equal treatment in the media. From this perspective, the media coverage of politicians is still on a beaten path: Female candidates are portrayed in a way that undermines their authority” (p. 225)

The next chapter is one in which I discuss the methodology and the methods utilised to analyse news coverage of the mixed gender campaigns and the interviews with women candidates. It discusses the use of a mixed-methods approach synthesizing content, frame and feminist analysis.

## **Chapter IV: Research Methodology**

This thesis explores the relationship between women, media and politics within the Ghanaian political media context, employing mixed methods. I gathered news stories of coverage of mixed-gender political campaigns and interviewed women candidates to discover the areas of focus in the Ghanaian news media's coverage of women candidates. I analysed the data collected using content, frame and discourse analyses to investigate the media's treatment and depiction of the women, - and the ways the women's coverage was similar to or different from coverage of their male colleagues. The study's analysis was framed on feminist perspectives.

In this chapter, I discussed the choice of methodology and methods for data collection and analysis and their suitability to discerning the nature and extensiveness of coverage for female and male candidates. I also discussed how data was collected and analysed. I mentioned my use of a mixed-methods approach combining the analyses of news content and interviews using content, frame and feminist discourse analyses. In employing the three methods, I used a coding framework, which detailed a system of indicators for systematically identifying, recording and quantifying frames from newspaper text. For the interviews, frames were established by way of salient themes from the comments of the women about their portrayal. A feminist analysis was executed on both data to interrogate, if any, sex differences in candidate framing in the newspapers and from the interview transcripts. The limitations of framing and content analyses were curtailed by using critical feminist analysis in gauging and underscoring meanings of the text.

## **Philosophical Assumptions**

My use of theory was restrictive in that I followed a largely pragmatic paradigm and so epistemological and ontological positions were loosely assumed. Although practical considerations seem pale to state when the idea of considering rigid epistemologies and ontologies seem serious and important, Bryman (2012) advised that “all social research is a coming-together of the ideal and the feasible” (p. 41). For example, in using semi-structured, in-depth interviews, it was not only that I intended giving the women the chance to make sense of their own representation (a philosophical assumption) but also such a method allowed for gaining a rich text, as they were able to recount actual incidents to explain their points (pragmatic). Even more, it afforded me the opportunity to observe women face-to-face as they spoke about what seemed to affect them. This approach proved useful and practical. For instance, I observed in the face-to-face interviews some form of inhibition from the women in detailing specific negative aspects of their portrayal by the media and the public, as if talking about them were like admitting to them and they seemed to be in some form of denial. I would have been less likely to observe this if I interviewed them using questions or phone or other non-face-to-face device. Using a face-to-face, semi-structured interview provided therefore “finer detail of people, social contexts and social practices” (Yates, 2004, p.140) which was important to a study, which sought to learn about the lives of women and also from the perspectives of women as well. The semi-structured nature also enhanced the rich texture of information collected, as women were free to veer into other topics as they have observed and experienced with the media.

In considering potential philosophical assumptions, the study lent itself to an interpretivist epistemology and constructivist ontology. The former would have been applied, thus:

legitimate knowledge of the world is gained by interpreting human behaviour and also through the perceptions of people regarding how they make sense of their world, other than a positivist orientation of assuming credible knowledge is gained when confirmed by our senses (Bryman, 2012). To this end, there was the assumption that knowledge about women's lives may be gained from studying human beings and human institutions involved in that process. The latter, a constructivist ontology, allowed for the admission that social realities are created by social actors and such knowledge is a "negotiated order", constantly emerging and actively being shaped (Strauss, Schatzman, Ehrich, Bucher & Sabshin, 1973, p.308). The constructivist orientation is taken against the backdrop that "we cannot take for granted, as the natural scientist does, the availability of a preconstituted world of phenomena for investigation" hence, researchers should "examine the process by which the social world is constructed" (Walsh, 1972, p.19). Constructivist ontology therefore inspired an investigation into why and how framing of women is shaped and by whom? Constructivism allowed for the admission of three positions for this study which were that (a) the media through their depictions of women are potential shapers of the perceptions of the public on women candidates and the realities of the women themselves; (b) women politicians also are active in reality construction and they did this through interviews by expressing what they believed or how they perceived they were constructed by the media and what was true or otherwise for them; (c) the researcher's interpretation potentially presents another reality, seeking to make sense of what factors may have accounted for the experiences of the women politicians and media.

This study's axiological inclinations employed both feminist and pragmatic values. Bryman (2012) suggested areas where axiology could be assumed, for example in the choice of area of research, data-collection and analysis techniques, and interpretation of data. This

study's pragmatic value is observed in the selection of methods, formulating research questions and implementation of data collection techniques.

Feminist researchers apply feminist theory and/or feminist methodology i.e., using theory to decode dominance, applying reflexivity and creating equal relationships with research participants by eliminating power imbalances. It seems a more realistic and considerate position that some feminists argue for a value-laden research. According to Bryman (2012), some feminist writers "have argued that only research on women that is intended for women will be consistent with the wider political needs of women" (p. 40). Allowing an interplay of feminist values seem to pay attention to women, whose depictions are being researched and reduce the perpetuation of androcentric values which by being norm have been subtle and perpetuated.

According to Oleson (2011), feminism intersects with different theoretical and pragmatic angles. The study of women's experiences cuts across several disciplines and any method could be rendered feminist (Deem, 2002; Moss, 2007). Feminist approaches problematise women's experiences in society and the agents and institutions of socialisation (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell, in feminist research, "the subject matter is often gender domination within a patriarchal society. ... and feminist researchers see gender as a basic organising principle that shapes the conditions of their lives" (p. 29). Keller (1985) adds that gender is "a lens that brings into focus particular questions" (p. 6). According to Lather (1991), the goal of feminist research therefore, is to "correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position" (p. 71).

Also, the research approach has equally been pragmatic as it opened up to multiplicity of opinions and perspectives – media and women. It has again been pragmatic particularly in

its predominantly non-commitment to philosophical assumptions and its openness to embracing multiple methods (Murphy 1990; Cherryholmes, 1992; Creswell, 2013). As Bryman (2012) stated, “while methods are not neutral, they are not entirely suffused with intellectual inclinations either” (P. 19). For example, ethnographers such as LeCompte and Schensul (1999) in their study engaged both quantitative and qualitative data collection, and case study researchers such as Luck, Jackson and Usher (2006) and Yin (2009) employed both qualitative and quantitative data. Using a feminist and pragmatic paradigms offered both an operational, analytical and interpretive framework for the use of a mixed methods approach in the conduct of this study. The critical stance of a feminist paradigm helps to achieve two things to (a) provide alternative meanings to knowledge (media discourse) as they are likely to be implicitly subjective and (b) simultaneously offer a critique for change as knowledge is assumed to be biased in favour of a dominant ideology. The pragmatic orientation has been constantly looking out for what methodology and methods work to meet the aims of the study without fussing over its philosophy.

### **Methodological Choices – Summary**

According to Silverman (2004), methodology “refers to the choices we make about appropriate models, cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc., in planning and executing a research study” (p. 470). In considering potential theory building, this study took an inductive stance. This research employed a case study design as multiple cases were investigated to answer the research question. I followed a mixed-methods strategy in its implementation by combining qualitative and quantitative methods in both data collection and analysis. The methods employed involved content, framing and feminist analysis of newspaper articles and interview data. Data were both quantitatively

and qualitatively analysed for breadth and depth of frames, themes and concepts. The feminist outlook helped to probe the analysis.

I employed different sources of data and different methods for analysis. The newspapers provided a good overview of exploring media depictions of political women and the interviews gave a detailed and comparative account from the perspective of the women, enabling different viewpoints. Combining newspapers and interviews helped in exploring if the different sources of data would be mutually corroborated. In addition, I sought to enhance the usefulness of findings based on its comprehensive outlook (Bryman, 2012).

### **Methodological Choices - Medium**

This examines how the news media in Ghana frames women politicians by analysing news stories covering selected cases and interviewing women candidates. The media is key to the (re)production and circulation of cultural knowledge about women in the society and therefore become an appropriate site for learning about women's lives in different societies. By studying how the media portray women, we can know the messages which are sent about them and review their implications for women's socio-political advancement in society. The choice for analysing newspapers in Ghana was made because of the reputable outlook they have among the population and also because newspapers appear, in terms of their content, more deliberate, purposeful and detailed than radio and television. As Pingree and Hawkins (1978, p.117) advocated: "in order to determine in reality the definitions of 'women's news' or how news definitions affect women, the more direct way is to examine implicit definition in actual content and layout of the press". In other words, with news content, one has 'evidence' in hand with regards to a considered journalistic output and one is able to assess manifest and latent meanings other than what

journalists may purport to have intended. This is important because the effects of coverage on women have more to do with the output than the intentions of journalists.

Again in Ghana, newspapers are the basic unit from which news stories are culled for radio and television news. According to Downie and Kaiser (2002), newspapers set the agenda for the broadcast networks. Their agenda-setting, informative purposes and inter-media influences make them a suitable first choice for examining the framing of women as they feed the television and radio agenda (Sikanku, 2011). Atkeson and Krebs (2008) also made a case for newspapers that “although the general informational value of newspapers vis-a-vis television is a matter of contention, newspapers provide critical information on local elections. They not only provide more political information than television, the effect of newspaper reading on voting in local elections is significantly greater than exposure to television news broadcasts” (p. 242). Kaneva and Ibroscheva (2014) also corroborated when they stated: “the emphasis on news is frequently explained through a combination of feminist concerns about gender equality and normative beliefs about the role of news media in creating an informed citizenry in democratic societies” (p. 3). Therefore, with the more detailed exposition that newspaper contents offer, the kind of coverage given to women’s campaign potentially would inform citizens about women’s capabilities and viability.

Furthermore, because the elites in Ghana serve as power brokers for the society and they are the ones who read newspapers, what they read and believe from newspapers may mediate the knowledge and impressions the non-elite may carry about women. For instance, the elite in Ghana are mainly people who are influential in their families because of their educational and economic status. Extended family members depend on them for both financial support and political guidance. Most of the time, their extended family members assume the political opinions of these people. Per this unique position of elites in

the Ghanaian society, they are able to mediate opinions of their families and the larger population operating from their close circuit; Their privileged access to newspapers because of their education, therefore, seem to be a differential source to their knowledge and hence newspaper content become important to study. In addition to all the factors already mentioned, in Ghana, “publishable print media is generally archived and easily accessible, it provides the most practical research venue to examine potential difference or bias in local media reporting” (Atkeson and Krebs 2008, p.242). Above all, several feminist media studies have used the newspaper as a medium of analyses and that was instructive to my choice, as well. These reasons strengthen the case for newspapers to be continuously explored to track women’s place and status in society and their implication to their general political and social wellbeing.

### **Methodological Choices – Mixed Method Approach**

Analysis of newspapers was balanced with interviews with women candidates to source their perceptions of their treatment and portrayal by the media.

Byrne (2004) has described qualitative interviewing as “particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals’ attitudes and values. ... [and that they] provide better access to interviewees’ views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences and opinions” (p. 182); such a qualitative method according to Yates (2004), “explore the ‘rich texture’ of ‘everyday social life’” (p. 134) of women.

Although methods do not necessarily have an inherent value (Silverman, 2004), qualitative interviewing supports a feminist methodological approach of empowering women’s voices in how they make meaning of their own world. Several feminist media scholars such as

Ross (2002) have used interviews in exploring the relationship between women, media and politics.

Several studies have been conducted to explore how the media frames women. The gendered mediation of women have entailed mainly two aspects: quantity and quality of coverage which include studies exploring the (in)visibility of women, tone of coverage and the areas of coverage which may also cover gendered policy issue association of candidates and coverage on gendered traits . Per the nature of feminist media studies, very early scholars have followed largely a qualitative paradigm. Currently, others continue to use mixed-methods to collect and analyse data. Also, feminist media scholars have borrowed a number of analytical frameworks including but not limited to critical discourse, framing and content analyses in interrogating news content and these have been supplemented by feminist standpoints. Kaneva and Ibroscheva (2014) pointed out that, “broadly speaking, most analyses of gendered mediation are rooted in framing theory” (p. 3). This is founded because gendered mediation looks at sex-related differences in coverage, in essence, framing theory helps to point out this gendered salience.

Trimble, Sampert, Wagner, Raphael and Gerrits (2012) in their longitudinal study on news coverage of female and male candidates of the New Democratic Party of Canada used content analysis and feminist discourse analysis to explore the manner in which “gender and gendered relations of power” were replicated in news discourse of the candidates (Lazar, 2005, p.11). Also, Ross and Comrie’s (2012) mixed–methods research approach which considered media coverage of elections and leadership candidates in New Zealand synthesized content, discourse and frame analyses. Dan and Iorgoveanu (2013) also used frame analysis in their study of the coverage of male and female Romanian candidates for European office.

According to Ross and Comrie “the historical dearth of women candidates for political office has meant studying the relationship between gender, media and politics is still a juvenile sub-discipline” (p. 970), however they argued that this irrespective, the decades of research interrogating this aspect of media depiction of women have consistently found that there is a gendered mediation at work and women are normally absent, trivialized and condemned. In other studies however, women have been more visible, especially given a novelty value (Jalalzai & Krook, 2010; Hinojosa, 2010; Franceschet & Thomas, 2010), and their campaigns have also featured a far wider range of issues (Bystrom, 2006; Atkeson & Krebs 2008).

Following after previous research investigating the relationship between women, media and politics, I examined news media coverage of three different party elections and analysed interviews with women candidates for Ghana’s legislative assembly. I specifically explored how the selected newspapers and the interviews with women inform us about how the media frames political women. This study analyses news coverage of 5 female political candidates – Samia Yaba Nkrumah, Araba Bentsi-Enchill, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, Alima Mahama and Gladys Asmah – and their male competitors in three separate elections where each woman only competed once and across the offices of party chairperson, vice-presidential candidate and presidential candidate. In addition, eighteen women parliamentary candidates were also interviewed.

Below, I discuss the method of framing and show the ways they were infused with a feminist outlook in order to (a) identify sex-related frames and (b) unpack if any, a gendered (power) relationship implicit.

## **Methodological Choices – Analysis**

### ***Framing***

The concept of mediation is news media's propensity to add to the facts (Patterson, 1996). Gendered mediation entails their penchant for different coverage of female and male candidates (Ross, 2004; Nesbitt-Larking, 2007; Trimble et al, 2012). Journalists use 'frames' in this mediation process (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Trimble & Treiberg, 2010). These news frames are manifest in their focus or lack thereof, language use and complementary visual information (Entman 1993; Pan & Kosicki 1993; Tankard 2001; Van Gorp 2007, Burke & Mazzarella, 2008). Many scholars have used framing analysis mostly on texts (Trimble et al 2010). Others have used both texts and visuals (Gidengil & Everitt, 1999; Reynolds & Barnett 2003; Semetko & Boomgaarden, 2007; Dan & Ihlen 2011; Dan & Iorgoveanu 2013;). A more current example of its verbal-visual use is Dan and Iorgoveanu's study on Romania which looked at media coverage of the most prominent female and male contenders for the European parliamentary elections.

From the literature review chapter, the concept of framing comes across as a workable analytical framework for, for example, feminist research because it implicates the focus of coverage by journalists as well as language use as means of constructing particular realities. However, it seems to lack an intentional mention and infusion of its use with critical indicators such as gender, ethnicity and race among others, although its application has been adapted as such by several feminist scholars and so to do a frame analysis on media depiction of women have meant identifying the gendered focus and language-use by the media (Trimble et al., 2012).

### ***Feminist-informed Framing Analysis***

Byerly and Ross (2006) posited, “Feminist communications scholarship has developed along two main lines. The most common has been the adaptation or extension of existing critical or cultural studies in ways that allow women’s experience or concerns to be addressed within existing theoretical frameworks. ....reworking these with a feminist inflection” (p. 102). They continued, “A second and less common line for feminist communication scholars has been the building-and naming-of new theories to enable some specific communication phenomenon associated with women’s experiences to be analyzed.”

I used framing in the first instance that Byerly and Ross described. Employing therefore a feminist frame analysis enabled me in an intentional way to explore a gendered salience of news coverage and language use i.e. what sex-related facts were emphasised or downplayed; included or excluded to create individual realities for either women or men: realities, particularly related to sex differentiated quality and quantity of coverage. Dan and Iorgoveanu (2013) have stated that “in the case of research on election coverage, framing refers to the practice of emphasizing a certain standpoint on a given person, issue, or event, and downplaying others” (p. 210). Stating a feminist frame analysis made its application more tailored and intentional in the distillation of sex-related differences. In addition, the focus of framing also helped to establish the dominant narratives put forth about candidates and further explored any gendered differences.

Gendered mediation theory shows us in what areas coverage of male and female candidates have been similar and different in terms of (in)visibility, tone, attributes and portrayal. Using those indicators, a feminist framing analysis looked at the sex related differences of media treatment via (in)visibility, tone, attributes and portrayal. Together

with content analysis, frames were first systematically quantified following which they were interpreted in-depth.

## **Data collection and analysis**

### ***Newspapers***

To explore the frames that the news media in Ghana portray the women politicians, I analysed the coverage of candidates of three, mixed-gender races in Ghana between 2008 and 2011 in four Ghanaian national newspapers using a mixed-methods approach of content, framing and feminist analyses. This was both to capture the breadth and depth of identified frames in news. The newspapers selected were national dailies which were the highest circulating and with highest readership and meant they would likely impact a larger number of the voting population. These newspapers also happened to be divided across state and private ownership. Ghanaian newspapers do not necessarily follow strict ideologies, although the two privately owned newspapers are deemed to be sympathetic towards the right wing New Patriotic Party (NPP). On the whole, the four newspapers were reputable in the newspaper landscape in Ghana with long established traditions of considerable balanced reporting. The selection of both private and state owned newspapers enabled a sense of balance given that the private ones which could have more freedom to cover news from varied perspectives sympathised with the opposition party (NPP) at the time between 2009 and 2011. This is because most likely, the powers that be would seek to exert considerable influence on the government owned newspapers which is sometimes the case in Ghana. Also, even because the cases were intra-party elections the

ideology of newspapers and influence of government in impacting coverage could as well be limited.

The four newspapers in the order of the highest circulating and highest readership were *The Daily Graphic*, *The Ghanaian Times*, *The Daily Guide* and *The Chronicle*. The first two leading newspapers were state-owned and the last two private-owned. The state-owned newspapers are ordered by every government department, ministry or agency as a fiat and so it is not surprising that both tend to be the highest circulating and with the highest readership. These newspapers are all part of the English press in Ghana which are influential and are considered as part of the quality press in Ghana as well. Also, they commanded a wide influence among the educated population and even the non-elite through the influence of newspaper reviews on broadcast networks in Ghana. They are influential in setting the agenda and influencing policy and opinions in Ghana's socio-political sphere.

Although there are quite a number of newspapers in Ghana and a huge proliferation of tabloids, as increased media freedom prevails in Ghana, these four were selected as 'representative' newspapers for the study.

### ***Case Selection***

Although all three cases could be considered as executive offices, the cases were across three different offices with differential stature and authority, which helps to see how women vying for different offices, even executive ones, were covered, and to explore their uniqueness and similarities. Cases were selected on the following criteria: a) a woman was contesting b) no woman had yet occupied that office and c) no woman had ever credibly

contested for that office. These cases also happen to be races of the three political parties who at the time had representation in parliament for its session between 2008 and 2012. This was important because the general elections in Ghana were held on 7th December 2008 and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and these political campaigns were all preparations by parties to find either the right candidate for the presidency, vice presidency or party leadership for consequent electoral success. Furthermore, while much research has looked at women competing as 'ordinary' election candidates and a growing body of work is now looking at women competing for Presidential or Vice-Presidential positions, hardly any work has looked at women who seek to become party leader, thus my study is breaking new ground. Since I was actually in Ghana in 2012. I was able to look at news coverage of women candidates during the 2012 election as well as interviewing women candidates of this same election. Data was collected and analysed for news coverage of the 2012 election but news stories were mostly sponsored profiles of women candidates by largely non-governmental organisations and they lacked the content and statistical significance to engage in meaningful analysis. However, this provided background information to interpreting however small aspect of the findings especially where in the interviews women complained that the media paid less attention to them and it was some non-governmental organisations that paid for airtime for them. Also, as a result of the fact that the presidential election run concurrently with the parliamentary and also because those elections and campaigns are locally based in constituencies, national newspapers hardly follow and focus on parliamentary candidates. In many constituencies, local radio stations are found to be more useful to reaching the particular constituents than national newspapers and candidates focus more on reaching their constituents through local radio than through national newspapers. These situations constrained my ability and approach

in also considering news coverage of parliamentary candidates of the 2012 election. Consequently, the cases selected included:

C1 the vice presidential candidate nomination race of the New Patriotic Party

C2 the Party leadership candidates race of the Convention People's Party and

C3 the Presidential candidate nominations race of the National Democratic Congress

These three political campaigns which took place between 2008 and 2011, were selected to study the contents of news coverage of the female and male candidates. The cases were selected because of their mixed-gendered nature, their novelty, and the prominent coverage given by newspapers culminating in a sizeable sample for analysis.

The research setting was Ghana because very little is known about the relationship between women, politics and media in non-western contexts. The target population was located there and the centres and newspaper archives to get the related newspapers to study were also in the same location. The Ghana News Agency (GNA) granted permission to enable me access their archives in response to a letter I wrote to them making the request. Earlier, I had visited the offices of the selected newspapers to explore the possibility of working from their archives. Although the newspapers mainly kept copies of their own publications, none of them had past copies for all the four selected newspapers for the study. Gaining permission to access the archives of the GNA which stored copies of the newspapers of my interest, saved me time and resources. I carried my scanner to the premises for the two-week period I was digging through the newspapers to select stories for each case study. The articles decided upon for each case were scanned and stored on my computer. Back in the United Kingdom (UK), prior to beginning analysis, I printed out the scanned stories for each and sorted them so that I could put articles appearing on

different pages together and code them as one. I coded articles “for both manifest (e.g., number of mentions) and latent (tone) content” (Woodall, Fridkin & Carle, 2010, p.94). The coding guide and the coding sheet employed are found as Appendice A and B (pages 368 and 371) respectively.

The coding framework offered a very in-depth newspaper coding guide with six components which provided for (1) coding the basic information of the newspaper such as the name, the date and the page number; (2) information about journalists' sex; (3) the sex, role and function of the people in news and whether their age, familial relation, and occupation were mentioned and if they were directly quoted. The other two categories were the (4) subject/topic of story and the (5) visual features on the page; (6) information about candidates as follows: candidate mention, focus on candidate, candidate quoted, tone on candidate, age, familial relations, appearance, novelty, professional attributes and character traits. These attributes like the rest of the markers were deducted from knowledge of the literature. However as the findings chapters would show, the specific personal attributes for each candidate were also induced as coding went along because they were qualitatively different. Although interest was in the candidates' section, the other five components were useful in offering context and seeing the story in all the nuances it could have taken. I coded all observations from newspapers myself. Overall, 198 newspapers were coded for all the three cases studied. Articles were coded for quantitative data and read for qualitative content noting quantitative patterns and qualitative descriptions of the various indicators especially about candidates.

## ***Interviews***

I used face-to-face, semi-structured interview with predetermined questions to guide the flow of interaction and with the aim of eliciting detailed responses about participants' views, knowledge and experiences. As previously noted, it would have made more sense to interview women candidates for 2012 election and simultaneously monitored the press for articles about the candidates which I did, but was content-wise and statistically constrained. Therefore, I conducted interviews with women candidates and looked at news coverage of other cases (women competing for their party leadership) with the goal to explore what we can learn from each case both uniquely and in similarities and not necessarily in terms of comparability. Byrne (2004) suggested "qualitative interviewing has been particularly attractive to researchers who want to explore voices and experiences which they believe have been ignored, misrepresented or suppressed in the past" (p. 182). Semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to "raise important issues not contained in the schedule" (Denzin, 1970, p.125). The questions I asked were not necessarily asked in a particular order. The unstructured style enabled me to follow up on some of the participants' interest and the schedule served largely as a guide and was not restrictive. I used probes and follow up questions for the women to expand, clarify and verify meanings allowing them also to give personal and detailed examples (Yates, 2004). As Bryman (2012) stated "semi-structured interviewing are used so that the researcher can keep more of an open mind about the contours of what he or she needs to know about, so that concepts and theories can emerge out of the data" (p. 12), an objective of this study for taking an inductive stance. In the selection of respondents, I used a convenience sample which is sometimes known by other names as an *accidental* or *availability* sample (Mutchnick & Berg, 1996; Babbie, 1998). Therefore, I interviewed candidates who were accessed and available.

Earlier I had considered a purposive sample where I was going to interview specific people who I deemed as vocal and more media present to offer their insights on their media relationship and portrayal. I also considered a sample where I interviewed those female and male candidates of the two major parties who contested for the same seat. The latter became the plan entering into the field. The fieldwork phase was between end of September (when I left the UK on the 19<sup>th</sup>) and early January (I left Ghana on 10<sup>th</sup> January), 2013. The period between October and December were very busy for the candidates because the elections were held on December 7 and then they had to carry out thanksgiving services and events in the communities and prepare for the holidays.

Overall, 18 women were interviewed, and most of the interviews happened after elections. Several took place on the day I was leaving for the UK when I went to the Parliament to find interviewees. I took advantage of the fact that it was the first sitting of parliament after the elections and so all parliamentarians were expected to be present. I was fortunate to meet some parliamentarians who knew my father who happens to be a constituency chairman of one of the political parties and for that moment my father's name secured for me the access I had used nearly three months to chase with so much difficulty. That day doubled as the only day I had conducted more than two interviews in a day, had a lot more parliamentarians willing to wait on me to interview them (because of my father) but I was unable to even conduct many more than I did and could because I was leaving for the UK that evening.

### ***Conducting a Thematic Frame Analysis of Interviews***

After the newspapers were collected and interviews conducted, I coded, analysed and wrote up first the newspaper findings, followed by the interview findings. I conducted a

thematic frame analysis through coding transcripts and identifying themes. Thematic analysis involves the study of data “to extract core themes that could be distinguished both between and within transcripts” (Bryman 2012, p.13). All interviews were fully transcribed and printed out. Interview times ranged between approximately 18 minutes and 1 hour, with about half the interviews 40 minutes and above. I coded each transcript. Before I started to code, I had developed a list of possible themes, based on the interviews I had conducted and transcribed. The aggregation of the issues defined the themes – the issues being the points raised by respondents in response to the questions I asked them.

On the day of interview, I explained to participants how the interview would take place and that I would ask a number of questions within the time they offered me. I also reiterated the fact that the data being collected was for my dissertation and they would be anonymised. I did also mention that they were free to opt out anytime or request to have a recording or the final written document. The interviews started with general questions around the respondents’ political backgrounds and media use to gauge how well placed they were to contribute meaningfully from both their experience and observation. Later I guided the conversations into their perceptions of their relationship with and portrayal by the media. I audio recorded all interviews with full consent from the respondents. I coded transcripts mainly as phrases or paragraphs. I expanded on initial themes as coding was being done, and also, in instances where previous themes couldn’t apply. Where previous themes loosely applied, I labelled twice to represent the different themes a paragraph, phrase or aspect of the transcript might have portrayed. While coding, I made marginal notes to remember to merge a theme with another in order to draw some form of explanation or note relationships. For example, I noted if a phrase or paragraph seemed to deviate from or corroborate the literature, among others. After coding, I grouped individual themes that emerged and proved salient to the women with their corresponding

excerpts and placed under each interview question they fell under, this time, using the electronic transcripts. After reviewing the themes, relevant themes conglomerated into wider thematic frames, others became variants to main themes and others stood alone. I decided on the three main relevant interview questions in line with the aim of the study and used the themes raised by respondents in presenting the findings. See Appendix C (page 373) for an example of how coding was executed on a transcript.

The codes/themes I raised have hardly lost their essence and context because generally those themes were used to respond to the questions under which they were raised, demonstrating that the immediate environment of the data was maintained. I identified themes in responses to questions and the recurrent nature of ideas in the transcripts. As Bryman (2012) noted, theme here refers to a category identified from the data and which relates to the research questions (p. 580). From this piece of analysed and organised data, I proceeded with my qualitative analysis of what the women said about their relationship with, treatment and portrayal by the media and how similar and different they were compared with their male colleagues. In presenting the findings, I have used verbatim quotations from interview transcripts in providing evidence, giving voice to the women, illustrating a point, and with the hope to deepen the understanding of readers (Corden and Sainsbury 2006, Bryman, 2012).

### **Self-reflection**

Before travelling to Ghana, I had already secured the list of candidates contesting the Parliamentary election in 2012 for one of the major parties in Ghana. There were other candidates from the other political party that I knew about and so I added them to the list of candidates and started making contact. I got the candidates' list for the other party when

I got to Ghana, after several visits and referrals. I established contact with candidates in multiple ways, through posting letters (while in the UK) and dropping some letters off when I got to Ghana. I also used Facebook, email and phone-calls. The plan before heading to the field was to interview both female and male candidates who were contesting for the same seat in the constituency. Since I had selected for the newspapers mixed-gender races, I had hoped to learn through interviews with both women and men how different or similar coverage was for the parliamentary candidates. After taking about two to three weeks to chase the candidates' lists, and as I was, now, able to identify the definite sample (female and male candidates of the two major political parties contesting for the same seat), and I made more contacts for interviewing candidates. In the sample, I also included seats being contested by two women representing the two major parties. This was in order to learn more about how coverage of same-sex candidates could compare and contrast with a mixed-gender kind. As a result of the fact that it was an electioneering period, candidates were incredibly busy in their constituencies and with campaigning. My being in the field and trying to make this match-making interviewing work proved very difficult as it was problematic to reach these earmarked candidates and secure interviews with them. Some of them ended up forgetting or cancelling out on me when I had arrived because other important matters had surfaced. In the end, after consulting my supervisor, I expanded the sample and refocused my attention to all candidates who would be available to be interviewed – both men and women. See Appendice D and E, (pages 381 and 382) for letters to candidates and GNA.

Consequently, given the limited time and resources plus the few women who were candidates, I had to refocus yet again (and now mainly on women) in order to get enough interviews. Dropping the male candidates gave me the chance to focus ultimately on making sure I got women to speak. The large numbers of men as candidates was not going

to let me achieve that, since I might have ended up with more interviews of men than women. It was appropriate to take this decision because one of my primary objectives was to learn about women's perceptions of the media with regards to their portrayal. Consequently, the new sample focused on all women candidates of the two major political parties. At the end, the candidates I got the chance to interview had either responded to one of my formal or semi-formal ways of establishing contact, and they had arranged interviews in their homes, offices, cars or beauty salons. I caught up with some at events and others were those I met in parliament and asked for an interview. Even focusing on women only was not without the challenge of cancellations and (in)accessibility.

Interviewing people across the political divide that were comfortable with me was positive as I saw a shift from moments of closure to moments of disclosure and openness. I understood this switch because of the culture of mistrust in our politics when I first approached candidates for interviews. My interest in women and in politics and my father's positive image facilitated access and more open conversations which were relaxed and mutually enjoyable. Although I was able to interview two journalists and eleven men, these data have been dropped, as they are not essential in answering the research question.

Retrospectively, I believe the methodological choices I made were the best ones given the knowledge and previous literature, however had I known better, I may have organised the study to look at especially radio instead of newspapers to answer my research question. Interviewing the women politicians revealed that in women's political communication efforts and media coverage in Ghana, the radio plays a more central role than newspapers which have been mainly used in western studies in ascertaining media depictions of women candidates. The criteria of highest circulating and highest readership in selecting newspapers saw the exclusion of tabloids that could have impacted on the level of slant

and negativity in the coverage of the women candidates. Potentially, this could have increased more aligned findings between the newspaper and interview chapters especially in terms of the frames and the level of negativity as the women interviewed spoke from their experience with a variety of media including broadcast and print, and quality and tabloid newspapers.

In terms of approaching interviewees and especially male politicians in the future, I may be more circumspect about any use of the word gender. I seem to be 'lucky' that the first time I used it was to one Member of Parliament who considered me a "god-daughter" and I was slightly 'rebuked' and guided to not mention it openly for obvious consequences. I took instruction. The second male parliamentarian was actually silent and didn't offer his time and it was later when we met again and he got to know who my dad was that he became more open to me. By that time, I realised what it was that made him uninterested the first instance I approached him with "my gender issues" as it would be popularly referred to in Ghana.

The next chapter is a discussion of the findings of the party leadership race of the Convention People's Party in 2011.

## **Chapter V: Findings and discussions on news coverage of the 2011 chairpersonship race of The Convention People's Party.**

### **Introduction**

The Convention People's Party (CPP) is one of the political parties in Ghana, considered as a third force to the de facto two major political parties: the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The CPP was the first political party popularly elected to govern Ghana in 1957 following British colonial government. The CPP leader Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in Ghana's first military coup d'état on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1966. Ghana was restored to a multi-party democracy in 1992 after several interludes of coups d'état, enabling the CPP amongst other parties to contest the 1992 elections. While the CPP has over the years won parliamentary seats, it has not been elected again to steer the affairs of the nation since the 1992 constitution.

This chapter presents findings and discussions of the news coverage of the CPP's leadership race in 2011. In this race were four contestants: two female and two male. Samia Christina Yaba Nkrumah was the only daughter among the four children of Kwame Nkrumah, founder of CPP and Ghana's first President.

At the age of three, Samia Nkrumah had left the shores of Ghana when her father was overthrown: now she was in the race to be party leader. The other woman was Madam Araba Bentsi-Enchill, at the time the 2nd Vice-Chair of the CPP. The two male candidates were the then CPP chairman, Mr. Ladi Nylander and a former chairman, Professor Edmund Delle. Samia Nkrumah, now offering to serve as party leader, was at the time the sole CPP Member of Parliament (MP), having won a seat in the Parliamentary elections held in 2008, consequently saving the face of her party in a crucial election that could have thrown the

CPP out of parliament. Samia Nkrumah won the chairpersonship race followed by the two men, and Bentsi-Enchil placed last.

This case is important for study because: 1) it was the first time a woman was contesting for party leader in Ghana, but also, because two women were in the race alongside men candidates; 2) one of the candidates was the daughter of a former president of Ghana, and her participation generated a lot of media interest because of her father; and 3) for many Ghanaians still fond of former President Nkrumah and nostalgic about his vision and charisma, the participation of Samia Nkrumah in this race represented hope for the survival of the CPP as a credible and necessary third force a number of Ghanaians wish for our multi party democracy; hence this race was a landmark in Ghana's political history. The use of this case study aims to offer insight into news media coverage and the framing of political women and men in Ghana.

The National delegates' congress was held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011, when elections for the candidates took place. For this thesis, thirty-two news articles were collected, with coverage of the campaign at the start of the month to the election and post-election coverage of the candidates to the end of the month, from the four leading national daily newspapers: *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Daily Guide* and *Chronicle*. Articles were selected for three reasons: their reference to all or any of the candidates in the context of the race; and/or the delegates' Congress; and/or the chairpersonship race.

Table 1 shows the distribution of stories by the source. More stories were collected from the state-run *Daily Graphic*, followed by the two private papers, the *Daily Guide* and the *Chronicle*, and the least number of articles from the *Ghanaian Times* (state-run). Fifty-six per cent of the stories were collected from the *Daily Graphic*, 22 per cent from the *Daily Guide*, 19 per cent from the *Chronicle* and 3 per cent from the *Ghanaian Times*.

**Table 1- Distribution of Stories by Newspaper Title**

<u>Newspaper Title</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
The Daily Graphic	18	56
The Daily Guide	7	22
The Ghanaian Times	1	3
<u>The Chronicle</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>19</u>
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Overall, there were more articles collected from the state-run papers together (59%) than the privately owned ones (41%). As the CPP does not operate any newspapers of its own, and because of its historic place in Ghana’s independence history and narrative as the first party in government after the British, it has continued to enjoy the support of both government and opposition media. As a result, it is expected that media coverage on candidates may not be unnecessarily prejudicial against specific candidates. Also, since it is an internal election, opposition or government media coverage of candidates would less likely be particularly negative because of the lack the lack of immediate political threat.

### **Coverage on Candidates’ Visibility**

Table 2 shows the differences in visibility which are seen across three indicators of the news coverage of the candidates. Visibility entailed the following: 1) frequency of mention, 2) frequency of actual focus, and 3) frequency of quotes. The “frequency of mention” indicated the number of articles that mentioned a candidate. Within an article, a candidate may be mentioned more than once but the article was only coded once. The second indicator for visibility, “frequency of actual focus”, counted the number of times an article focused on a candidate. An article could mention any number of candidates but it would be

recorded for the candidate who was the main focus of discussion and had the greatest mention across the article. Where an article focused on more than one candidate it was recorded as such (See Table 2 for e.g., “Nkrumah and Delle”; and “Nkrumah and Nylander”). The third indicator, “quoted”, determined the number of times a candidate’s words were quoted verbatim across news articles. In order to account for N (32) - the total number of articles sourced, Table 2 states where articles focused rather on party politics than candidates, even if it had mentioned them.

Table 2 shows that collectively, the two female candidates were mentioned, focused on and quoted more than the two male candidates. Compared to each other as candidates however, Nkrumah gained more to increase the frequency of the female candidates’ indicators for visibility. Individually, Samia Nkrumah was the candidate who was mentioned, focused on and quoted more than the rest.

**Table 2 - Assessment of Candidates’ Visibility as determined by the 3 indicators**

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Actual Mention</u>	<u>Actual Focus (%)</u>	<u>Actual Quoted</u>
Bentsi-Enchill	10	-	-
Nkrumah	25	21(66)	5
Nylander	13	2 (6)	1
Delle	12	1 (3)	-
Nkrumah and Nylander	-	1 (3)	-
Nkrumah and Delle	-	1 (3)	-
<u>Party Politics</u>	-	<u>6 (19)</u>	-
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>32 (100)</b>	<b>6</b>

The N for ‘actual focus’ is equal to N(32) - of number of stories collected as each story was considered to fit into one of the indicators under the heading ‘candidate’ on the table.

First, in terms of mention: Nkrumah was mentioned nearly 3 times more than the other female contestant Bentsi-Enchill, a little over twice more than Edmund Delle and nearly twice more than Ladi Nylander (the incumbent at the time). Samia Nkrumah had the highest mention (25), followed by Ladi Nylander (13), Professor Edmund Delle (12) and lastly Bentsi-Enchill (10).

Second, in terms of focus: 66 per cent of articles focused on Nkrumah, 19 per cent on Party Politics, 6 per cent on Nylander, 3 per cent each on Delle, Nkrumah and Nylander, and Nkrumah and Delle. The other woman candidate (Bentsi-Enchill) had no article focusing on her. Here again, Samia Nkrumah was the leading candidate who gained news media attention and had the most number of stories written extensively about her.

Third, in terms of candidate quoted: Nkrumah was the candidate with the highest figure, quoted five times, and then Nylander, quoted only once.

Several studies have shown that women receive less coverage compared with men (Washburn & Washburn, 2011; Jalalzai, 2006; Kahn, 1996), however, this was only true for Bentsi-Enchill, and not Nkrumah. Other studies also have confirmed that difference in coverage, which favoured women candidates, was mostly related to their novelty and the importance of the office they contested (Dan & Iorgoveanu, 2013, Meeks, 2012, Washburn & Washburn, 2011; Hinojosa, 2010). So women who contested for higher offices, also as yet not occupied by a woman, would normally attract media attention because of their novelty, which may potentially increase their coverage. Studies on Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin for the U.S. presidential nomination and vice-presidential bids respectively (Meeks, 2012, Washburn & Washburn, 2011; Woodall, Fridkin & Carle, 2010; Bystrom, 2010) and others on Irene Saez of Venezuela (Hinojosa, 2010) and Cristina Fernandez de

Kirchner of Argentina (Piscopo, 2010), confirmed a focus on novelty and the importance of the presidential office in increasing their media coverage over their male competitors.

For the two women (Nkrumah and Bentsi-Enchill), novelty coverage was expected; as it was also the first time women were contesting for main leadership of a political party in Ghana. In fact, Gidengil and Everitt (2000) mentioned that women are rarely party leaders and so mostly, women as party leaders are therefore novelty. However, it was only Nkrumah whose exceptionality earned her coverage far exceeding the rest of the candidates. Generally from the news articles, there was little to no coverage on being the first women to contest for the top party job. So novelty coverage leading to the elections did not necessarily suffice in the first place, meaning that Bentsi-Enchill, like Nkrumah, could not benefit as such. However, Nkrumah increased her coverage with the novelty frame when she won the elections for party leader of the CPP, where now, news articles focused more on her being the first female to be party leader. A difference in coverage between the two women (and also, Nkrumah and the rest of the male candidates) therefore was affected by the novelty coverage on Nkrumah which rather focused on her victory, that being understandable as most of the news articles were post-congress.

Moreover, another factor that increased media coverage for candidates is celebrity status, as media is inclined to follow fame (Harmer & Wring, 2013). Under celebrity influence, only Nkrumah was thus covered. When she entered the race, coverage was more framed for her as the daughter of Ghana's first president and she seemed to have been considered, as a result, as more viable than the rest of the candidates. Nylander, Bentsi-Enchill and Delle did not appear to have any important familial connections; hence differences in coverage was also as a result of the absence of an important factor that Nkrumah had and which seemed to be deciding the elections. For instance, the *Daily Guide* reported:

even before the votes were cast, opponents, journalists and observers at the CPP's national delegates' congress had overwhelmingly anticipated a comprehensive victory for the daughter of Ghana's first president (September 12, 2011, p.3).

This suggests that Bentsi-Enchill and the other two male candidates did not appear at the time to be a preferred choice, given the presence of Nkrumah in the race, hence it appears that they were considered as less viable compared to Nkrumah; as it was perhaps very obvious that Dr. Nkrumah's daughter would and should win the elections. Media attention then was more focused on Nkrumah because of perceptions around her viability, influenced by her celebrity status. Consequently, this potentially detracted from the amount and quality of the coverage of Bentsi-Enchill, Nylander and Delle. Bystrom's (2005) study confirmed the influence of the level of viability of candidate Elizabeth Dole on media content, and Dan and Iorgoveanu (2013) have attributed candidates' viability and attributes in European elections in Romania to influence their coverage. The celebrity focus of the media on the candidate Nkrumah seemed very potent, such that the candidates framed themselves to the important political figure in the CPP – Dr. Nkrumah, and argued their own point of relationship with him. Samia Nkrumah's celebrity status therefore, did not appear to only define her campaign and coverage, but also, that of her opponents. For example, Nkrumah made her claim and self-framed accordingly, as she was reported to have said "I want you to honour Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah with your vote" and to this declaration, it was reported that about "2000 delegates responded with a thunderous applause that exploded through the roof of the pavilion D ...and reverberated several metres away from the pavilion" (*Daily Graphic*, September 13, 2011, p.1, para 3). Here, we see the response of the delegates to her familial connection as very useful and important to them. On the part of her opponents, Nylander also stated his claim to Dr. Nkrumah, however loose, and said "Comrades, I am the devil you know. I am also Kwame Nkrumah's

child. When you vote for me, you vote for Kwame Nkrumah” (para 6). Delle also claimed his lineage to Dr. Nkrumah through his placards which read, “Nkrumah is for all of us” (para 8). All these indicating how potent the name of Dr. Nkrumah was in ones ability to secure the office. Bentsi-Enchill was absent in this claim contest for a slice of celebrity via Dr. Nkrumah by the candidates. Possibly, she found it delusional and unimportant to claim a lineage to Dr. Nkrumah as a daughter, when the ‘blood’ daughter herself (Samia Nkrumah) was on the ticket.

The novelty and celebrity focus of the media which seemed to have dictated the differences in coverage for the candidates notwithstanding, one would expect that especially the incumbent Nylander would also be seen as experienced, and so, more viable than the inexperienced Nkrumah. The same applies to Delle who had also held the office of party leader before; and again, Bentsi-Enchill who was still a second Vice-Chair. In the light of their previous positions, it could have been expected that the other three candidates would have favourably competed given their experience. Moreover, it could be expected that during their term of office in the various positions they would have built important relationships in the media that they could have benefited from at the time of the campaign. However, it did not appear to be the case, given such an abysmal performance on their part in the election. This stands to suggest that they were perhaps dormant at their posts. As at the time they were at the helm of affairs, the CPP was still struggling on its feet to be competitive in the Ghanaian political landscape, and it is very likely that the appearance of Samia Nkrumah to challenge them forced these candidates to wake up. Over the years, leaders of the CPP appeared to have lost the vision to build the party to become a more competent third force, and normally used the CPP’s votes as a bargaining chip with the two major parties during elections. It is therefore possible that the incumbent and the other

experienced candidates might have failed to build a suitable profile over the course of their official duties that could have withstood the candidature of Nkrumah.

Moreover, it was also very apparent that Nkrumah's celebrity was also very important and, all things being equal, seemed to have singularly brought about the visible differences, as it appeared to have been a powerful negotiating and mediating force in her very prominent media coverage and consequently, her election. Since 1966, when Dr. Nkrumah was overthrown, many political elites in the CPP, and Ghanaians at large, have savoured a reincarnation of him. To the CPP, Dr. Nkrumah left too wide a gap, and consequently many have thought that it is only his children who could fill this and revive the CPP. Samia Nkrumah's appearance on the political scene therefore seemed to be exactly what almost everybody had been waiting for to happen. These sentiments appear to have gone a long way to put Samia Nkrumah ahead of all the other candidates, including the incumbent and the other experienced candidates. The latter subsequently became less competitive, apparently due to both their own ineffective handling of the CPP as a party, which potentially have affected their chances and media relations, and also to the absence of a powerful political lineage. Samia Nkrumah's viability was demonstrated in, for instance, reports by one newspaper when it carried, "her name was on the lips of virtually everyone (both delegates and non-delegates) the *Daily Graphic* spoke to ahead of the election, apart from the fact that her supporters appeared to be the most vociferous in the contest of singing, drumming and dancing" (September 13, 2011, p.1., para 12). Considering Ms. Nkrumah's familial connections, her warm nature and her charismatic qualities, her entry into the race was destined to be a buzz among the people as the newspapers reported, and as the amount and quality of her coverage evidenced (see Table 2).

Beyond viability, personal characteristics, novelty and celebrity claims, considering that Ms. Nkrumah was also younger, slim, fair-coloured and tall, she would normally be

considered attractive to the media, whereas Bentsi-Enchill was a larger, older woman with a down-cut and was likely to be considered less desirable to the media by prevailing beauty standards. The two male opponents were palpably 'old-school' in age and ideas, plus, as we know from several scholars, the media would be likely to pay less attention to the appearance and age of men candidates (O'Neill and Savigny, 2016; Ross, 2002). The *Ghanaian Times*, for example, made readers aware of Ms. Nkrumah's youthfulness. It reported: "Samia Yaba Nkrumah, daughter of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, has made history in the nation's political landscape by becoming the first female chairperson of a political party." It continued, "the youthful Samia Nkrumah polled a whopping 1,151 of the 2,300 votes at the Convention People's Party (CPP) national delegates congress" (September 12, 2011, pp. 1 and 4). Moreover, Ms. Nkrumah's youthfulness was even recognised and implied by her opponents. Prof. Edmund Delle commended her "for her tenacity and vitality" (*Daily Graphic*, September 10, 2011, p.12). Her youthfulness was not lost on the elders of her party who considered it as an asset and so surely, if these constituencies saw her youth as desirable, then the media mostly likely did, as well. Earlier, before the elections, six elders of the party (also professors) threw their weight behind Ms. Nkrumah, saying that their party needed a "fresh, bold and imaginative leader" for the party (*Daily Guide*, September 9, 2011, p.6). Samia Nkrumah's age, via descriptions of youthfulness and actual mention of age, was mentioned altogether four times. Although the figure seems to show that it was not necessarily a key interest area for the media in terms of frequency, nor was it unrecognised also qualitatively in determining how drawn the media were to cover her campaign. The differences in visibility among the candidates seem to have been highly negotiated to the advantage of Nkrumah through attributes of celebrity, charisma, novelty, and youthfulness.

## **Coverage on Candidates' Attributes**

Candidates' attributes were determined as professional and personal. Professional attributes included educational attainment, occupational background and political experience (demonstrated by public office and party positions held and related political accomplishments). Personal attributes were decided as: 1) character traits - descriptions of candidates' character, values and qualities; 2) appearance – candidates' looks and fashion sense; 3) age - actual year or descriptions of being youthful or elderly and; 4) familial relation – role in family as mother, father, son, daughter, wife, husband etc. As a result of the fact that the women were 'firsts' in contesting for the chair position, coverage as novelty was coded, and another specific trait was introduced to capture possibility of a 'non-conformist' portrayal.

Nkrumah was the only candidate with a substantive coverage for the attributes identified. She was the only one covered in the novelty frame (13 times), as she became the first woman leader of the party. Her familial coverage was equally prominent and was mentioned 16 times. So were her character traits, 10 times to Nylander and Delle's one-time references. Coverage as a non-conformist featured less prominently at 2 times, with the age and appearance frames at 4 times and once. Overall, Nkrumah, the only candidate with such focus, was more framed in personal terms by her character traits, familial connections and novelty to the neglect of the other three candidates who seemed to have accessorized the ticket just by media's failure to cover them.

It is understandable that with more news articles focusing, rather than mentioning her (Nkrumah), (see Table 2); there was more room for explicatory and evaluative content than that of a cursory nature. The findings show that the age and appearance of candidates were of rather low-key interest to the media. There was also no mention of any of the

candidates' professional attributes except the one-time reference to Nkrumah as a "freelance journalist" and then later we learnt "Samia is not a political neophyte, nor is she unknown in activist circles. She was one of the founders of 'Africa Must Unite', an NGO that promotes her father's ideals in a very practical way" (*Daily Graphic* September 17, 2011, p.10, para 16). These professional mentions seemed to be forced and an afterthought. However, any reader would have some knowledge of her professional background but not that of the rest of the candidates. Since the age of three, when Samia Nkrumah left Ghana, almost nothing was heard about the children of Fathia Nkrumah and Dr. Nkrumah. Her return was clearly an opportunity for the media to update the public knowledge of her, yet the public was left to choke on a desire to know more. Thus, as Piscopo (2010) stated "whereas some female executive candidates might find their political resumes overly-scrutinized" it appears that Samia Nkrumah's qualifications seem to have been "downplayed and her celebrity highlighted" (p. 215). Little was disclosed about Nkrumah's credentials, but media paid attention to her familial connection, with scant media attention given to her education and professional portfolio, even as the media did to the rest of the candidates. Consequently, with coverage heavily skewed to her familial connection, her success seemed to have become her father's not hers, since she was elected in the absence of substantive coverage on her political and professional experience. Jalalzai (2016) has questioned and interrogated one key circumstance in the election of women to top political offices by asking whether the election of women presidents in Latin America goes beyond family ties, as many appeared to have grown their political careers through male mentorships, husbands, and fathers. Even as the media evidence shows, Nkrumah was largely voted for as her father's daughter, and that was the choice of delegates and doesn't take away her ability to have thrived in the political space without her father's name. Even today, there are just snippets and hazy knowledge of her previous life before

returning to Ghana. Legitimacy may continue to become a problem as her father's image is increasingly seen. For Nkrumah's own ticket as a candidate, she was decorative, as a result of coverage which heavily focused on her father, with her in his shadow. Given that Bentsi-Enchill, Nylander and Delle were poorly covered by the media in both quantity and quality terms, culminating in almost an absence in media visibility, it is understandable that they neither seemed to be competitive, nor gained any meaningful votes. For a start, they appeared to have been considered less viable which potentially fed into poor visibility, and their consequent loss. The focus of media coverage was dictated by celebrity coverage, thereby, having a near total absence of their personal and professional attributes.

Given that Nkrumah dominated media coverage among the rest of the candidates, for example, many more articles focused on her than any other candidate, it was not surprising that her more extensive coverage included some attributes. In summary, although the appearance and age of female candidates was of very limited interest to the media, the findings confirm that the personal, rather than professional, attributes of female candidates would seem to dominate their coverage, given the chance, as seen in Nkrumah's case via her coverage in personal terms, to the neglect of her occupational background and political experience. As this thesis shows in the literature review, numerous studies indicated that media descriptions of political women mostly have a personal focus, concentrating on women's looks, their marital status and their familial roles and connections (Bystrom,, 2006; Banwart, Bystrom & Robertson, 2003; Ross, 2002).

### **News Media Frames: Candidates' Personal Attributes**

The following discussion focuses on these particular frames which were manifested (or absent) in the media coverage of the candidates' attributes.

### ***Novelty coverage***

Men are hardly new on the political scene and so coverage as novelty was not expected. Novelty coverage as already mentioned focused on the leadership election victory of Nkrumah, and as a result Bentsi-Enchill, together with the men could not have been thus framed. Nkrumah's novelty was mentioned 13 times. Benchi-Enchill had no article focusing on her novelty. Her coverage was largely as 'also ran' (Ross & Comrie, 2012). Nkrumah was portrayed as someone who has made history in Ghana and Africa at large by becoming the first party leader of a major political party. Such seemed to be the theme reported by the *Daily Guide*:

By her enviable achievement, Samia has made political history as she becomes the first woman to be the chairperson of any political party in the country (September 12, 2011, p.3)

In another edition, the *Daily Guide* again reported:

The election of Hon. Samia Nkrumah clearly demonstrates how our democracy has grown to accept women into mainstream Ghanaian politics. Indeed, the first woman in Africa to be elected to the position of national Chairman of a major political party is a Ghanaian and we must be proud of that (September 14, 2011, p.14).

Nkrumah's novelty was covered by the *Chronicle* as well and was also celebrated and recognised by opposition parties. Her novelty was thus reported:

The NDC views Samia's endorsement as historic in Ghana's body politics, being the first woman to lead a major political party like CPP (September 14, 2011, p.2)

In addition, Nkrumah's novelty coverage as the first female party leader in Ghana was as frequent, and was heavily intertwined with her coverage as daughter of the first president of Ghana. Having a dominant familial coverage across all newspaper titles, it was not too unexpected that at the point of her 'own' success via her election to the party leadership position, Nkrumah was still covered by her familial connection alongside, and therefore seemed to still be portrayed somehow, as an adjunct of the father's legacy.

According to the *Ghanaian Times* (September 12, 2011):

Samia Yaba Nkrumah, daughter of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, has made history in the nation's political landscape by becoming the first female chairperson of a political party (p.1).

By this feat, Ms. Nkrumah, the only CPP member in Parliament, becomes the first woman leader of the party, which won independence for the country under Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 (p. 3).

The *Daily Graphic* also persisted in expressing her novelty alongside her familial linkages:

Ms. Samia Yaba Christina Nkrumah, the only daughter of Ghana's first president, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, cut a slice of history when she became the first-ever female leader and chairman of a political party in Ghana (September 12, 2011, p.1).

The 'first woman' frame clearly resulted in more press coverage for Nkrumah, as other studies have shown it did for other women candidates (Falk, 2010). Scholars such as Murray (2010) have argued that novelty frames overshadow coverage of the substantive credentials of women, and when such coverage wanes, the public is left with limited credible knowledge of the women worth competing for their vote. Although Nkrumah's 'first woman' frame was after she had won, the findings show that coverage neither focused on her credentials leading to the contest. This could potentially make the case that whenever the 'first woman' frame is engaged, either for women in the competition or victorious women, there is the possibility that women's credentials are still less focused on

overall. This is supported by a number of studies showing that coverage is less likely to frame women by their professional attributes and more on personal terms (Aday & Devitt, 2001; O'Neill & Savigny, 2016).

While the 'first woman' frame is able to increase coverage, it highlights women's novelty and emphasises "the notion of women as out of place and unnatural in the political sphere" (Falk, 2008, p.37). According to Murray (2010), the political consequences women thus come to face include, for instance, the fact that each new generation of women candidates may be required "to reinvent the wheel" as novelty portrayals effects the deletion of "women's legacy from public consciousness", creating the impression that "every woman who stands for executive office is the first woman to do so" (p. 14). Current media reports on Hillary Clinton's bid for the presidential nomination of the United States indicate that Clinton, unlike in the 2008 primary, is no longer downplaying the 'first woman' frame in 2016. Even though Clinton's coverage in 2008 was comparatively dominant, studies such as Bystrom's (2010) and Meek's (2012) suggested coverage was increased via other attributes as well, predominantly negative, such as her appearance, familial connection, and her perceived non-domesticity, among others (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; McGinley, 2009; Lawrence & Rose, 2010).

Novelty coverage has also signified other positive forms of coverage such as notions of change, and breaking away from the past (Jalalzai, 2008; Jalalzai & Krook, 2010; Murray, 2010). Sirleaf Johnson and Michele Bachelet's novelty coverage was intertwined with ascriptions of the dawn of a new era; a break from the macho politics that led Liberia to war, and, for Bachelet, a new economic administration, different from old policies spearheaded by the male doyens of their country's politics (Adams, 2010; Franceschet & Thomas, 2010; Anderson, Diabah & Mensah, 2011). Nkrumah's representation as a reincarnation of her father, a messianic unifier and resuscitator of the CPP's political

fortunes (discussed further below), was woven into her newness and novelty; she was a new and positive thing happening in the Ghanaian political landscape. Murray (2010) queried, however that, such a portrayal comes at a price, and that a “woman who is new and different is, by definition, lacking in the experience and networks which are expected of a leader. Even when a woman possesses the necessary experience, this may be underestimated due to the emphasis on the woman’s newness and difference” (p. 14).

There was almost no coverage, and so negligible, on the professional, political and educational background of Nkrumah by the media, as was the case for the other candidates. Also, we see how the media neglected those aspects in order to herald her novelty, lineage, newness and difference, and her celebrity, as van Zoonen (2006), van Zoonen and Harmer (2011) and Harmer and Wring (2013) observed that female politicians are more often represented as celebrities.

### ***Appearance and Age***

The findings show that the media displayed an overall interest in the personal attributes of the female candidates (specifically Nkrumah) than the males (O’Neill & Savigny, 2016). Nkrumah’s appearance was mentioned only once, and references to her youthfulness and actual description of her date of birth given as biographical information were mentioned, 4 times, indicating that compared with the rest of the indicators on her personal attributes, and together with the absence of any such coverage for Bentsi-Enchill, Nylander and Delle, the media showed a rather low-key interest. As the media would normally not be interested in the age and appearance of male candidates, the absence of coverage focusing on their appearance and age reflects the dominant literature. For the women candidates, such an absence, while very uncommon has also been carefully corroborated by a cross-

national study conducted by Gracia-Blanco & Wahl-Jorgensen (2012), which made similar observations where their sample showed a relative lack of interest in the physical appearance of women ministers in the majority of the countries, particularly in Spain and France. Yet, the sample from the United Kingdom (UK) was hugely different, consistent with findings from the multi-national studies by Ross (2002) where women politicians in the UK, New Zealand and South Africa implicated the media in showing an incessant interest in their appearance and sartorial style. This difference could potentially be an attribute within English media, as French and Spanish cultures seem more elaborate in their appearance. Other studies have shown that, in fact, all politicians (both female and male) attract personal coverage from the media (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Gonchar, 2014; O'Neill and Savigny, 2016). Male candidates such as Barack Obama and McCain have had some media attention to their funny ears and cheeks (Gonchar, 2014); the appearance and personal qualities of the UK's Ed Miliband have been variously mocked, and British male MPs have also had the media covering them in personal terms (O'Neill and Savigny, 2016). However, these studies also showed that personal coverage has been more of routine for women than for men politicians. O'Neill and Savigny (2016) showed by content analysis of a wide range of British press over a period of two decades that news media's focus on the personal was tilted against women.

In many previous studies, when the focus has been on women's appearance and age, they have been used to trivialise them. Murray (2010) mentioned that "women who are not considered sufficiently desirable are subjected to negative comparisons about their appearance ... appearance therefore becomes a double bind, ... women are either trivialized for being pretty or ostracized for being plain. ... Conversely, appearance is less prominent in the media coverage of men candidates" (p. 13). Women candidates such as Merkel have been variously scorned, by especially the Western German media with

reference to her East European fashion style and old lady fashion sense, along with her choice of purple jackets (Wiliarty, 2010). Ségolène Royal of France and Cristina Fernández were portrayed as too flashy and vain, with their cosmetic beauty and high fashion sense, and for Fernandez in particular, even her high taste in the kind of bottled water that she consumed (Murray, 2010; Piscopo, 2010). Other political women such as Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin have also come under extreme media attacks (Heldman & Wade, 2011; Gonchar, 2014). Julie Posetti mentioned of Hillary's media depictions:

Hillary has been reduced to wrinkles in a pants suit. ... when a woman of Hillary's character, experience and intelligence is deemed unfit for the White House because of perceptions the voting public will be turned off by the prospect of watching a woman age before their eyes (Posetti, Crikey, December 20, 2007, para 1 and 3).

When media talk about women's appearance and age, it affects how voters view their qualifications for office (Aday & Devitt, 2001; Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Gonchar, 2014). This is mainly because "the traditional news media tends to associate older male politicians with experience, a female politician's age is commonly discussed by major media pundits, especially as derisive commentary" (Gonchar, 2014, p.14). Age and appearance appear interconnected in their use. For instance, analysis of the portrayals of Hillary Clinton on online news blogs showed pictures of Clinton portrayed as "haggard and tired" and "emphasized her age and physical flaws" (Gonchar, 2014, p.26). Many women in especially western cultures are often made by the media to be insecure about their physical appearance, as the media constantly drive attention to their appearance and make them self-conscious (Gonchar, 2014). As a result, it is injurious to a woman candidate's campaign to be portrayed with attention on the so-called 'flaws' women are seen to have, further emphasised by their ageing.

Propitiously, the qualitative analysis for this study showed that neither appearance nor age was any meaningful focus of the media for the candidates. The only mention of Nkrumah's appearance and the 4 times mention of her age were more positive than negative, as her appearance, in this instance, portrayed her to have a sense of composure, calm and maturity. The paper reported that she was "neatly dressed in all white" and her youthfulness was in the light of having a riveting ability to vitalise the ageing political ideas and elders of the party of Old Ghana (excerpt on her youthfulness used under 'visibility' coverage above).

### ***Character Traits***

The literature review showed that a cross section of past studies found that not only do voters hold stereotypical opinions about women and men, but also use gender stereotypes in assessing women and men candidates. Consequently, through these stereotypical assessments, voters and sometimes media both perceive that women and men possess different qualities and hold different strengths suitable to different aspects of the political tasks at hand (Dolan, 2004; Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993a, b; Murray, 2010). Even more, these traits may be more focused on by the media, as they may seem required of their gender to perform. Coverage of candidates' traits is one of the ways gendered framing takes place, either by using masculine imagery for women, or feminising their qualities. Coverage on the traits of Bentsi-Enchill was absent, and the rest was only coded for once for Nylander and Delle. Again, given that she had more elaborate coverage, Samia Nkrumah's character traits were mentioned 10 times.

In an interview with one of the groups for Nylander, they portrayed him as an effective leader who they perceived as having being successful in post, and therefore should be re-elected. According to the group communicator:

It is during his administration that the party has seen real discipline, proper role of the elders (council of elders), re-branding of the CPP, shadow cabinet ministers, early congress and the fielding of credible parliamentary candidates, proper accountability and even the progress made with the Nkrumahist unity talks ... why should we experiment with the chairmanship of the party (Daily Graphic, September 3, 2011, p.12)

The details given in this description of Nylander touched on what can be considered very important tasks of a party leader, and therefore by directing attention to these details, he was framed as experienced, and more able to push the goals of the CPP forward, if elected.

One article headlined “Delle outlines timetable for Election 2012” depicted him as a thinker and a planner, and someone who had in mind the future goal of winning elections for the CPP. The Chairpersonship primary was not over, but he had already revealed plans and activities for the then impending elections, representing him as an able and visionary leader. Coverage on the men were gender congruent, and as it does not, either, deviate from the perceptions of leadership or be skewed to a seriously typical manhood, it can be estimated that coverage was positive and they were framed them within acceptable limits of their gender.

Coverage on Nkrumah’s traits was more diverse. She was spoken of as the candidate with good intent and plans i.e. “she wants to do well for the party” as well as being the one with passion, i.e. “a burning fire in her belly”, with the additional description that she was rational, that is “she has a very steady head on her shoulders” to deliver on party goals, and for which delegates should elect her. Especially at the time of this race, the person that

party members looked for was someone who would “do well” for their good and the good of the party, i.e. revamping the party and working hard with the presidential candidate to win elections which has been far from their reach for a number of years. Although Delle and Nylander have occupied this position, and had their supporter groups point to their experience and a consequent ability to achieve these goals, it did not appear to have been convincing enough. Delle and Nylander have alternated the Party Chair positions of the CPP, always leaving with dwindling fortunes in the general elections. Framing Samia Nkrumah as, also, someone who has the goal to do the expected, and while not experienced in this particular job, as were the others, having the passion to see through the task, was very positive to her candidature. She was portrayed as rational, compassionate, and passionate about the party and the good of the country:

I have met Samia face-to-face only once but she left me with the impression that she has a very steady head on her shoulders and a burning fire in her belly. She wants to do well for the party and this country’ (*Daily Graphic*; September 17, 2011, p.10, Para 11);

... Samia is not a political neophyte’ (para 16)

Here, Nkrumah was portrayed positively, even though by the positive tone, coverage was gendered. The point when the writer presented Nkrumah as leaving him impressed suggested that perhaps, before their interaction, he had lower expectations of her abilities and suitability for the job at hand, or he might have been neutral. If Nkrumah therefore left him positively smitten, it needed mentioning and taking note of. It is possible that the writer’s lower expectations were clearly not informed by anything concrete he had known or learned about her, as his own writing suggests: “I have met Samia face-to-face only once” – just when he actually did meet her. It seems to prove that the writer’s views were perhaps informed by societal perceptions around a gendered ability, where it was

convenient and plausible to him, leading him to underestimate Nkrumah and not to have expected that she would have a steady head on her shoulders.

Also, it could as well be that the writer tried to 'overvalue' Nkrumah by creating the impression that he used to be sceptical, regarding Nkrumah but no longer, because candidate Nkrumah was able to convince him otherwise, in the course of his 'interrogation' of her.

Again, Nkrumah's ability was interpreted as masculinity. The image of her as having "a very steady head on her shoulder" appears as masculinised imagery, evoking stability, rationality, non-emotionality and strength, and seems to have been intended to describe her in the context of masculinity, and, by extension, capability. Leaving the writer impressed because she has a very steady head on her shoulder seemed to say that he did not expect that, possibly by being female, she could have been so stable, rational, non-emotional and strong, because women are normally assumed not to be, nor supposed to be nor expected to be. Therefore, these qualities are treated as alien to the trait fabric in women candidates. By using this imagery for Nkrumah, the intention probably was to place her as someone fit and ready for the 'game' men play. However, it estranged those qualities from her and other women as natural and normal to their species.

Furthermore, in the *Daily Guide*, she was said to be:

always gentle, affable and accommodating, Samia doesn't show emotional response to problems, but demonstrates a calculated reaction to them, thus exhibiting the fact that she is a positive thinker just as her father was (September 17, 2011, p.4, para 4).

Another related attribute also stated:

Her calm demeanour, easily approachable nature and her connections with the youth is very admirable and will be useful in turning around the fortunes of the party! (*Daily Graphic*, September 18, 2011, p.12, para 2)

Samia Nkrumah was depicted here as a mature leader which was very positive to her candidature especially, as at the time the CPP was looking for a leader to unite the Nkrumahist family; many saw Samia Nkrumah as the capable implementer of the cause. Therefore, presenting her, as “gentle, affable and accommodating” would likely show just the right kind of qualities that the factions may expect to see in the one who seeks to bring them together. This kind of portrayal presented Nkrumah as acceptable and prepared to deliver on the goals of delegates to bring unity to their ranks.

Again, she was portrayed as someone who could increase the party’s fortunes with the youth, as she was seen to relate with young people very well. These representations of Nkrumah, even though interspersed with “just as her father”, still presented her as the right candidate for the particular goals of the CPP at the time. This probably put her above the other candidates, who were older and seemed stale and out of touch with the youth, and who could be considered to have achieved less in bringing the factions together. Since all the other contestants had been party leaders before, they could all be considered as having failed during their tenure to make appropriate gains with the youth, in general elections, and in unifying the party. Nkrumah was the only candidate who was yet to be tried as holding any party position. Furthermore, without Nkrumah’s seat in Parliament in 2008, the CPP would have been without any parliamentary representation. These unifying, accommodating and mature attributes of Nkrumah, presented with evidence of her parliamentary seat, also positively positioned her to grasp a win at the delegates’ congress.

However, the need to point to her rationality and so-called non-emotionality mirrors, considerably, the writer's assumptions, and equally underlies the notion that women are somehow emotional beings. So although a positive portrayal once again, it was gender-laden by finding it useful to state that Nkrumah doesn't show an emotional response to problems, suggesting possibly that, she being female would have been expected to show emotional responses to issues. But here, Nkrumah is seen to be not be that female, and so one can expect to be, perhaps, less irritated by feminine emotional responses and being run by her feminine hormones if elected. This is because, Nkrumah, supposedly, is able to put her 'women's emotional issues' and potential mood swings affected by biology (e.g. menstrual moods) under control, to perform at full rationality, and by extension capability, as, perhaps, a man. Thus, in putting her emotional responses aside she was "exhibiting the fact that she is a positive thinker just as her father was" – father, being male. Wiliarty (2010) revealed, "sometimes female candidates are presented as overly-emotional, perhaps driven by their hormones rather than by their reason" (p. 149).

Additionally, sections of the Ghanaian society, like many other patriarchal systems, expect women to be accommodating. Presenting Samia Nkrumah as accommodating, affable, gentle and approachable would be, likely, to make people feel less threatened by her, if she happened to not be the kind of woman who did not fit societal expectations. By presenting her as such, her personality was made more endearing to delegates, who, in line with their goal, needed someone of an equable personality to close their ranks. Sirleaf Johnson has noted in the documentary *Iron ladies of Liberia* in 2007 that her 'Old Ma' political style has generally attracted very positive and satisfactory responses from Liberians. According to Adams (2010), Sirleaf Johnson "approached constituents as a mother who listened to them" (p. 161). Sirleaf seems to show that voters perceived an accommodating character, as that of a mother, favourably, and it is likely that Samia Nkrumah soared in the same way,

given her warm attributes. Other scholars have noted that trumpeting unfeminine traits like being *tough* or *competent* for women candidates may rather serve them negatively, as other women who may have taken the path of traditional family roles may be estranged (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Jamieson, 1995; Washburn & Washburn, 2011) and women candidates could lose some support in their base.

In addition, Nkrumah was discussed as someone who could hold her own together in being the leader she had to be, and would not be obeisant to the whims and caprices of any kind of persons or groups whatsoever.

She was described as:

disciplined, tough and not someone who can be tossed left and right or intimidated by any person or a group of people. (The *Chronicle*; September 15, 2011, p.2 para 4)

Women leaders many times have to deal with insubordination, and usurpation of their powers, by mostly male colleagues who are normally less likely to accept the authority of a woman because men are mostly seen as default leaders (Catalyst, 2007); or it could be cross-gender miscommunication. Representing Nkrumah in this manner portrayed her as someone who would neither allow others to undermine nor usurp her authority, and by this the writer possibly sets off an alarm for potential ‘coup plotters’ of her administration to consider. Her representation as “not someone who can be tossed left and right or intimidated...” was an important portrayal of her non-conformist stance to be the leader and not the led, defying notions of gender roles in Ghanaian society (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013).

Nkrumah’s personal traits, unlike those of the male competitors, reflected both feminine and masculine characteristics and therefore coverage on her traits can be considered as

balanced although gendered. The focus on Nkrumah's feminine traits was positive for the CPP goal of unity; hence coverage on those traits did not seem to be potentially injurious. Covering her also as a rational, strong and effective leader was equally important to create the needed balance for an executive position, such as being topmost leader of a political party seeking to wrestle power from opponents. It appears therefore that Nkrumah enjoyed the right balance of coverage on her personal attributes. Coverage for Nkrumah and the rest of the candidates could be expected to have been less negatively affected by gender stereotypes, especially because it was not a general election, Covering women in feminine terms tends to hurt women for public offices where change or renewal does not seem to be the citizens' desire (Jamieson, 1995; Devitt, 1999; Carroll and Fox, 2006; Murray, 2010).

Washburn and Washburn (2011) stated "common gender stereotypes have less negative impact on women candidates than on men...however, a focus on personality such as *feminine* or *compassionate*, they can appear to many voters as ill-suited to handle difficult policy decisions in areas such as the economy and military affairs" (p. 1028). It is therefore not surprising that although women might benefit from such coverage (Kahn, 1996; Iyengar, Valentino, Ansolabehere & Simon, 1997; Heldman, 2009) the masculinisation of politics makes it harder for a feminine essence unless under gender-congruent positions and issues (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008; Meeks & Domke, 2011).

Nkrumah was appropriately portrayed to be the right candidate for the renewal, restructuring, and the freshness the CPP needed; as a woman, she was gender congruent for the task.

### ***Character traits via familial connection and vice-versa***

Samia Nkrumah's representations of her character traits and gestures were also interlinked to her familial connection. Her traits and general attributes were almost always "just as her father". For instance; she was a unifier "just like her father", charismatic "just like her father", and an organiser "just like her father". There appeared to nearly be no difference between herself and her father except obviously the biological differences of female and male. Samia Nkrumah, apparently, if she was anything at all apart from her father, seems to have been hardly seen or emphasised. The one who seemed to have shown up and been covered was but Kwame Nkrumah. It was he who was perhaps seen most, and not Samia Nkrumah, and possibly, him that they voted for. Nonetheless, even as she also self-framed as Nkrumah's daughter, she considerably presented herself credible, capable and congruent enough to have merited their vote even though she was as 'Nkrumah's daughter'.

#### *Unifier "just like her father"*

The choice of Nkrumah did not only have consequences for party unity; she was in fact seen as having the ability to unify in the same way as her father.

Of her unifying abilities and tasks, *The Daily Graphic* reported:

Throughout delivering her acceptance speech, Samia held the hands of both Mr. Nylander and Prof. Delle in an apparent imitation of her father's famous Independence Day-eve speech at the Accra Polo Grounds about 53 years ago (September 12, 2011, p.3)

*The Chronicle* also reported:

The choice of Samia Nkrumah would help rekindle unity among all Nkrumahists, and bring the vision of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to bear on the political scene (September 13, 2011, p.3, para 4)

A popular theme in the *Chronicle*, another edition reported:

Samia Nkrumah is a listening leader... the PNC as a party was going to tap in her listening leadership qualities to ensure that the much dreamed about unity between his party, the PNC and CPP comes to fruition." It continued Samia Nkrumah has "the ability to bring together the two biggest Nkrumahist families and wished her well in her historic position (September 15, 2011, p.2, paras 5 & 6)

It is worthy to note that, unity efforts among Nkrumahist parties have shown a long unfulfilled desire. After the 1966 coup which saw a ban on the operations of political parties including the CPP, there was disintegration, as subsequent elections which were called, saw many offshoots of Nkrumahist parties, of which the PNC is one. The PNC won elections in the 3rd Republic until another military junta took over. In the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic, these Nkrumahists parties continue to exist in isolation and it has been the wish of many Nkrumahists to see a unified Nkrumah force, hence the belief and hope that an offspring of Nkrumah, who has his charisma, would equally have the magic wand to bring these parties together under the bonafide custodian of Nkrumahism, the CPP.

In a related representation, Nkrumah was seen as a saintly breakaway from the old, and a much-awaited sanitiser of the prevailing politicking.

In the *Daily Graphic's* reports:

"Miss Nkrumah was a unifier capable of bringing all the gurus within the CPP together to make it a formidable political force". [Miss Nkrumah seem to have been reminded also] "to follow the footsteps of her late father, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's founder and first president who embraced the masses often as the veranda

boys and market women into the fold of the CPP". (She was thought to be) "the embodiment of peace to ensure that the CPP engaged in clean politics devoid of insults and inflammatory remarks that would bring tension into the country" (September 13, 2011, p.13)

Also, from the accounts of the *Chronicle*:

Samia is the best of fresh air for the CPP, and by that people are going to walk back to the party. She went to the people, talked to the people, and that was the mantra of her father. It is the magnanimity of a victor that the people will be back (September 12, 2011, p.2, para 22)

Samia Nkrumah here was presented, as the unconventional politician who was like her father, whose personal relationship style according to the newspaper accounts, was dearly missed. She was captured as the new politician on the block to inspire a new way of politicking which was not very much the order of current politicians. The *Graphic* and the *Chronicle* accounts indicated that the political pews of the CPP would be filled because Samia Nkrumah, just like her father, "went to the people, talked to the people" and the political stir and harvest that Dr. Nkrumah yielded for the CPP by this style, Ms. Nkrumah will produce in the same way. At the time of the independence struggle, the initial party, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), invited the young Dr. Nkrumah to be its General Secretary. Nkrumah later became popular with his populist values interacting with market women and the youth, among others, spent less time in his office, and was said to be, frequently, among the people and on the streets, mingling and talking. He later broke away from the UGCC and formed the CPP. Ms. Nkrumah became that politician who started doing new things in current Ghana as her father did in colonial Ghana. Apparently, she was depicted as having resurfaced, this time to bring home the politically wayward Nkrumahist factions on one cause of delivering Ghana, not from imperial colonialists, but from imperial

economic downturns. It was not unexpected that she was portrayed as the one “to relive Nkrumah’s vision and ‘historical and economical’ wonders in shaping the destiny of Ghanaians and Africans”. (*Chronicle*, September 13, 2011, front page.)

### *An Organiser “just like her father”*

As Dr. Nkrumah’s daughter, Ms. Nkrumah was also seen as someone with inherent organisational skills:

She has her father’s organisational skills and mantra and is the people’s woman. She meets, eats and listens to the people. Her achievement in Jomoro speaks volumes of her capabilities ... Tagged as inexperienced by her critics, she defied all odds when she swept her way to victory (*Daily Graphic*, September 18, 2011, p.12, para 3)

Her organisational attributes seemingly popular with the *Daily Graphic*, it recounted:

She believes, as did her famous father, that organisation decides everything and has vowed to build the party up ‘from the floor’ She was quoted as saying “The CPP must organise something, even if it is only a football match among our supporters”. [To this the writer retorted] Now, she has more than a stadium at her call (September 17, 2011, p.10, para 13)

### *Resuscitator/ The Political Messiah*

The theme of Samia Nkrumah’s messianic ability for the CPP has been familiar throughout this chapter. As her depiction as organiser and a unifier directly above also spoke to her ability to deliver the CPP from an ageing political woe. Nkrumah was portrayed as

someone capable to resuscitate the CPP from political death to the administration of a new era:

The member of Parliament for Sissala West Constituency, ... has described the election of Samia Nkrumah as the chairperson of the Convention People's Party (CPP) as 'historic and God-sent to the entire Nkrumahist family. He "added that Samia's victory marks the birth of a new CPP and therefore should serve as the beginning of a new era for the actualization of the unfinished dreams of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who served Ghana with everything he had." (*Chronicle*, September 15, 2011 p.2, paras 1 & 3)

The *Daily Graphic* also reported of her difficult task of reviving the party:

The more difficult job of changing the party and getting it to believe in itself and setting it on the path to political seriousness is a mountain facing her at the moment. Indications are that she is aware of her task. (September 17, 2011 p.10)

Lastly, the *Daily Guide* added:

an onerous responsibility has been placed on her to administer the affairs of the CPP, to resuscitate the sleeping CPP to its former self and reanimate the nationwide constituency structures. Samia's task ahead is really formidable, and I see that the dynamism and hard work of her father are inherently vibrant in her to do all these. (September 17, 2011, p.4, para 5)

### ***Familial Relationship***

Family relationships and marital roles were other areas that the media focused on, especially for women candidates. Men's family roles are mainly more of an asset on the political trail than they appear to be for women, who are seen as having more responsibility for the home, and so less time for indulging in the public sphere. Mostly,

women are demonised for having 'left' their families, or not committed to making a family life. Either with or without a child, marital and familial statuses constitute an area which women, more than men, have had to contend. In addition, women with important male figures are more likely to be framed through them. Coverage was silent on the family roles and marital status of the other three candidates, except Nkrumah.

Not all of the candidates had an important male figure, even though at a point, the men tried to superficially trace their political lineage to Dr. Nkrumah. Therefore, it was not expected to have been overlooked that Samia Nkrumah as Dr. Nkrumah's daughter was an important frame for the media. Nkrumah's familial connection, in this instance was mentioned 16 articles. As we see from representation of her personal attributes, Samia Nkrumah, as her father's daughter, was a central theme around which her descriptions of self, abilities, and capabilities revolved.

The fact that she was a daughter of the first president of Ghana did not leave her, in her novelty, celebrity, or character trait portrayals. It was not only the news media and political commentators who framed her as such, but she herself was equally inspired as a replica of her father's genius, and for good reasons of electoral profitability. Women interviewees in Ross' (2002) study spoke about the fact that they know how to get media attention. However, they also reiterated that not all publicity was positive, and so that guided how they performed on the political stage. Unlike Samia Nkrumah, her father's name made for positive political acts and antics. Kaneva & Ibroscheva (2014) and O'Neill & Savigny (2016) also have revealed that politicians are not passive in their image management or depictions in and by the media. Samia Nkrumah, as her father's reincarnation, was a message which was the media's as much as hers. According to Ms. Nkrumah herself: "I had to come back to revamp our father's tradition" (*Daily Graphic*, September 13, 2011, p.1, para 4).

In the next pages on how she was discursively framed, Nkrumah was portrayed as Dr. Nkrumah incarnate, and in her political cleaning ascriptions were a resuscitator, messiah and deliverer of the CPP from political misfortunes after the manner of Dr. Nkrumah. She was also framed as the incorruptible carrier of Dr. Nkrumah's vision, and among his children she was the good sheep and the torchbearer of their family.

There were media reports and headlines such as "Kwame Nkrumah's daughter has been acknowledged by the CPP rank and file" (*Daily Graphic*; September p.10, para 9). "CPP back to roots, as Samia takes over" (*Ghanaian Times*, September 12, 2011, front page.) and others, such as "Samia invokes father's spirit at congress" (*Daily Graphic*, September 13, 2011 p.1..) And then: "sounding more optimistic, just like her father, Samia told the gathering..." (*Chronicle*, September 12, 2011, p.2, para 22).

These statements about the CPP returning to its roots, and Samia Nkrumah invoking the spirit of her father at congress grounds, was undertoned with nostalgia, suggesting that it was no other than Kwame Nkrumah – their very own and illustrious son's flesh and blood that was widely accepted to lead the party.

Samia Nkrumah's optimism which was referenced just before, again, brings to mind Ghana's independence struggle, where the UGCC's approach exemplified in their slogan "self-governance in the shortest possible time" was seem as pessimistic. Dr. Nkrumah broke away with an optimistic, "self-government now". With Samia Nkrumah sounding optimistic just like her father, the memory recurs of Nkrumah's optimism and vibrancy in fighting for independence. Such a spirit is perhaps invoked upon Ms. Nkrumah as having to lead the now-ailing CPP to their promised land as her father and first leader did for Ghana to gain independence.

Below is a presentation constituting how her familial frames were manifested or lent itself.

### *Incarnate and Torchbearer*

In introducing Nkrumah and speaking of the notable old block of which she is a chip, the writer of the *Daily Guide* Paper wrote:

The world knows that Samia is the daughter, the only daughter of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president who previously fought for the nation's political independence! It is ironical that the only lady amongst Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's four children has, for the past few years, stood tall in the political shoes of her father, becoming a parliamentarian ...near the Nzema birthplace of her father, and visibly instilling dynamism in the CPP which her father founded. ... Definitely, Samia has taken after her father's shrewdness and sagacity to manage affairs successfully with the very little money she has (*Daily Guide*, September 17, 2011 p.4, para 3)

Here, she was made to benefit from her father's achievement and goodwill, just as in the several cases of her depiction. Samia Nkrumah was seen as the hero and torchbearer of her family name which almost went into political redundancy after the coup that overthrew Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. This excerpt also demonstrates her non-conformist portrayal. Being the third born, and the only female among the 3 known sons of Dr. Nkrumah, the writer appeared to have suggested that she was the least expected by her gender to have stepped into her father's shoes to reclaim his image and build his legacy. Samia Nkrumah here, was portrayed as going beyond cultural norms surrounding age (not being the first born to naturally inherit and take on family responsibilities) and gender (being female). The *Chronicle* reiterated her non-conformism in society as well, when it wrote:

Women who try to venture into politics are described in derogatory terms, which scare their women colleagues away. Despite these frustrations, Samia Yaaba Nkrumah, daughter of the late Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, seems to have braved the odds and is rubbing shoulders with her male counterparts (September 14, 2011, p.2, para 2)

Again as a reincarnation, Nkrumah was portrayed as the manifest essence of Dr. Nkrumah.

The *Chronicle* reported:

the daughter of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah was the right person to lead the CPP, since she has got the charisma to attract people to the party, just like her father. (September 12, 2011, front page, p.2, para 21)

Nkrumah was portrayed as the right person to the CPP by virtue of her father. She was therefore qualified by her paternal heritage and thus, seemingly an ability gained through the same to lead the CPP. In her, the charisma found in Dr. Nkrumah has been reborn and the potency of that ability which was lost was now regained in Samia Nkrumah.

Nkrumah was also at times represented as the one to relive and re-enact the era, the vision and the goals of Dr. Nkrumah. Samia Nkrumah was believed to be the one capable to continue the good works of her father which no one else, it appears, had been able to do since 1966. As an incarnate of Nkrumah, she was believed to be the true person with an incorruptible ability, dream and dedication via her bloodline to see to her father's goals and to continue from where he had left off:

The veteran urged the national executives to give Samia all the support to mobilise local and foreign resources to relive Nkrumah's vision and 'historical and economical' wonders in shaping the destiny of Ghanaians and Africans (*Chronicle*, September 13, 2011, front page).

Another edition of the *Chronicle*, which mainly circulated this incarnate theme reported:

Four leading members are contesting for the chairmanship of the party. Ms. Samia Yaba Nkrumah, daughter of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, first president of the Republic of Ghana, is vying for the

post to re-enact the era of her father, as the leading light in the CPP.  
(*Chronicle*, September 9, 2011, p.3)

In a more vivid connection of the two, Ms. Nkrumah and her father's story were told side by side:

In 1947, a 38 year-old political activist, journalist and educator with academic qualifications and street credibility from America and the UK returned to the Gold coast at the invitation of older, mostly British educated lawyers with a more sedate vision of political struggle. Within two years, he had caused upheaval in their political movement, and having founded his party, emerged as the preeminent personality in the galvanising movement towards self-government. His name was, of course, Kwame Nkrumah.

Fast-forward some 64 years. Another political activist and journalist named Nkrumah, having returned to her native Ghana after years abroad, goes into politics with the support of her elders in the party. As in 1947, the current elders hoped to benefit from her advantages, principally her lineage and charisma

Within two years or so of her return, she had wrestled a parliamentary seat from a veteran incumbent, and by holding her party's only seat in parliament, had become a serious force to reckon within her party. What the elders had not reckoned with is that this Nkrumah, being daughter of her father, had politics hard-wired in her DNA? (*Daily Graphic*, September 17, 2011, p.10)

It is quite evident that Samia Nkrumah's representation gave her less room to be anything herself and unrepresentative of her father. She also appeared to have understood the task very well by her own self-framing, even as she was subtly instructed, and over here, cautioned of the potential challenges that might be ahead.

Speaking of the task ahead of her as to whether she could do better than the man into whose big shoes she has now stepped, the *Daily Graphic* reported that she

being the daughter of Osagyefo, the inspirational leader does not make life any easier for herself. [And that] She carries real burdens

for change that the father dared not touch (September 17, 2011, p.7, para 14)

Nkrumah's familial representations have demonstrated that her father was woven tightly to her candidature, and in all ways that she has expressed herself. By these constructions, Kwame Nkrumah was presented, as precursor to Samia Nkrumah, heralding possibly that she could not be enough on her own, without her patriarch.

Her familial connection also conveyed expectations of her. That she was expected to deliver, as it is believed that Nkrumah did in his time, and even to continue her father's legacy by venturing into areas her father cared about but where he was constrained and received opposition. Within the "daughter of" framing, she was presented as not having an agenda of her own, or rather as she also communicated: her father's agenda was her agenda.

Samia Nkrumah's portrayal, one may conveniently conclude, so much concerned her father that we learnt a great deal about how much she is like her father, but little about herself, for example her educational background, professional attainment and experience. In fact, it appears to be that it was not what she had which was going to make a difference; delegates seemed to have already decided that her credentials were her important familial connection, and this seemed to be enough. Many CPP delegates, being people of the old bloc who are almost never over the days of Dr. Nkrumah, could as well have set Samia Nkrumah up to fail. What if she is more than "just like her father"? The potential conflict for wanting to re-live a potential fantasy through her has been the basis of conflict in the CPP in recent times since Samia Nkrumah took over. She continues to enjoy popular support however; many, stuck in their old ways, who thought perhaps they were going to be relevant to teach a neophyte about the days of Nkrumah, seem to have been

disappointed, as instead of re-enacting their Nkrumah, she seems to be enacting her own sense of 'Nkrumah' – whatever Nkrumah may mean.

According to Murray (2010) “Many women have entered politics as a result of family ties, for example, through following a husband or father into political office” (p. 15), it seems so have men, for example, George W. Bush Jnr. The incessant shadowing of Samia Nkrumah by her father in coverage of her traits, her vision, and her goals attributed, as with others, women’s achievements to important men, and less to their own qualities. From her portrayal, we learnt nothing about her that was not “just like her father”, as if suggesting that those traits were not necessarily hers or were only inherited. This notion therefore could considerably explain, how these make sense: Ms Nkrumah’s celebrity through her father, and the nostalgia surrounding Nkrumah’s reign, and its re-enactment. It is suggestive that by this notion the delegates of the CPP confirmed that indeed Samia Nkrumah is Dr. Nkrumah re-incarnated, for if not, why had his political shoes not been filled since, by those who have followed him and continued to read his books; they all appeared to be waiting for a blood daughter? In Samia Nkrumah, they believe true Nkrumahism resides.

## **Conclusion**

The abiding and tiring mention of Samia Nkrumah’s family status with the ‘daughter of’ frame, as daughter of the former president; the references made to everything she did to be “just las her father”; the need to propound her toughness, rationality and non-conformity to signal that she was just not the woman next door, but possibly, a different kind, who reasoned like the favoured sex (male), was as a result of perceptions of her gendered roles and their relationship to power.

Nkrumah's coverage may not have appeared negative, but it was gendered especially in the portrayal of aspects of her personal attributes and in the way and manner her familial relationship was contextualised. For instance, the incessant references to everything she did as the daughter of Nkrumah and being "just like her father" seemed to be great effort on the part of sections of the media to potentially make sense of who she was in a way that solicited a paternal covering over her, and possibly with the purpose to facilitate people's acceptance of her to lead the party, as not any other person but its leading figure, the Chair.

Family status, inasmuch as being an offspring of a huge political figure, may make one less free to walk independently of the shadows of a political dynasty: Nkrumah herself self-framed and used this to her advantage. It appears that the incessant and almost irrelevant associations to her 'patriarch'- her father, might have been a way the news media also thought they were serving her well to gain popular acceptance. Although not negative, as it is clear from the analysis, she benefited hugely from this; it may be considered a gendered manifestation which questioned her autonomy.

Nkrumah enjoyed all the political clout none of the other candidates could match. She was new on the scene, the returnee daughter of the former president after their exile, the only child who was more interested to protect her father's heritage, the only MP of the party in parliament at the time, and a voting congress fixated on the idea of Nkrumah's blood daughter to lead the party again. None of the other candidates had these attributes. The media's total disregard for the other candidates was so much expressed in their idea of who in media culture and values gets attention: the celebrity was chased (Harmer and Wring, 2013).

Again, it might as well be that the rest of the candidates received less attention because of their own viability. We learnt from previous analysis that both the media and delegates,

and even the non-voting public had already called the election for Samia Nkrumah. Their minimal coverage of the others therefore might be expressed as “hopeless cases” which begot “hopeless attention” (Robinson & Sheehan, 1983, p.76).

From the analysis above, with focus on novelty and celebrity coverage, Nkrumah was the most visible candidate. There was no novelty coverage on Bentsi-Enchill, and of course with the position being previously held by men, ‘first’ frame was not expected to be part of their (men) coverage. The analysis also showed that Nkrumah increased her coverage by her celebrity turn, her youthfulness and her viability as considered by the media. We also learnt that her celebrity negotiated her considerations of viability, as even before elections were held, both media and delegates were supportive of her candidature compared with the rest of the candidates. Table 2 showed that Nkrumah was the more visible candidate via the three indicators of *candidate mention*, *actual focus* and *quoted*, she was directly followed by Nylander, then Delle and lastly Bentsi-Enchill.

In terms of candidates’ attributes, we saw that although the news media focused on Nkrumah’s personal attributes, it neither focused on the professional attributes of the men. From the findings, we saw that focus on candidates’ attributes was highly biased in favour of Nkrumah, who seemed to be the major candidate covered. Nkrumah was variously described as rational and much less likely to have emotional responses to issues. Nkrumah’s personal traits as we saw from previous analysis were considerably balanced on the feminine and masculine continuum. Her familial relationship and novelty were predominant in her coverage. Her appearance, age and non-conformity to societal norms by her gesture were rather low key. Bentsi-Enchill had no mention of any of her attributes. Delle and Nylander were positively depicted as experienced leaders who were ready to lead much more than the so-called inexperienced Nkrumah. With absence of coverage on

her professional attributes, the media seemed to have aided in providing 'evidence' to claims of Nkrumah's political inexperience.

The findings on the coverage of the candidates (in both its presence and absence) seem to point to a more supportive Press than hostile, which could be potentially less sexist even if of a benevolent kind based on content and the newspapers considered (newspapers however, not considered representative as they were all of the quality press although they were spread across state and private ownership, nonetheless). With the scant coverage on the rest of the candidates including the other woman candidate, it could potentially confirm that gender was not necessarily used against the women or the men, although a gendered coverage in terms of context to personal attributes, familial relationship and novelty for Nkrumah was present.

The next chapter discusses findings on the running mate race of the New Patriotic Party in 2008.

## **Chapter VI: Findings and discussions on news coverage of the running mate race of The New Patriotic Party in 2008.**

### **Introduction**

This study focuses on the media campaigns of the vice-presidential hopefuls of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). In 2008, the NPP went into the rigmarole of selecting a vice-presidential (VP) candidate for the 2008 presidential elections. The vice-presidential candidate in accordance with the party's constitution is selected by the flagbearer (Presidential candidate) in consultation with the National Council of the Party in accordance with article 12(1)b of the party's constitution. Normally, the vice-presidential candidate should have been "nominated by the Presidential candidate at least twelve (12) months before the general elections when the party is not in government or the sitting President is not the candidate"; so at the next delegates' conference that individual can be presented to the rank and file of party members. After VP candidates are nominated and approved by the presidential candidate and the party's national executive committee, there are no other formal internal party processes. But this time, it was exceptionally delayed. News had it that the flagbearer had been contemplating a female running mate which some of the 'elders' of the party did not think a wise political step, and therefore had no appetite for guinea pig decisions. With an impending delegates' conference where the flagbearer was to reveal his choice, there was supposedly a greater burden to pick a candidate.

Although several names were circulated, this study focuses on and analyses the coverage of the four leading contenders who received meaningful media coverage in the VP aspirant race: two women and two men, although non of these two men or women was picked by the presidential candidate in the long run but a different male was. The two women were the previous and the current ministers of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs:

Gladys Asmah and Alima Mahama respectively. The men were Lepowura Jawula, a Chief Director at the Ministry of Health, and Boniface Siddique, a Member of Parliament and Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing. Mahama and Asmah doubled as Members of Parliament, as did Siddique.

This study was important for the following reasons: 1) This was the first time women were in the race for the NPP; 2) This was the first time we saw women as visible contenders in party processes with national implications for breaking the glass ceiling; 3) This was the first time the conventional binaries – religion and geography – for selecting a vice-presidential candidate in Ghana, were stretched, and gender featured a strong resistance to the terms Northerner and Muslim taken solely to imply a male candidate, consciously and unconsciously neglecting that it could be female. This chapter, like the previous one, offers both findings and discussions on coverage of the candidates.

Articles collected were from the same four leading national daily newspapers in Ghana which were used for the previous campaign of the CPP: two state-run, and two privately owned newspapers. At the time of this campaign, the NPP government was in power., but its presidential candidate wasn't the incumbent who had already served his term limits. However, with the sound media relation's record of the NPP against the social democratic NDC, and also given the media freedoms spearheaded by the NPP government in 2001, there is little evidence to suggest any serious media manipulation. To this end, although the NPP was in power, and the private newspapers were also considered NPP-oriented; the four newspapers selected across state and private ownership could be expected to be fair and not unnecessarily skewed. While it would not be beyond reason to expect paper favourites in terms of candidates, quality newspapers in Ghana do not have a habit of endorsing political candidates, unlike the US, as seen in the case of the Boston Globe's endorsement of Hillary Clinton in January 2016. Again coverage could, also be expected to

be balanced for candidates because like the previous CPP campaign, this was also an internal election.

Articles were collected within the 3 months (June-August) of the declaration by the presidential candidate of his choice of vice presidential candidate at the Party's rally. The rally was held on August 14, 2008. The selected articles mentioned at least one of the four candidates in the context of the race.

A total number of eighty-four (84) stories were gathered across all the newspapers: *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Daily Guide*, and *Chronicle*. Articles were analysed for media coverage and framing of the candidates.

Table 1 shows the distribution of stories gathered for the period, across newspaper titles. Overall, the privately-owned newspapers produced more articles than the state-run newspapers. The *Daily Guide* and the *Chronicle* produced 71 per cent and the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*, 29 per cent of the articles collected.

As individual papers, 56 per cent of the articles were from the *Daily Guide*, 17 per cent from the *Daily Graphic*, 15 per cent from the *Chronicle* and 12 per cent from the *Ghanaian Times*.

**Table 1 - Total number of stories across newspapers**

<u>Newspaper Genre</u>	<u>No. of Articles</u>	<u>(%)</u>
The Daily Graphic	14	(17)
The Daily Guide	47	(56)
The Ghanaian Times	10	(12)
The Chronicle	13	(15)
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>(100)</b>

The *Daily Guide*, which produced majority of the articles was the leading private newspaper with sympathies towards the NPP whose race is the subject of this particular case study. It was therefore not surprising that the *Daily Guide* served as the source for

majority of the stories on this race, followed by the *Daily Graphic*, the leading state-run newspaper with the highest circulation and readership.

### **Coverage on Candidates' Visibility**

Table 2 shows the visibility of candidates per the following indicators: "frequency of mention", "frequency of focus" and "frequency of quote". These indicators were only coded once in an article irrespective of the number of times a name was mentioned or quotes were referenced. Given an article, "focus" was determined and coded for the candidate who was extensively talked about for the length of the article. Where the article paid a comparatively equal attention to more than one candidate, the article was coded for both or all under collective headings, for example: "Majority of Candidates", "Both Female Candidates" among others – See Table 2.

Overall, the male candidates were mentioned more, but focused on and quoted less than the female candidates. The male candidates had 54 per cent and the female candidates 46 per cent of total mention; however 67 per cent of quotes were from the female candidates and 33 per cent from the male candidates; also, 31 per cent of articles focused on the female candidates and 23 per cent on the male candidates (See Table 2 for further breakdown of 'Focus' for the remaining 46% of articles).

From Table 2, the two female candidates as individuals took contrasting positions as the most mentioned and the least mentioned candidate; the most focused on and the least focused on candidate; the most quoted and the least quoted candidate.

**Table 2- Assessment of candidates' visibility (actual numbers)**

<u>Candidates</u>	<u>Mention</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Quoted</u>
Alima Mahama	47	20	5
Gladys Asmah	16	4	1
Lepowura Jawula	38	12	1
Siddique Boniface	36	6	2
Majority of Cand.	-	20	-
Both Female Cand	-	2	-
Both Male Cand.	-	2	-
<u>Primaries</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>9</b>

Table 2 shows that individually, Alima Mahama enjoyed the highest mention in coverage (34%), and was also the most focused on candidate by articles (24%) as well as the most quoted candidate (56%) among the rest of the candidates. Lepowura Jawula enjoyed the second highest mention at 28 per cent and the second highest of focus at 14 per cent but a third place in terms of number of times quoted (11%) pairing at this juncture with Gladys Asmah, the other female candidate. Siddique Boniface enjoyed the third highest mention (26%) and third highest of actual focus (7%) but a second place for number of times quoted (22%). Lastly, Gladys Asmah was the least mentioned (12%) and the least focused on by articles (5%). As already mentioned, she shared a third and the lowest place with Jawula on number of times quoted.

From Table 2, there were as many articles focusing on “majority of the candidates” together as there were solely on Alima Mahama. Articles written focusing on mostly all four candidates were 24 per cent, the same percentage as articles focusing solely on Alima Mahama. In terms of articles which focused on candidates by their gender, there were 2 per cent each of those articles which focused on both female candidates alone and both male candidates alone. The nature of the articles, especially the ones focusing on more than

one candidate, seemed to be a horserace, concentrating on which candidates among the rest were gaining ground, either among the ranks of the public, party executives, and or flagbearer. Other stories were also about candidates' profiles, and the rest seemed to have featured them as potential VP candidates. For example, a front page headline by the *Daily Guide* reported "Nana Eyes Alima" and in the text covered all candidates extensively. It mentioned which candidates were making headway and those who were not, in this race. This time, it was Alima Mahama and one other male aspirant, who is not covered in this study:

Latest information picked up by *Daily Guide* indicates that the race to catch Nana's attention has taken a new twist, with a report that it is now a straight fight between Hajia Alima Mahama, Minister of Women and Children's Affairs and Alhaji Malik Alhasan Yakubu, Second Deputy Speaker of Parliament (July 15, 2008, p.3)

Another headline from the *Chronicle* (August 13, 2008 pp.1 & 15) stated, "it's Jawula, Bawumia in final", and in the text detailed various positive points and endorsement for these two candidates, and why the rest like Alima Mahama, this time are out. On Jawula, it stated:

The *Chronicle* can report that, Alhaji M. N. D. Jawula, immediate Chief Director of Ministry of Health, seems to be obvious choice. ... In a surprise endorsement of the Lepowura, three heavyweight endorsements came flying in from a number of people... .

Then of the other contenders, the *Chronicle* covered:

Surprisingly, Alhaji Boniface, in spite of his maximum interface with the press, never quite made it to the ring minders who have thrown a gauntlet of beefy armour round the aspirant.

And on Alima Mahama:

Hajia Alima finally did herself in, after the fatal blow by the venerated Hon. B. J. da-Rocha, whose treatise leaked to the *Daily Mail* last Monday, unleashed a simultaneous chorus of disapproval from

Women's group in parliament, not only could a staged marriage to a willing and approving man within the last few days stem the poison of naysayers. Her last act of corralling demonstrators to the office of the flagbearer was too late to sway the flagbearer's early enthusiasm for her candidature.

Coverage by the *Daily Guide* and the *Chronicle* above presented candidates as in a race for the attention of the flagbearer, and that some were close to meeting their goal, like Jawula and Mahama at one point whereas others like Siddique and in this instance again, Mahama were trailing. Scholars such as Aalberg, Stromback and De Vreese (2012) have stated that election news is covered in the game/horse-race and strategy frames. According to them, the game frame employs the language of sports and wars, winners and losers, and interest in electoral outcomes. They also mentioned that the strategy frame on the other hand constituted tactics and strategies of campaigns by candidates. Other scholars such as Lawrence (2000) and De Vreese and Elenbaas (2008) do not distinguish between the game/horse-race and strategy frame. According to them the game or strategy frame can be used interchangeably and would comprise both polling (who is winning or losing) and the tactics of politicians. Scholars such as Gidengil and Everitt (1999, 2000) have mentioned that the media cover political campaigns as a horserace with masculine warlike and sporty imagery, similarly Trimble and Sampert (2004). A bevy of scholars also confirmed that election news coverage around the world is also framed as such, as a strategic game frame, using the language of war and sports (De Vreese, 2001, 2008; Esser, Stromback & De Vreese; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2008; Scammell & Semetko, 2008). On Mahama, the *Chronicle* reported that she was handed "a fatal blow"; and of Siddique, it reported that he "never quite made it to the ring minders who have thrown a gauntlet of beefy armour" and finally, Jawula received "heavyweight endorsements". The *Daily Guide* as well stated that it was "a straight fight" between Mahama and one Alhaji Yakubu. The *Chronicle* also reported that Mahama's strategy of "marriage to a willing and approving man within the last few

days” didn’t quench “the poison of naysayers” neither “her last act of corralling demonstrators to the office of the flagbearer”, as it “was too late to sway the flagbearer’s early enthusiasm for her candidature.” The accusation by the *Chronicle* that Mahama has fixed herself a husband also constituted a scandal frame. One of the reasons for some resistance to Mahama’s candidacy was the fact that she was unmarried. Coverage by the *Chronicle* suggested that Mahama had just tried to fix this supposed flaw by secretly finding any “willing and approving man” over a few days to wed, a man she probably did not know but ostensibly used to meet her goals. There was some tension and uncertainty concerning this issue, as there was little for the media themselves and the public to verify to ascertain the truth; also given that both Mahama and her team would more likely withhold information or speak to the media about this, either to deny or confirm, given the potential implications of either position. The potential of this scandal frame, where interest in her strategy was on her marital status, posed as a gendered framing of her candidature.

The strategic game frame within which this race was presented confirms that media framing is a tool for telling political news (Mendelsohn, 1993; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Van Zoonen, 2005; Street, 2011) and which could likely have consequences on citizens (Iyengar, Norporth & Hahn, 2004).

Kahn’s (1994a, b, 1996) seminal works revealed that women candidates were covered less, and stereotypically, by their gender. More recent research conducted by Bystrom, Brown, and Fiddelke (2012) also revealed that women for offices such as those for governor and mayor as recently as 2008 received less media attention. Other studies however, by Smith (1997) and Devitt (1999) on coverage of female and male candidates running for state and federal offices (Governor and Senate) found that there was just about the same quantity and type of coverage. Meeks (2012) also, studied the news coverage of four female political

candidates – Dole, Caskill, Clinton, and Palin, and their male counterparts and revealed that the women received more coverage than the men.

Both the type of office and most likely the candidates' attributes, potentially affected the mixed picture (Aelst, Maddens, Noppe & Fiers, 2008; Meeks & Domke, 2011). In the Ghanaian context, a vice-presidential candidacy is deemed as a high office, especially because it is an executive role. As an individual, Mahama's higher visibility in a campaign for an executive office therefore is corroborated by findings from Meeks (2012) and other scholars such as Bystrom (2010), Hinojosa (2010) and Trimble and Treiberg (2010), where women contesting for executive positions were the most covered by the media, and as Gidengil and Everitt (1999, 2000) suggested, probably because they were more likely to be evaluated. Given the tension surrounding Mahama's candidacy, her evaluation increased her visibility in news. The differences however between the two women might be as a result of candidates' personal differences and media perceptions of their viability (Aelst, Maddens, Noppe & Fiers, 2008; Meeks and Domke, 2011; Dan & Iorgoveanu, 2012).

Differences in visibility of the candidates was because of a combination of factors which apparently were demonstrated in novelty, viability, religion, ethnicity and family status – some which are delved into more under the heading “Media Framing of Candidates' Attributes” (found further below). All the factors, earlier mentioned, relating specifically to Mahama were nuanced with her gender. On novelty, the idea of her, securing the nomination with the possibility to move on to become the first woman VP of Ghana was new and appeared exciting. As mentioned earlier, this was the first time that one of the major parties that could win an election in Ghana had women in the aspirant race, and these were the two women who had handled the relatively new ministry established by the outgoing government. By being one of the first women to enter the VP aspirant race,

Mahama fitted a novelty frame coverage which she was given. Her novelty extended into the possibility of her becoming the first female VP of Ghana, should the NPP win the elections. It would be expected that Asmah would have benefited from the 'first woman' frame as well which she did but was limited; perhaps this was as a result of perceptions surrounding her viability compared to Mahama, and also, because she came into the race later than Mahama. From Figure 2 – found below, Asmah as novelty was mentioned just once and Alima Mahama 5 times.

In all, both female candidates were recognised as a 'first woman' and so their exceptionality attracted some limited attention, although it contributed to their overall visibility. This finding confirms studies that revealed that women executives and women party leaders are depicted as novelty (Jamieson, 1995, Murray, 2010), and also stated that although sometimes "irrespective of how many other women candidates may have come before, women are still framed as being the first woman executive candidate" (Murray, 2010, p.13). For example, previously, one of the less viable political parties - The People's National Convention (PNC) had already confirmed a female vice-presidential candidate who later ran with the presidential candidate in the 2008 election, but it had gone unnoticed, just as the campaign of that party was not necessarily of media interest too. Again, before Asmah and Mahama's consideration, there was Betty Mould-Iddrisu, who was seriously considered by the NDC as a VP candidate, and for which this time was given prominence in the media.

Nonetheless, it is equally understandable for a 'first woman' frame coverage to have sufficed because first, it was actually the first time women generally featured any prominently in considerations of VP candidates; and second, coverage on their novelty was mainly as potential Vice-Presidents of Ghana rather than first time female aspirants. In the

end, novelty frames would contribute to making women aliens in political practice without recourse to previous experience no matter how limited, by framing the political ground as an unfamiliar territory for women, and portraying it as a territory they never seem to finish conquering.

Again on the higher visibility of Mahama, she was at the right age, just in her very early fifties - 51, a very cheerful character, could be considered physically attractive, with a warm presence, and very likeable. Asmah on the other hand, although thought of as pleasant and politically experienced, was considered tough, menopausal, and old school; attributes which would be evidenced by her coverage further down, and her pictures used in newspapers. Additionally, Mahama was more like the personality type that would blend in with the character and experience of Akufo Addo, the presidential candidate. It was sometimes reported in the media that the flagbearer felt same about Mahama's personality. According to unsubstantiated reports, this was also taken by some party elders as recipe for sexual trouble, as Mahama was also a single woman. On Asmah's less attractive personality, the pictures used in stories covering candidates saw her as more old-fashioned and Mahama as more fashionable, although both were maturely dressed (duly covered). Asmah appeared in what would normally be considered in Ghana as old-school, old-lady's apparel; she wore curls instead of perm, her clothes styles, handbags and shoes were like the '80s and '90s fashion sense, whereas Mahama wore more contemporary styles. It is therefore possible that Asmah may have faced stereotypes "based on visions of older women as unattractive, menopausal, weak, and past their prime" (Murray, 2010, p.18). Also, according to the SADC Gender Protocol Baseline Barometer (2009), "older women are virtually invisible: to the extent women's voices are accessed, they are likely to be in the 35-49 year bracket for both print and electronic media" (p.196). Asmah's seeming unattractiveness, perhaps in actual age, political age and sartorial taste

might have exacerbated media's neglect of her. She was variously even referred to as "Grandma Gladys". Mahama however, was of the right age and sartorial taste relative to Asmah, and that might have increased her chances to attract decent media attention.

Mahama and Asmah as relatively younger and older women, fitted into the double bind of "too young or too old". Murray noted "the window of opportunity within which to build a political career is so narrowly defined for women as to prevent most women from succeeding" (Murray, 2010, p. 18) because of impressions around them, regarding age and political office. Asmah was definitely seen as too old, as she was referred to at a point as belonging to the "old school of Ghana politics" (*Daily Guide*, August 9, 2008, p. 19, para 1). Conversely, being "old school" also might have created the impression that she was experienced as it portrayed her as having being in the job for a long time. Although experienced, the packaging of it could be considered unattractive to the media, as this experience appeared stale, unlively and boring with her personality; being of the old politics and older age did not seem to be attractive enough. Mahama on the other hand, was perceived as relatively inexperienced (but attractive), even though she had a comparable CV to Asmah and especially the men candidates. So even given Mahama's age and experience, she was not entirely seen as experienced. Murray (2010) confirmed that "younger women candidates are assumed to be inexperienced" (p. 17). It appears that although both Mahama and Asmah were relatively experienced, the latter's age possibly made it more believable than Mahama's. Between the two women, the comparable visibility of Mahama and invisibility of Asmah were more likely to be influenced by the differences in their political and physical attractiveness. Just as the media might have found Asmah archaic and old school in her politics, so might they have found her appearance the same, which meant that they were very much less attracted to her as a

candidate than to Mahama. Interplay of these factors potentially structured the differences in coverage and representation of the candidates.

Furthermore, on Mahama's higher visibility than the rest of the candidates, the impression of her viability contributed to the increased media attention. According to Gidengil and Everitt (2000) because "women have traditionally been considered less viable electorally than men, the media are likely to devote more attention to the horse race aspects when reporting on women" (p. 109). Accordingly, the media may focus on the women and their viability in the race. Women considered viable may then receive more coverage, including evaluations, and those considered less viable may receive comparably little media attention. In fact, according to media reports and indications from party communicators, the whole nomination process was delayed as a result of the strong preference of the presidential candidate for Mahama, with which some party elders did not agree. As this political jaw-jawing persisted, Mahama continued to be the subject of discussion, and this also increased her visibility. Specifically between the two women and their positions, from media coverage, public discussions and party communications, Asmah did not particularly feature as strong a presence as Mahama on the flagbearer's radar, especially on being a favourite. She came into the race as someone who could also be considered, if at all costs the NPP had to present a woman nominee, then they should open the field in addition to Mahama to include a list of others, such as Asmah (*Daily Graphic*, July 22, 2008). Moreover, Asmah did not fit the conventional criteria for selecting a running mate because she comes from the South where the presidential candidate is considered also to belong. As Ross and Comrie (2012) predicted that the media visibility of women who are seen as weak contenders would generally diminish, this appears to have been the case for Asmah. Furthermore, none of the other candidates had issues that would necessarily cause

comments such as concerning their family status (eg. being a divorcee as Mahama was), and being a female Northern Muslim; controversies which contributed to media concentration on Mahama, increasing her visibility. For example:

The *Daily Guide's* headline stated "more fire over Nana's veep", where in its pages, Alima Mahama was a major feature (August 7, 2008, pg 4). The *Chronicle* also featured a headline story: "NPP blocks Nana's choice" and wrote "though the party and the flagbearer are sharply divided over the choice of running mate, Nana Akufo-Addo, however, is determined to demonstrate the party's philosophy of gender equality by electing Hon. Hajia Alima Mahama. ... The authoritative *Chronicle* can report that Mr. B. J. da Rocha, one of the elders of the party, has vehemently kicked against the decision of Nana Akufo-Addo to pick Hajia Alima Mahama. He has officially written to the flagbearer and outlined various reasons why he should rescind his decision" (August 5, 2008, p.12).

Again, the *Ghanaian Times* also ran a front page story titled "Anxiety! As NPP Executive Committee meets over running mate" ( August 15, 2008) and another "The politics of the running mate" all suggesting tension over the decision that is yet to be taken and the woman in the middle of it. – Mahama. These tensions which had Mahama as the centre because of her exceptional and controversial candidacy, unlike Asmah and that of the two men, also contributed to her visibility.

In addition, there were stories on Mahama's religious identity as a Muslim woman and her familial status as a divorcee which added to the media buzz. News on her suitability as a Muslim woman taking on a leadership position and as a divorcee were relatively common staple. The media engaged the Muslim community and their leadership on the teachings of the Quran around leadership by women, even if secular. Such reports and the support groups that spoke of her (un)suitability, would mostly have increased her visibility. For example, the *Daily Guide* reported:

Leader of the Central Regional Federation of Muslim Women Association of Ghana (FOMWAG), Hajia Memuna Habib, has emphatically stated that there is no law in the Holy Qur'an which prevents women from leading her people. According to her, the only thing that a Muslim woman is not allowed to do is to lead her people in Salat (prayers). ... She said even Pakistan, which is an Islamic country, had a female Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, 'so how come Ghana which has many religions cannot do the same' (July 10, 2008, p.16)

The religious debate around her surfaced because there were concerns surrounding her ability to deliver Muslim votes to her party, because supposedly, there are restrictions on a Muslim woman leading men. These factors offered a site for her unending evaluation (Gidengil & Everitt, 1999, 2000), consequently leading to her more visible but yet controversial presence. Asmah was more of the norm: she was a Christian woman, married, and did not attract controversy. It was easier for her to be overlooked, since the media would rather go after sensational stories involving politicians' personal lives (Darras, 2008; Tiffen, 2008; Aalberg, Stromback & de Vreese, 2012). Therefore, the range of issues surrounding Mahama's candidacy relative to the rest contributed to her higher visibility.

Also worth noting is that the major opponent of the NPP ahead of the national presidential election was the NDC, with both of its candidates, presidential and vice-presidential, being Christians. In elections in Ghana, there has been a developing convention for observing religious and geographical balance in choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidates: so mostly, if there is a southern Christian then a northern Muslim will be selected to pair up to contest the presidential elections. As noted above, this was not the case for the other party which had two men, both Christians but from the South and North. With this situation, one would have safely assumed that Alima Mahama stood a better chance of attracting Muslim voters than John Mahama, the vice-presidential candidate of

the other party, especially as the NDC had deviated from the convention of religious balance which is generally considered important. Yet this did not become an advantage for Alima Mahama, who was both Northern and Muslim. This was because there were fears that she would lose the votes from the Muslim community because she was a woman, thus adding to the ticket a new demographic which actually ought to have widened her constituency. Also, it could not just be that all Muslims would vote against her, when she was an MP in an almost all-Muslim community. What this potentially shows is that her gender made a prominent difference, however negatively. It appears to have been rated more highly than what would potentially make the male VP aspirant successful, even though he was non-Muslim, while Mahama was unsuccessful at the polls, even though Muslim.

If religion was actually as important as assumed to be, the NDC which later won the election, would not have chosen two Christians, while the NPP which maintained its religious balance, lost after it chose a male Northern Muslim. It appears therefore a woman was the problem, as those who cited religion did not appear to be bothered that the NDC even failed to acknowledge religion on their ticket. So religious reservations expressed over Mahama's candidacy might have just been another safer exit which might have been used to drop her off the ticket. Potentially, one could safely argue that, if the king-makers – seemingly rightly so, not the queen-makers – cared about gender fairness and balance, then what better balance could there have been than one in religion, geography and gender on a presidential ticket, especially as the previous excerpt from the *Chronicle* claimed a so-called gender equality philosophy within the New Patriotic Party. By their choice, they potentially demonstrated that they were interested in considering and choosing first and foremost a man, confirming that what is the norm and therefore safer, is male.

Meeks and Domke (2011) posited that women are more likely to be considered for lesser positions and legislative ones which are seen to be somehow feminine, than executive positions. This is a possible reason why Mahama, like other women, was able to be elected in the dominantly Muslim North as an MP but their parties still felt their nomination to a VP slot to contest with the presidential candidate might be too risky.

As mentioned earlier, in the case of Asmah there were no concerns about her suitability as a direct result of her religion. As another woman in the race who was Christian, she seemed to serve as a form of litmus test, because in Asmah, the NPP could also have had two Christians discarding the religious balance as did the NDC, and introducing a gender balance. The neglect of Asmah also point to the possibility that the party was simply not interested in a woman as vice-presidential candidate. Although Asmah also doubled as one who was Southern, but of a different ethnic group than the presidential candidate, there are any number of women either from the North and Christian, or from the South and Muslim, who could have made it to the ticket had there been a commitment to meeting a gender and religious balance in addition to geography. This possibly shows that the gender of the women might have been the bigger problem for political parties in particular, who seem to be acting as gatekeepers for male dominance in the selection process of VP candidates.

Media coverage of candidates could have served the selection panel both ways in gaining feedback and using the feedback to assess candidates, either, positively or negatively. However, since the delay of the selection panel itself generated media attention on, for example, Mahama, her higher visibility therefore cannot necessarily be argued to have largely determined the probability that she would have been selected.

## **Media Framing of Candidates' Attributes**

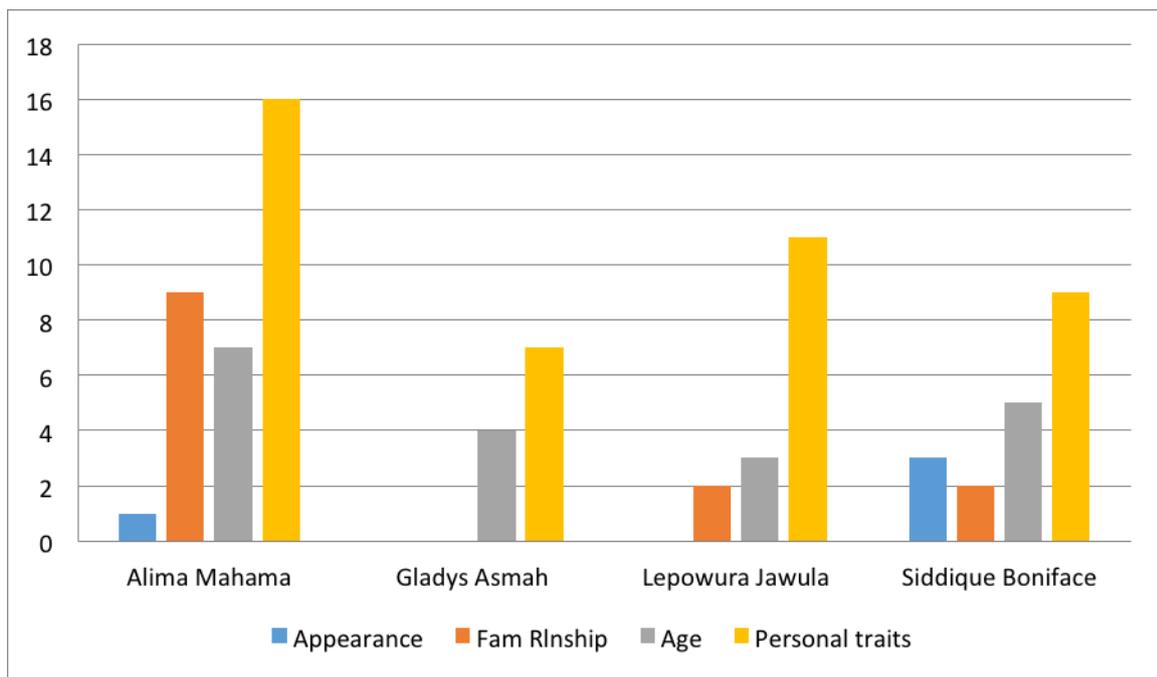
Figures 1 and 2 show the areas of focus in the coverage of candidates' attributes. Attributes were determined as personal and professional. Professional attributes included professional background and political experience (demonstrated by public office and party positions held and related accomplishments). The personal attributes were decided as: 1) character traits - descriptions of candidates' character, values and qualities; 2) appearance – candidates' looks and fashion sense; 3) age – actual year or descriptions of being youthful or elderly and; 4) familial role – role in family as mother, father, son, daughter, wife, husband etc. Again as in the previous study, as a result of the fact that the women were 'firsts' in aspiring for the running mate slot, two specific traits were introduced to capture, first, notions of novelty, and second, the possibility of a non-conformist portrayal.

Overall, the media focused more on the personal attributes of the two female aspirants than the males. In terms of professional attributes, the media showed more interest in the male aspirants than the females, although difference was very minimal.

### **Personal Attributes**

Figure 1 shows that with the exception of "appearance", the rest of the personal attributes: the familial relationship, age, and character traits, of the two female aspirants were referenced more than those of the male candidates. Siddique's appearance was mentioned more.

**Figure 1 – Frequency of Attributes - Personal (actual numbers)**



### *Candidates' Appearance*

On appearance, only Mahama and Siddique were thus covered. Siddique's appearance was mentioned three times and Mahama's just once. The seeming lack of interest in the candidates' appearance, especially Mahama's and Asmah's, might have been as a result of the nature of the aspirant race which was less about platform campaign or rallies, which would have most likely invited and increased the possibility of sections of the media to assess sartorial appropriateness and appeal for the events.

The race was more about lobbying of power brokers, activities of interest groups and candidate interviews with media – the kind which sought to verify allegations or to profile candidates, and where arranged would potentially be positive and not necessarily distract from their bid. Coverage may also have lacked focus on appearance, as it appears that such focus does not seem to be a staple in the Ghanaian media. This might be as a result of respect for elderly women in the culture, as it was in Sirleaf Johnson's case in Liberia.

Both Asmah and Mahama would normally be seen dressed in the traditional 'Kaba' and 'Slit' – generally sewn as a long skirt and a blouse that covers the hands and, when worn, is usually considered as a modest and formal way of dressing by women. Both women usually also wore headscarves, Mahama being a Muslim woman, and Asmah being an elderly woman expressing her elderly tastes.

Women politicians in Ghana rarely wear suits in any form. This may be another reason why less was said about their appearance, as they were mostly seen to be wearing the dress and styles considered the norm. Sirleaf Johnson, who normally wears the Liberian traditional headscarf and clothes similar to the Ghanaian 'Kaba' and 'Slit', also attracted limited media attention to her appearance as a presidential candidate (Adams, 2010). Carroll and Schreiber's (1997) study of media coverage of women in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress found that focus on women's appearance was very minimal, with only 3 per cent of articles on women in congress referring to anything on how they looked or dressed. However, they do contend that the few references were generally offensive. The former being the Ghanaian case, as there was practically statistically insignificant reference to the appearance of the women candidates considered.

As this was the case, attention paid to Siddique's appearance especially as a male aspirant, and in the context that it was discussed in newspapers, appeared to be a narrative which might have been intentionally placed and certified by him, maybe informally for political expediency, especially when a male candidate's appearance is less expected to merit media attention. However, although the media are less likely to focus on the appearance of male candidates, when male candidates do focus on their appearance, it is more likely to yield positive results for them, whereas the same situation would less be likely to yield the same for women.

Murray (2010) confirmed that in the smart/attractive dichotomy, “while physical attractiveness can be an asset for male candidates – indeed, it is common for men candidates to emphasize or even enhance their physique – a similar approach may backfire for women. Beauty in women is associated with superficiality and fragility rather than power” (p. 16).

Siddique’s construction as chic and a celebrity of the Zongo<sup>3</sup> communities, as seen later in the chapter, might be reasons, also that most probably fed this particular media content.

It was mentioned:

His good looks make him a valuable material for platform politics as he is often described as a charmer of floating and female voters. (*The Daily Guide*, July 18, 2008, p.18, para 12).

This assertion was made by a spokesperson of one of the interest groups in favour of Siddique and was reported by the media. Interest groups, as one would expect, are either for or against a candidate in terms of issues and interests and not looks. Unless the argument is made that it is a reflection of the shallowness of politics done in Ghana, then it appears that this interest group and their message might be one that the candidate engineered himself for his cause.

This is not uncommon in Ghana’s political campaigns in order to create an impression of a large following, or to advance (seemingly trivial) points around appearance. On set, and with the pictures of him in the newspapers, one could sense that Siddique’s smile was meant to charm, and he was a person aware that he was considered handsome which will not be surprising, as he was mostly referred to in a celebritising way as “Boy scout” Boniface, “Yeji boy” among others.

In the subsequent weeks, the *Daily Guide* again reported:

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<sup>3</sup> Zongo - Muslim slum settlements

Boniface Siddique has a smile which will charm any lady and it's no wonder he's courted the press so easily (August 9, 2008, p.19, para 2).

This may confirm that Siddique was seen as a very charming personality and one who easily courts the media, and so was projected as a candidate who could win votes for his political party if given the nod. It may then be suggested that the *Daily Guide* might have been duly courted, as it looks to have continuously prevailed on its readers with such statements in its pages. As suggested earlier, it appears spokespersons of Siddique considered his good looks as an asset because women are more than half the population in Ghana and, according to them, women vote for good looks. This points to the possibility that his looks among other of his attributes might have been intentionally referenced for political profitability, as he was perceived by them to be more marketable. Spokespersons seemingly intentionally planting and consistently watering the narrative of his good looks is one thing; on the other hand, the media carrying the said reports because it was suggested that they were supposedly also charmed by his smile, as the fourth estate, reveals perhaps an aspect of the character of the Ghanaian media – corruption. That a smile was enough to have broken the very probing and critical lens of the media as it does, supposedly, to women, smacks of celebrityising his candidacy in a way and manner unexpected from the watchdog.

This suggests that such an effort from a media house, could among others, probably have been paid for to be inserted: it might have been Siddique's money and not his smile that could have charmed them. Some of the women candidates interviewed for Chapter VIII of this thesis said that the media and their male colleagues had a language both understood very well, which they explained that given their own limited resources and the mostly

greater resources available to their male colleagues, they are sometimes sidelined and overlooked. Possibly, Siddique's charming of the media might have been facilitated by his resources, a phenomenon not uncommon in the Ghanaian media landscape, popularly called *solli*.<sup>4</sup>

Also, constructing aspects of his appeal around his looks and female voters suggest that women do not appear to have political interests that they look for going into elections, and are seen to not be seriously politically minded. For women then it appears that candidates' looks appeal more than maybe, for example, campaign issues around their reproductive choices, work-life balance, housing, education and the economy. With this notion, it seems to have been implied to the benefit of Siddique that the demographics were on his side, as women in Ghana are deemed to be the population with a higher voter turnout and political loyalty. This is not only shallow to advance, but highly trivialises women voters.

Siddique's appearance representation portrayed women as voters who appear incapable of catering to their interests, and who, out of the many policy concerns one would consider as more pressing, favour the looks of the one who occupies a political seat. This ensures that male candidates considered handsome, irrespective of what they stand for, are voted into office. This trump card of Siddique point to his own culpability and potentially implicates him as colluding with the media to concentrate on his appearance, which to a male candidate was meant to add to his appeal (Heldman, 2009; Murray, 2010). Siddique might have acted with the knowledge, although not scientifically verified that generally, more presentable and personable male candidates are likely to win elections in Ghana.

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<sup>4</sup> *Solli*, used as a short form of solidarity is the money mostly paid to journalists by politicians, people and organisations that invite them for a program or to cover their event. A good *solli* would normally give a very positive coverage and get some sections of the media to do the bidding of the highest bidder.

Apparently, Siddique recognised that physical attractiveness as a male candidate was a plus to his ticket, although if women were thus framed, they would most likely be thought of as less smart and unserious.

### ***Familial Relationship***

All of the three candidates, with the exception of Asmah, had a reference made to their familial status. Candidates' familial descriptions were framed in ways that negotiated political capital for them. Yet in Mahama's case it seemed to mainly have scorned her, and most likely was meant to subtract from her, because of her status as an unmarried mother and divorcee. However, on the occasions that the newspapers reported her affiliation to important male political family figures, she was portrayed positively. Figure 1 shows that Mahama's family descriptions were a focus of attention as they were mentioned 9 times. For the male candidates, references to their family were mentioned twice for each.

As it was, Gladys Asmah was seen as her own woman, with enough clout on her own as a politician. She was considered politically astute, and could call anyone's bluff, so probably invoking another's political might over her was likely of lesser interest to the media. For instance Asmah was described as:

Grandma Gladys belongs to the old school of Ghana politics. Tough and well vetted by the Ghanaian electorate, Gladys was a propelling force behind the female empowerment drive in Ghana. ... She's a fighter, very experienced and has political endurance (*Daily Guide*, August 9, 2008, p.19, para 1).

Also, being considered elderly and as belonging to the generation before the other aspirants, Ghanaian custom would require a more reverent approach towards her. Most likely, her family life issues may be one of the things the media would shy away from, although there seemed not to be any such issues worthy of media interest, anyway.

Asmah's depiction as one who has garnered political experience for a long time was not downplayed by the media, although many times this was suggested by her own supportive interest groups. Her framing in this sense was one way that the media demonstrated a gender fairness around competence, and where such was not unnecessarily defaulted to male candidates. However being well vetted and tough should less have been evidenced by a female empowerment drive.

As evidenced from Figure 1, Mahama and both men had a mention of their family connections, and this was more of an invocation of a patriarchal covering over them, although it was mainly contextualised differently for the genders. For the men, references were made to long-standing associations of their families with the political traditions in Ghana. Other times, there were references to their royalty, heritage and lineage; referring to the fact that mostly a grandfather or father's kinsmen were a group of people the political party would need votes from to win elections, thereby appropriately placing their own relevance to the success of their parties via their ethnic, familial and tribal relations. Mostly, for Mahama, while positive references were made to her father as a veteran politician of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition, there were more references to her domestic role or absence of it as a wife. She was characterised mostly as the divorcee and the unmarried mother, and thereby framed as a problematic candidate.

First, for the men, Jawula was described:

As a son of Kpembe Royal clan, Alhaji M.N.D. Jawula was born a thoroughbred Zongo person and is a descendant of Jakpa, the warrior, known in Zongo folklore (The *Chronicle*, August 13, 2008, p.15, para 25).

Also, the *Daily Guide* reported:

Born at Cowlane in Accra to a Ga mother and a Hausa father, the choice of Alhaji Jawula, a devout Muslim, will surely attract votes from both tribes and especially from the Zongo communities, something which has caused the NPP [votes] in past elections. Mr Assuah noted. (August 6, 2008, p.12)

The second statement on Jawula was one of the points advanced by one of his advocates. The two statements collectively argued that Jawula was someone who came from a family of bold and courageous men who are important leaders in their communities; by his lineage, he had the necessary leadership ability and would most likely deliver a political oasis to the NPP in their politically dry areas.

On Siddique, the *Daily Graphic* reported:

As a Gonja man, the choice of Boniface would strengthen the appeal of the NPP vis-a-vis the National Democratic Congress' John Mahama – MP for Bole Bamboi, whose mother is from Krachi in the Northern Volta and Bole in Gonja. Moreover, though Boniface appeals to the Ewes because his father is from Nkonya in the Volta Region and because he was raised up at Yeji in the Brong-Ahafo Region, he has an appeal that transcends the PRU constituency to the northern part of Brong-Ahafo; the transcendancy that is referred to is best exemplified by his lineage – specifically that of his Presbyterian grandfather, which serves to enhance the national character of this amiable politician (*Daily Graphic*, Friday 25th July, 2008 p.9, para 3).

It is apparent that the wealth in the social basket of the male aspirants was couched in imagery and contexts which were mainly positive and exhaustive to support their candidature. Even the opposition contender from the other party (NDC) also was characterised by familial relationships which were to promote his candidature. Since politics is about numbers, it is therefore understandable the various familial associations that were tapped into for the men to become politically relevant and advance their bids to be nominated for the VP ticket. The problem however is that, especially for Mahama, the

same lineages she has were not extensively advanced compared with her male colleagues, even the limited references to her father only were as positive. In addition to her father's political background, her familial relationship made important to her bid was that she should have also stayed married – to be a wife. Aside the feature on Mahama which purposefully advanced political capital for her through her father, it was not the norm, or how the media was necessarily framing her. The mediated silence on Mahama's political extended family also might just mean that there appeared to be more important familial connections to address for a person of her gender – as a woman, which was the absence of a husband, her new patriarch handed over from her father, now that she was a grown woman.

On Mahama's more positive familial coverage, the *Chronicle* reported:

In selecting the running mate, care should be taken not to make a stranger the running mate to the flagbearer; since the running mate has the potential of becoming the president should something untoward happen to the incumbent President. Hajia Alima's father, Mr. Mahama Tampurie had been a great follower of the UP tradition. He was the party's MP for Walewale Constituency (August 8, 2008, p.3)

Mahama's father's earlier political achievements were used to advocate that she was to be trusted to hold a sensitive position in the party, because her paternal forebear had been a party member. Alima Mahama's familial connection on one hand seems to have been used to establish credibility for her candidacy. To have become MP meant that, on her own, she had achieved well enough within the party to be given the nod to contest on its ticket as a parliamentary candidate. Being MP also meant that she was not a stranger with regard to her commitment to the party. Although tracing her background to her father was equally

useful in gaining more ground as a core party member, exactly what she was in terms of her own qualities and achievements, were deferred and did not seem to have proved enough. This is consistent with Murray's (2010) suggestion that women's political achievements are mostly deferred especially to the important male figures in their lives; where they gain positions, it is assumed that they were less likely to have made it to those positions as a result of their own achievements. In fact, a position of a female author of a feature in the *Daily Graphic* also advanced, by stating:

In the few instances where a woman has been able to get into the limelight, particularly as a leader, she would have had to prove more than twice, if not more, that she is capable to take on the mantle being handed over to her. ... When competent women have worked hard to get into recognisable positions at the top, it is sometimes not seen as merit, but rather it is because she has powerful connections at higher places (June 18, 2008 p.7)

It appears the familial characterisation of the men was less about establishing credibility as leaders but more about how through where they come from and to whom they belong, their parties could potentially earn more votes with consequential effects. This shows that familial connections may potentially be used differently for women and men candidates, and more to the discredit of women candidates.

On Mahama's more problematic family status, the *Daily Guide* reporter wrote:

newspaper articles have argued that being a divorcee could count against her in the public mind (July 1, 2008, p.14, para 8).

References to her divorcee status were most likely to suggest that failure in her private life might be a window into her public life, and whether she would likely be successful or not as VP candidate when nominated, although those two can not possibly be causative.

Reports did not capture why she was a divorcee and an unmarried mother, but as to why she was, seemed to not matter. As a woman, it appeared that to some sections of the media, she just had to stay married.

Again, in subsequent edition of the *Daily Guide*, she was referred to, as an “un-married mother”. It reported:

They say her current state as an unmarried mother does not send good signals as far as family values are concerned (July 18, 2008, p.3, para 11).

“They” here, potentially represents the important male figures within the NPP who resisted Mahama’s ticket. It appears that staying married as a woman was key in considering if Mahama was a good candidate and also assessing her chances of being successful if given the nod. Since it was useful to establish her credibility via her father, it could also be the view that, to sections of the media and public, she needed to establish the same also via a husband. It suggests that the search for male figures in general in the life of a political woman, for that matter, might be a validation society seeks for women from men.

Seemingly, the importance that parts of Ghanaian society appear to place on a woman staying married to a husband – as the excerpts suggested, might be its way of confirming that Mahama was not being a social deviant; that she could be malleable and a person who acknowledges patriarchal authority over her. This is because, especially educated women who are not married, are perceived to be feminists and insolent to men in Ghanaian society. Her divorcee status counting against her in the public mind, according to the statement in the *Daily Guide*, seems to have assumed of her, as a divorcee, to be one who potentially abhorred the patriarchy, a feminist in arms, rigid and possibly man-hating.

Clearly, such an aspirant would not be nominated, as she was deemed as unlikely to be accepted by voters. It is likely that she was still able to become MP because her constituency has known her for most of her life. In Ghana, MPs are normally native to, and generally known in, the constituency towns, since there are almost always extended families who live there all their lives. Should the kingmakers be interested in Mahama as a candidate, as the flagbearer himself was known to be, her divorcee status would not necessarily be an insurmountable problem, because she was generally known as a very affable person.

Again, being MP and having colleague parliamentarians who have come to know her, could have propagated her more affable personality to the public through the party's media strategy to disabuse the public's minds. An absence of this effort further suggests that, the party kingmakers were generally not enthused by the idea of a woman candidate per se. The auxiliary distractions being cited as a divorcee and single mother could have been avoided, given a meaningful commitment to nominate her.

It is possible that there are male divorcees in Ghanaian politics, but it is not an area that has been emphasised or commonly used against male candidates in the Ghanaian public or media. Even by being a single parent, her family values were equally questioned as a result; an "unmarried mother" – she has a child and is unmarried. It is likely that a male candidate who was divorced may equally encounter problems with his ticket. But the possible reasons one may ascribe to the cases regarding gender would be likely to be different, although not necessarily positive for one and negative for the other. But most probable is the possibility that a woman without a husband would be more likely to be electorally penalised as Mahama's case seems to suggest, and as there has been almost no incident

related to a man being a divorcee or a single parent, although there may well be male divorcees and single parents contesting for positions in Ghana. A single parent, a mother without a husband perhaps, is more criminalised than a single father with his children. This is probably because society would most likely be tempted to doubt her 'motherliness' and 'womanhood' for 'ignoring' her children and marriage in search of a career. A single man taking care of his children would be likely to be seen as more honourable in society's eyes. This may also be because that is not the role bequeathed to a man; in fact, it is something he is mostly excused, and so to take it upon him would seem honourable. By being an unmarried mother, she might have been thought of as possibly, amoral, and 'not woman enough' according to the standards of parts of the society, and so for these reasons, society seemingly was not going to see her in a good light, concerning "family values", and that meant that she was less likely to secure the nomination.

The absence of a male authority as validation might have also made her an unsuitable candidate in a way that a man without a wife may not necessarily have been, and it seems quite evident that she was not going to be given the nod without a husband which makes perfect sense of rumours in media that she was in search of a husband, as the *Ghanaian Times* reported:

It appears that a single woman with a considerable fortune seeking the nomination of the New Patriotic Party flagbearer as his running mate into the 2008 elections, must be in want of a husband (August 12, 2008, p.19, para 3).

### ***Candidates' Age***

The ages of all four candidates were mentioned, mostly captured as biographical. Together, the ages of the two women candidates were mentioned more than those of the males. Of total age mention, the two women had 58 per cent and the two male candidates 42 per cent. Specifically, Mahama's age was mentioned 7 times, Siddique's 5 times, then Asmah's 4 times, and Jawula 3 times. This indicates that Mahama's age was mentioned considerably more than the rest of the candidates.

On Mahama:

Hajia Alima Mahama, who turns 51 this November, is an accomplished woman in her own right. She is a lawyer, legislator for Nalerigu-Gambaga in the Northern Region and has a mass female following (*Daily Guide*, August 14, 2008, p.5)

On Jawula:

Fifty-nine-year old Dawuda Jawula, an Eastern Gonja chief with the title of Lepowura, *Daily Guide* has gathered, is set to shed the traditional position and resign his government position should he get the nod (*Daily Guide*, June 19, 2008, p.2)

Also on Asmah, the *Daily Guide* reported:

The septuagenarian, born October 16, 1936 is currently the minister for Fisheries and the oldest woman in the present Ghanaian parliament (July 15, 2008, p.3)

Furthermore, some inferences to Asmah's age were made from references to her as "Grandma Gladys" and as one "belonging to the old school of politics" as earlier mentioned in the chapter. References to Siddique's age were thus:

The group noted that Alhaji Boniface, who turns 48 this November, has a proven track record in both civil and public service (*Daily Guide*, August 4, 2008, p.6).

Furthermore, Siddique was referred to as being:

tactically good for the NPP also because of his age. He's young and with some apprenticeship could easily morph into the presidential candidature role come 2016 (*Daily Guide*, August 9, 2008, p.19, para 2).

Again, Siddique's youthfulness was also inferred from his celebrity and chic construction:

The '*Yeji boy*'<sup>5</sup> is credited with a good job done when he was Northern Regional Minister, especially in the wake of the Dagbon crisis (*Daily Guide*, July 18, 2008, p.3).

Referring to him as the "Yeji boy" seems to demonstrate his youthfulness and popularity among the youth and the *Yeji* community. He was portrayed as someone more exciting than perhaps the "tough", "old school", and implicitly boring politician, and so someone the youth would rally behind more easily. As it was earlier said about him, someone who fits "platform politics" and whose appearance most likely will not be torturing to behold. Siddique was rendered as presentable to the youth, one of the key demographics in Ghana that political parties seem to count on for votes.

Such inferences also appear to have negotiated the particular demographic of support to men. As it was very evident from the systematic reading of the newspaper corpus, men's leadership was constructed as for all the demographics, but the women's, for women, as even their achievements were mentioned mostly for the constituency of women. For example, the excerpt above mentioned that Mahama has "a mass female following". Earlier,

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<sup>5</sup> Yeji Boy seems to be used to mean the darling boy of the people from Yeji, a town in Ghana.

we learnt Asmah was a powerful force behind the female empowerment drive. This would later be hinted on in the chapter under “Character Traits”, which follows this section, then mainly touched on under “Professional Attributes” and in the Conclusions chapter, as well. Siddique transcended being a middle-aged man to a chic youthful personality, while the aged Asmah remained “Grandma Gladys”.

From the representation of the candidates, age appeared to be used differently for the women and the men. For instance, Mahama was said to be:

a loyal member of the party and age puts her in a good stead to catch the eye of the flagbearer (*Daily Guide*, July 18, 2008, p.3, para 9).

She, being a woman candidate, one may be right in being cautious to assume that was meant to imply a youthful advantage as it did in the case of Siddique. Her “age puts her in a good stead” suggested that, she was of the right age of maturity as a woman – middle-aged, to not be thought of as an unserious politician, since if she were any younger, she would be less likely to make the needed impression with regards to voters’ perceptions around her competence, credibility and seriousness for the job at hand. For her as a woman, around the same age as Siddique, her age serving her well implied being a mature adult rather than a youthful girl or a young woman, although Siddique was perfectly positively and without struggle constructed as a “boy”; a youthful figure. Even Jawula too, 8 years older than Mahama being 58, was called a “Zongo boy” (*Chronicle*, June 7, 2008, p.3). The men, represented as young boys, fit the idea of a serious politician and are, in fact, the ideal kind of candidate normally sought after to appeal to the youth, and to later “morph into a presidential candidate”. Yet the same construction, if given Mahama, makes her a less suitable candidate: this was a revealing contrast of how age played the political cards for the genders and how age used either way, young or old, favoured men and not women. A

middle-aged man was alright being middle aged as is, or even if younger would not lose an ascription to him as serious. A middle aged woman, or even if any younger, would most likely not be able to use being youthful to her advantage as a man would, because it would be likely to undercut her as a serious candidate. In either case, as an older or younger woman she may still have to subscribe to at least a middle-aged maturity to be seen to be serious. Beyond being middle-aged, she faces another stereotype of being menopausal, whereas an elderly man would likely be associated with political experience.

Women candidates therefore are in constant need of having to prove their seriousness even with their age and not their experience, whatsoever. The need for women to prove their seriousness is linked to their competence ratings as well. As women are mostly assumed to be novelties - new to the 'game' of politics, the closer they are to the association of being unskilled for that particular terrain, hence the need to prove their seriousness and competence. Men are normally seen as by default the more mature, serious and capable candidates. Women are generally seen as complementary figures to men's 'natural' ability. Murray (2010) posited, "younger women candidates are assumed to be inexperienced, unviable, and are expected to be at home raising children" (p.17), a depiction of Ségolène Royal and Sarah Palin, whereas young men as candidates seemed to be favourable - President Obama and Prime minister Justin Trudeau.

With such mindsets around younger women, there is little to no incentive therefore for women to want to cling to any use of being youthful in vying for a political office. By placing women almost always as second to men, and with men remaining as the norm and women as the deviation, relating age to political seriousness against women is perpetuated. Women ascribing to the mature frame are meant to announce perhaps, how

much of men they might have become; capable, level headed and serious to fully participate in politics – the ‘game’ men play. Ross and Comrie (2012) demonstrated, “the problem of differential treatment based on sex can be exacerbated by other characteristics such as age – a double whammy rarely befalling male politicians” (p. 971). This situation characterises the differences in age representations between Siddique and even Jawula on the one hand, and the two women on the other.

### ***Character Traits***

Collectively, the personal traits of the two women were focused on more than the male candidates; 23 times for the women and 20 times for the men. As individuals, Mahama’s personal traits were the most focused on and Asmah’s the least, with the men in between. Mahama’s was focused on 16 times, followed by Jawula’s 11 times, then Siddique’s 9 times and Asmah’s 7 times.

The women’s key attributes, where mainly positive, were mostly domesticated and feminised, especially Asmah’s; to nurture and to care, seemingly, like the mother hen. In a feature by a female writer of the *Daily Graphic*, she stated:

Let our politicians and godfathers who are busy deciding the fate of womanhood... go and listen attentively to ... the singer Shaggy. Shaggy has wondered if God is a woman. According to the song, God has the strength of a woman, He protects like a woman does for her children, and smiles on us all day in the face of our follies’ (August 20, 2008, p.16).

The women seemed to be portrayed as having the characteristics of the proverbial mother in Ghana – one who slaves it out all the time for everybody, and one who is incapable of raising the rod because of her ‘innate’ compassion and sensitivity to the pain of childbirth

can't "hurt" her child and so seems to defer punishment to men/fathers as their traditional role. Also, the woman is portrayed as very accommodating, as she is said to smile all the time no matter what. Although this portrayal depicts a compassionate nature to an extent, it equally shows a weaker nature which does not fit the general idea of who a leader is thought to be, because the idea of leadership is not imputed to people who are seen to be a walkover, because they smile all the time "in the face of (everyone's) follies". This portrayal also may show how so much is required of the Ghanaian woman in sections of the society as a result of her gender roles. The balance of being compassionate, and yet not a walkover, for people for a leader, was left absent in this frame.

Although the writer's intention might have been to promote women, her portrayal of them fed the stereotype that women are not cut out for politics and that they are innately not tough, and lack the qualities of leadership required.

Specifically for Asmah, she was several times depicted as a mother, for example by the groups who endorsed her in the media. The *Daily Graphic* reported:

We consider her (Gladys) as our mother and pray that she would be given the nod to continue her good work in the capacity as the Vice president of Ghana (August 8, 2008, p.15, para 9).

The *Daily Guide* also reported:

He also said that Mrs Asmah besides being a true NPP member was also the best in the race in terms of marketability, experience and the 'most accommodative who can help increase the party's votes come December 2008' (July 31, 2008, p.16)

In the first statement, the people's references to Asmah as being their mother invoked the domestic traits of women as nurturers to promote her candidature. It appeared from her description that by being kind and compassionate and serving the constituency of women she became a mother to them, and that actually most likely promoted the notion that women are generally seen as akin to, if not synonymous with, nurturing. To be able to nurture does not seem to be what is problematic, but the nature of nurture could be. The seeming absence of an authoritative imagery in the use of 'mother' at a time where people required leadership could potentially sideline women in taking key leadership positions which are deemed more serious and required a different set of skills. Although voters are more likely to vote for likeable personalities demonstrated by their compassion, people may prefer to vote for those they may feel could protect and lead them, because they may feel safer with them, as this constitutes mainly the impression of leadership.

On the balance of probabilities, perhaps, projecting motherly traits may get some women into office; for example, countries coming out of some form of economic depression and war are said to be more likely to appreciate what are termed as feminine traits, and so may tend to vote for women who are deemed to possess such traits (Jalazai, 2008; Adams, 2010; Franceschet & Thomas, 2010; Murray, 2010;). However, according to Atkeson and Krebs (2008) and Meeks and Domke (2011), because of the stereotypical association of women with feminine traits, there is a greater challenge in ascending to higher and executive positions. Since the VP is an executive position, and very masculine in Ghana, the maternalisation, domestication and feminising of women's traits seemed less likely to be the most favourable depictions in securing the nod. The absence of feminine traits as well in women's depictions is also found to be unfavourable to their candidacy which therefore calls for a balance in representation in the performance of gender by candidates.

The second excerpt on Asmah achieved this, as it positioned her both as experienced and accommodating. Earlier, we learnt she was well vetted and an experienced politician as well, however, they provided a tailored feminised evidence which was unreflective of the attribute being claimed. As explained further down the chapter, portraying women as a group with particular traits, and voting for women with the expectation that they are one particular people with a particular set of traits for all seasons, is not only unrealistic but limiting, and could be frustrating, since no effective leader could be just be a mother for what it is used to imply through and through.

Progressing from the above, some placards held by groups supporting Asmah's aspirant bid which the media wrote about, continued to refer to her motherly presence: "Maame<sup>6</sup> Gladys, we are proud of you." "Hail Gladys our saviour", "Obaatan Pa<sup>7</sup>, Gladys", and, lastly, "good mother, saver of women" (*Daily Graphic*, August 8, 2008, p.15, para 3). Asmah, as we see, continued to take on the form of the proverbial mother in Ghana which constitutes perceptions and notions of women's super-ability underlined by their so-called talents of compassion and nurturing. Asmah here again was desired for her qualities as a mother, but as indicated before, the general public might be looking for a leader and not a mother, and she also was seen as with a female following, just as Mahama.

Women's domestic roles were considered as what they would bring to the political table. Mostly in Ghana, women are expected and required to be mothers (with or without a child) and to be wives (with or without a husband). Traits such as compassion and cooperation considered within the feminine fabric are seen as very progressive and favourable to businesses and international politics. Although such is the rhetoric, it appears that they are less rewarded (Catalyst, 2007). Apparently, women may be restricted to being and

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<sup>6</sup> Maame means mother in the Twi language of the Akan people of Ghana

<sup>7</sup> Obaatan Pa means in Twi, Good mother.

remaining the custodian of society's values and its virtuous bank, and when those traits are required, it is only for women to give them.

These kinds of framing would be likely to increase people's expectations of women, what they feel women should be, or what women should be able to feel for them, or do for them as their elected officials. The same, mostly, may not be required of men, by reason of those expectations normally not being held for men. Society's seeming inability to recognise that women possess a variety of values relevant to the domestic as well as the public domain (and to men as well), may therefore set women up to fail after they have been voted or nominated into a political position. As they take on the job, and take on a nature relevant to be effective at it, voters may start to wonder whether it was a man that they voted for or a woman – implying their conceptions of what a man or woman has to be.

Some of the women respondents for the interviews done as part of this study cited that when the public later learn that they are tough, then they come to assume labels such as 'Margaret Thatchers' and 'Iron Ladies'.

In Ghana, many women parliamentarians have complained about losing their seats because of unmatched expectations of their gender from their constituents. Some, still in Parliament during interviews with them (Interview, 2012) complained about the burden put on them because they are women, and that constituents expect that they would feel more compassion for them than the male MPs. The women politicians also stated that they are therefore burdened to pay school fees, make funeral donations, rent accommodation for struggling mothers and fathers, and they are not expected to fail to meet any personal

need requests of their constituents. According to the constituents, a woman understands their plight, and that is construed to mean meeting their needs.

Voters' somehow unrealistic expectations of women, and their assumption that women are the complete game changers in politics, means for instance, once voted for, a woman at the helm of affairs should change everything from bad to good, worst to best. Constituents start to feel disappointed as they are still unable to see the light of day on their expectations. Being a woman clearly does not give one a magic wand: while women's experiences can tailor them to be more compassionate, there does not seem to be a gene for a magic wand. However, society's expectations, and normally harsher punishments for women, confine women to less risky tasks and treading more carefully in dealing with things that would conflict with society's expectations of them.

Therefore, the consequence for women being seen as deviating from what voters assumed they were may be that they are electorally penalised, and some voters would actually think then that, if women can't change the system then they are ostensibly better off to continue to vote for men. Moreover, because the standards are higher for women politicians as already mentioned above, people may begin to feel that the women they voted for performed less when this situation arises, whereas in fact it would be less likely that they might have performed less, but only shy of an unbearable expectation. Women politicians as we see are normal human beings who are not monotonous in the expression of virtues or the demonstration of their traits. Society and its systems should be seen to be circumspect and acknowledge this.

On their personal character traits, whereas the women were mainly confined to the private domain, the traits of the men were mostly put in the public sphere. The male candidates were largely framed as leaders who were already prepared and ready to lead.

For instance: on Siddique, it was said:

His tenure as Northern Regional Minister, Minister for Youth, Manpower and Employment and now Minister for Water, Works and Housing have proved his ability to resolve community relations, inculcate self-reliance and entrepreneurship, formulate, superintend and execute a key piece of government legislation (National Youth Employment Programme) that is critical to our nation's development, administer portfolios even-handedly to the point that his fairness and firmness in getting the best deal is recognised by all and sundry (*Daily Graphic*, July 25, 2008 p.7, para 11).

The *Daily Graphic* also had earlier reported:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman of the NPP in Techiman, said apart from the fact that Boniface is a very hard-working person, he is a crowd puller and will be a sure trump card for a one touch win for Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. ... describing him as humble, respectable, versatile and hardworking, noting that these were the qualities Ghanaians want from a running mate (June 18, 2008, p.16)

Siddique was presented as someone with key skills to deliver for the aspirations of the people. He was depicted as capable of leading and of cracking the whip.

Siddique was described as everything a leader could be – as one who takes initiative, who executes them and who shows tact in dealing with people. These attributes were not in any way suggested for the women, although it is likely that, with ministerial and cabinet experience, they took initiatives and showed tactfulness, as well. That might have been one way to have communicated stronger leadership ability than the descriptions of being mother and being the good women behind successful men.

Siddique in the second excerpt was also given a balanced portrayal of feminine and masculine traits, and this was, unlike for the women, not contextualised within his gender necessarily, but rather within the remit of the VP position which required that he is seen as someone who can work under a higher authority and not usurp the authority of the presidential candidate. This is a key attribute which is looked for in Ghana for running mates. This demonstrates that even when feminine traits are used for men they are likely to be contextualised differently, and it makes them a more appealing candidate than when masculine and even feminine traits are used for women. When masculine, a woman becomes less likeable; when feminine, the impression around her competence is also undercut (Tannen, 1994). However, a man becomes both competent and likeable when performing both masculinity and femininity. How candidates' character traits are framed therefore is important to communicate their leadership ability and their suitability for certain positions.

Considering that these feminine traits are highly favourable in the selection of a VP candidate, boycotting the women seen by sections of the media and society as people who are more collegial, suggests again that their sex was, most probably, what some members of the selection committee had an intolerance for. For the men, the feminine traits were more positive for them because, leadership and capability were already defaulted to them by their gender.

### ***Political Messiahs but within Different Gendered Contexts***

Within their personal character trait descriptions, there was also the notion of the candidates being political messiahs. The character traits of the women and men candidates had another context, where both genders were portrayed as a kind of political messiahs for the ticket. The men were represented as Stars and ordinary-people's persons among the largely northern communities, especially the Muslim slums, who could deliver their votes to the NPP because of abysmal performance in those areas. The women, however, were constructed more as moral appendages to the ticket, where they were seen to be considered as the pious ones who have been invited into the fold of the men to potentially sanitise their mess and consequently, render the ticket 'holier' and appealing to voters. The women were also depicted as having the capability to correct society's ills because of their family role as mothers holding families together and who supposedly are with the responsibility to rear their children. Some of these were representations that the candidates themselves would self-frame, as well as their spokespersons. For instance, Mahama herself was reported to have asked, "what if it would be a woman who will bring peace to Bawku?"<sup>8</sup> (*Daily Guide*, July 7, 2008, p.1). This suggests that, according to her, the men have tried to do it for so long but seems not to have made the needed headway, hence a woman should be given the chance. Therefore, it appears that Mahama claimed the stereotypical association of women to consensus-building- that women have something that men don't to bring peace and end war. It is not far from right for her to have claimed a certain ability just by being a woman because, as the literature indicates, women are seen to have the skills to tend to ailing nations, and are most likely to be elected for political positions when a country seems to be, for instance, coming out of conflict, as in the case of Sirleaf Johnson (Adams, 2010). This suggests that the public and society normally give

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<sup>8</sup> Bawku is a town in one of the northern regions in Ghana.

women more credit for the ability to restore peace, and she also self-framed her chances in the light of the stereotype for potential positive outcomes.

The *Daily Guide* again suggested, in making a case for why Mahama should be on the ticket:

Hajia Alima out of her neutrality and simplicity had become an icon of admiration to even members of the opposing parties and could therefore bring about peace among feuding factions in the North (July 30, 2008 p.17).

This time, Mahama is depicted as someone who is neutral and simple and as a result could work well with the feuding factions in the North to restore peace. This seems to credit Mahama's conflict resolution skills with a set of character traits she possesses, rather than her being necessarily a woman. It seems to not be evident enough, if by suggesting neutrality and simplicity her gender was implicated, but it is also possible that referencing these characteristics might have been inspired possibly by her role as a woman and mother in society. This might have been extended to mean a mother who was perceived to know how to stay neutral to separate her children fighting at home. If so, it could therefore be inferred that she would be able to do same among the people. This seem to feed on the motherly stereotype and assumes a capability to settle conflicts based on her gender. In a feature in the *Daily Graphic*, the writer mentioned another way women were added to the ticket to make up for what men might not have been able to do. The writer suggested:

A woman would transform our country even faster than we have ever hoped for. Women represent progress (June 18, 2008 p.7, para 21).

This typically reflects the expectations held of women as the ones who would likely do better than men: that they are allegedly saintlier, and that they have a special touch to things. These views held by parts of the public and the media probably underlie the reason

why women become the moral appendages to the political tickets. Where men are considered to have done well at their job, women would less likely be voted for, because it appears until there is a perception that men have failed, women are less likely to be voted in. Women also feed on the narrative of men's failure to suggest to voters their suitability to replace men; Sirleaf Johnson did this (Adams, 2010), as if men fail because they are men and not because of the conscious choices they make as human beings. When such narratives persist, it confirms that men are more likely to be considered generally for political positions, while women, as the literature says, are considered where the feeling is that there should be some form of renewal (Jalalzai, 2008, 2010; Murray, 2010).

Again, one spokesperson of Mahama was reported as saying:

Going by the notion that women are less corrupt, the communications Director of the Zongo Friends of Nana Akufo-Addo (ZOFONA), ..., has called on the flagbearer of the NPP as well as party stalwarts to consider making Hajia Alima Mahama, Minister for Women and Children's Affairs, the party's running mate (*Daily Guide*, July 14, 2008, p.23).

Furthermore, the statement appears to advocate women's piety and ask for their nomination to the ticket because they are supposedly less corrupt and seemingly likely by their motherly role to straighten society. On gender and corruption, Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti (2001) found a positive correlation between women and corruption; that the more women there are in politics the less corruption is practised. Swamy, Knack, Lee, and Azfar (2001) made similar observations about their study on gender and corruption that men are far more likely to engage in corrupt practices and that females have far less tolerance for corrupt practices. Earlier, Kahn (1996) had equally observed that women are appreciated as better able to uphold integrity in public office. It may therefore not be

unfounded to suggest doing better politics by electing and nominating women, and campaigns of women candidates also framing their candidates on piety. However, such impressions around women could burden them and excuse men, as by stating that gender makes a difference in corruption, men's corrupt acts are more likely to be excused as what men seem to do and seem to be helpless about.

The political messiah role of women, as explained above, associate women's role in politics with bringing about peace, stepping in for men where they are found corrupt, and fixing the ills of society. Women therefore, appear to be pushed to hold space for society as guardians of virtue; they seem to be invited in to clean vices with their virtues, and are therefore more likely to be accepted on tickets as moral appendages than as experts in the terrain.

However, the context of the political messiah frame for men was rather as people who salvage their political parties but not with pious virtues or being thought of as moral, but as well-known stars, people with good social baskets and leaders of their communities. Portraying that women seem to be "invited" in to serve and men are asked to lead. The *Chronicle* reported:

With Lepowura, we are more than convinced that Nana has less work to do because he is a man of the people (July 14, 2008 p.2, para 9).

Then the *Ghanaian Times* added:

If indeed the slogan 'politics is about numbers' is anything to go by, then the search for running mate to the NPP Presidential candidate, ... will soon be a done deal in favour of Lepowura, ... The Gonjaland is the largest traditional area in the Northern Region of Ghana. It is also considered as the largest traditional area in the country and with Lepowura Jawula as the traditional ruler in Kpembu, a town near Salaga, one can imagine the electoral fortune that he will bring to

Nana's ticket and for that matter the New Patriotic Party as a whole. ..It is very important to state that as a devout Muslim, Alhaji Jawula has good relations with the National Chief Imam and all the ten Regional Imams (July 17, 2008 p.8)

And of Siddique, it was said:

Many insiders see him as an ultimate organizer of Zongo votes – a factor which they see as vital in averting a presidential run-off in the December elections (*Daily Guide*, July 18, 2008, p.3, para 3).

The *Daily Graphic* also recounted:

Though Ghana is a secular state, we have to recognise that religion does play a role in our political discourse. As a Muslim who is highly respected both within the Zongos and outside its environs, the selection of Alhaji Boniface is an advantage that must not be overlooked. His popularity in the Muslim community is not limited to any part of the country but cuts across, from Esrama in the Western Region to Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo Region as well as the Zongo communities in the Kumasi metropolis (June 28, 2008, p.6)

The statements above intimate that the men were brought in, or endorsed for the running mate slot, more for their person skills and popularity and the women for their assumed piety.

Figure 2 below also shows a different set of attributes on the other areas of focus in the coverage of candidates: “non-conformers”, “novelty” and Professional Attributes. Mahama was the only candidate spoken of as a non-conformer. Also, only the two women candidates were covered as novelties in the race. As already stated above, collectively, the professional attributes of the male candidates were mentioned more than the women even

though marginally, however as individuals, Jawula and Mahama paired on those scores, followed by Siddique and lastly, Asmah.

### ***Non-Conformer***

Mahama was the only candidate characterised as a Non-Conformer. She dared a three-way limitation: a so-called conservative northern heritage, seeming religious restriction and her gender, and so her non-conformity characterisation could not be less than expected. Specifically to her gender, in the *Chronicle* she was framed as:

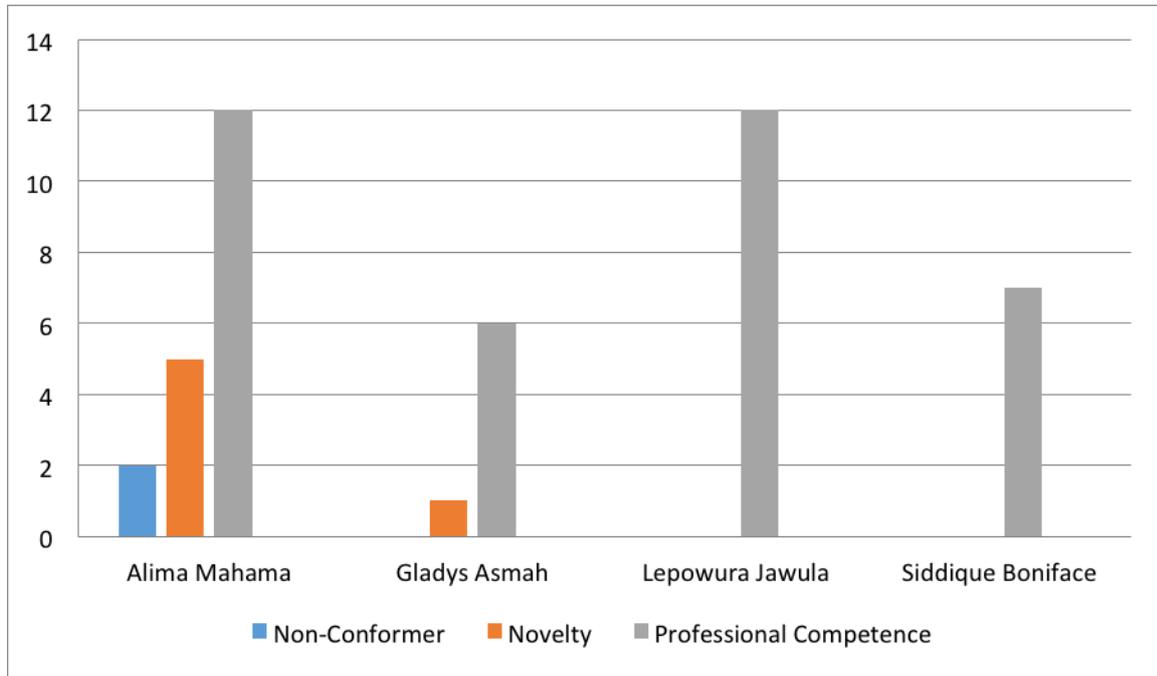
Hajia Alima Mahama is the only female who seems to be rubbing shoulders with the men in this keenly contested race (June 7, 2008, p.3, para 26).

Possibly, one may understand why it was Mahama, the woman, who was depicted as rubbing shoulders with the men, and not that all the candidates were probably rubbing shoulders with each other, or that one of the men was, with the rest of them. Men are not necessarily considered to rub shoulders with men, and this may be because men are deemed as of equal capabilities and privileges. Therefore, to be considered as rubbing shoulders with others may have implied two things; first, that Mahama was not in a familiar territory and that she was a newcomer to the field, whereas both men were not; and second, as a consequence, she was mingling and fraternising with those who were not her co-equals in capabilities and privileges.

The problem here intimates that although men's skills and experiences do vary, as politics takes on a very masculine character it has been represented mostly as synonymous with men and assumed to be a field where all men seemingly, have the right set of skills for. By

extension, one that not all women do except the few who would be seen to be ‘manning-up’, perhaps as Mahama might have been seen to be doing.

**Figure 2 – Frequency of attributes – Professional, Non – conformist, Novelty (actual numbers)**



So the skills and competencies of men are therefore less likely to be evaluated, since competence is assumed as the norm for men when it comes to public office. This conceivably, underlies the notion where it was comfortably assumed that it was Mahama who was rubbing shoulders with the men and not possibly the other way round. Most likely true about the assertion that she was “rubbing shoulders with men” would be that it was the political ground on which she was contesting, and patriarchal privileges would be likely to be extended to the men. Also in terms of resources men are likely to have more than women, and so the latter may not be in a position to compete favourably. In terms of terrain of politics and resources therefore, it may not be far from true that she was probably trying to rub shoulders with men. However, in terms of capability, the political ground was not alien to Mahama as she had been MP and served as deputy minister in two

ministries, and consequently became Minister; and it goes for Asmah, too. In fact, Jawula and Siddique together with Mahama had commensurate CVs related to political appointments and extensiveness of professional work. Women may not be in their numbers in politics, but some women are not necessarily new to the territory of contesting elections. For instance the novelty coverage seen to be given women candidates convey the impression that they are new entrants (Murray, 2010). This promotes women as without experience, and so seen to be rubbing shoulders with men. Such characterisations also serve as a barrier to women's acceptance in political office, as it is sometimes consciously and unconsciously assumed that they do not belong in there. As a result, when one is elected or nominated, the assumption is that she has now been granted access, and is then made to carry the burden of proof of the capabilities of all other women. When she is considered to have failed, other women are to be judged by her failure. Although men also 'fail', men still get voted back into public offices without insinuating that one man failed. This possibly clarifies why women are normally voted for on the basis of renewal and change because it the perception of voters is that women clean the mess of men, and that is what electors tend to be comfortable to vote women in to do. This also implies that women are called upon to perform once again a domestic duty assigned to them in the home but transferred to the public sphere.

In Ghana, most women and wives still take responsibility for the personal care of their men – their brothers, uncles, husbands, where they clean after them after eating and wash their clothes. When men present to have messed up themselves in the political space, women are seen to be called upon to come wash the dirty clothes and clean the dirty plates of their political play. Women as domestic cleaners become political cleaners. Then when women are done, they are expected to exit immediately. This, among other roles of women in society, perhaps reveal their status as adjuncts to men, where women are to cater to the

needs of men, and men are pampered by patriarchal privileges which mostly burden women.

Rubbing shoulders with men perpetuates the ways words are used to still define the borders for women's place and status in society and politics. She being Northern, Muslim and Woman, she was surely not conforming to expectations held of her, and might have been seen to be socialising where she shouldn't. Asmah as a woman was probably left out of the non-conformist portrayal because she was deemed as a woman after the likes of men. Being a veteran politician in her own right, it would have sounded quite laughable to insinuate that she was one rubbing shoulders with the 'latter day saints' of politics. She was seen as "tough and well vetted" as was mentioned earlier. Her description, an equally troubling characterisation of strong women who are not interpreted as themselves but as being men, thereby sidelining some attributes as not in females.

Asmah was the kind of woman who would call anyone's bluff, whereas Mahama comes across as a more careful kind of woman in relating to the patriarchy. It was said of Mahama that she carried herself with dignity, a term which could be implied in Ghanaian parlance as a woman who was more careful to not offend especially men, in for example how she was mindful and sensitive to the suggestions about how women are expected to speak to men.

Moreover, the phrase: "in this keenly contested race" in the newspaper excerpt which was describing the kind of race in which Alima Mahama dared to engage, so to speak, was equally problematic. It touted that it was not an expectation for Mahama to have been able to rub shoulders in a keenly contested race; implying that women probably play in the

sands and men in the mountains of politics; or that the women play at the banks of politics and men inside its oceans. Maybe, the opposite was equally true for women because in politics they contend with more in terms of gender stereotypes, limited resources, family and religious restrictions and patriarchy. The phrase however, betrayed Mahama's formidability and equal status with the men, as the expectation was that in a race as keen as the one she was in, she was not expected to have had her game on as she did by being up to the task and so was seen as "rubbing shoulders with the men".

Ultimately, it is fallacious for the writer to have assumed that she was rubbing shoulders with the men. How could she be rubbing shoulders when the playing field was not even one that would most likely have favoured her, as the resistance to her candidacy from the news corpus presented shows. She negotiated, navigated and fulfilled the terms, just as any of the candidates. She did not seem to have been excused, and she surely must have showed more chutzpah in this case, and yet she was the one rubbing shoulders?

### ***Novelty***

The two women were constructed as novelties; Mahama 5 times and Asmah just once. The flagbearer was mostly admonished to see to making it a reality that a "first woman vice president" was going to be possible by her nomination. Beyond these, the novelty of their candidacy was also suggested in the headline: "A woman Leader: let it happen in our lifetime" (*Daily Graphic*, June 18, 2008 p.7), suggesting the 'first-ness' of it, if one of the women were chosen.

Of Asmah, the *Daily Guide* reported:

Now it is time to give her the mandate to become the first woman vice president of the country and all indications prove that she will be an efficient, effective and successful vice president for our dear country (August 13, 2008, p.16, para 8).

Speaking of Mahama, the *Daily Guide* also reported a party executive as saying: “We want a true party man with some level of loyalty” (August 14, 2008, p.3, para 6) forgetting that true and loyal party members are not necessarily male, alienating Mahama and entrenching her novelty and by extension Asmah’s.

Lastly on Alima Mahama:

Within the last couple of weeks, a number of women’s activist groups and organisations have come out loud and clear on radio, television and in the print media that this is an opportune time for our beloved country to have a woman Vice president. It is interesting to note that a majority of these women’s groups are rooting for Hajia Alima Mahama, the Minister of Women and Children’s Affairs, as the obvious choice as far as NPP is concerned and for very good reasons at that. Firstly, since the major opposition party has already chosen a male presidential running mate, it is the ruling NPP, which is largely expected to win the December election, that can give the nation its first female vice president (*Daily Guide*, July 31, 2008, p.19)

The novelty frame acts together with the non-conformity frame to isolate women from being regarded as mainstream in politics. The quote therefore excluded the women as 1) party members, and 2) as qualified candidates, since they were not being considered from the statement. Even when neutral descriptions were used, they were to mean, just men. For instance, the search for a “Northern Muslim” or a vice-presidential candidate was constructed to mean male only, and Mahama was represented as outside of these. Mahama, and Asmah alike, became part of the conversation when the issue of gender consideration came in; other than that they were not covered under those definitions. Men were the

norm and it appears, if they were looking for a woman, they would qualify it as such. The party members did not seem to think the running mate position could be taken by one of the women who have served as not just ministers but cabinet ministers, and were also parliamentarians. One could conveniently ask about how much of newcomers or strangers were the women, who had not only been MPs but held cabinet positions as Ministers, such that in looking for a vice-presidential candidate, the talk was for a so-called true party man, as if they, the women, would not have had to be true members to have been elected on the party's tickets as parliamentarians and both appointed as cabinet ministers. The statement made an assumption that no woman would have arrived by way of political experience to be nominated as VP candidate. As mentioned earlier, it also assumed the norm for men that all of them were competent and qualified by default, and the ones to then be considered from among these defaults would be those much closer to the party machinery.

### **Professional Attributes**

Candidates' professional attributes included their political attainment and professional experience. Mahama and Jawula had their professional traits mentioned 12 times each, followed by Siddique, whose was mentioned 7 times and Asmah 6 times. Most of Mahama's professional construction was more a reference to her position as Women and Children's Affairs Minister. It was hardly mentioned that she was a human rights lawyer and development worker with huge experience in enterprise creation for women and in the practice of law, or she has been a legislator for some good number of years, engineered these projects and supported these bills among other activities. Even more, there was a deafening silence on her achievements directing the affairs of the ministry, and it is less likely that she was not successful at the ministry since the general impression was that she had carried herself well and worked hard at her job to have pushed the ministry forward.

As to the details of the hard work, evidently, readers were made to guess. This might be as a result of journalistic work or Mahama's failure to stress her credentials in the media during the race. However, for Asmah her initiating the idea of the women's ministry, her work at the ministry, and even her work with women before she was minister were fully elaborated and seem exhaustive, although the occasions they were mentioned were mainly by her surrogates.

Much of what we learn about Asmah was from these lobbying groups, mainly the women and community groups she might have worked with. It was only one feature article which provided extensively the professional and political background of Mahama. For her, there was not depth of coverage but breadth, although the opposite can be said about the coverage of Asmah, who was less visible but with some positive accounts of her work and politics.

For both men, details of both their professional and political backgrounds and their associated exploits were exhaustive; no stone seemed to have been left unturned in giving detailed accounts of the wealth of experience they were bringing on board, whereas it was very cursory for the women, especially Mahama, although she fared well in terms of frequency of those scant references to her being Minister.

On Alima Mahama's professional reference, the *Daily Graphic* reported:

The female contender is Hajia Alima Mahama, the Minister for Women and Children's Affairs in whose favour, according to the sources, a strong lobby to have a female running mate had heavily tilted the scales. Hajia Mahama has been occupying the position of Minister for Women and Children's Affairs since January 2005. She is also the MP for Nalerigu-Gambaga in the Northern Region. She is one of only four women in the Cabinet of President Kufuor (July 3, 2008)

And, for example on Lepowura Jawula:

Jawula, having had over thirty years in civil service, the Gonja/Ga native candidate stands tall among his competitors. With thirty-two years of experience in the civil service, Alhaji Nuru Deen Jawula has carved a niche for himself in the discharge of his duties in the various institutions that he served. Through his selfless, dedication and above all his commitment to serve his people, his competence in the public service has proven a better track record which has endowed him with rich experience to take Ghana to greater heights if he partners Akuffo-Addo for the presidential race. His visionary qualities have attracted lots of heavyweights within the NPP to endorse his candidature to partner Nana Akuffo-Addo. From Gambaga to Wale Wale, through Yendi and Damongo, where he served as District Executive in the 1970s and 1980s, his selfless dedication to work made him earn promotion upon promotion to serve in the Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning, Railways, Ports and Harbours until his retirement from the Health sector as a Chief Director. (*The Chronicle*, August 13, 2008, p.15)

For the women, it is less likely an absence of political astuteness which led to limited information, especially in the case of Mahama. The cursory nature of their professional mention relative to their male counterparts was more suggestive of the possibility that women candidates may, before their credentials are touted, have to deal with auxiliary questions arising from potentially their suitability as a result their gender, especially as we see in Mahama's case. For instance, women candidates may have to respond to family related concerns, whether they are too old or too young, whether they are suitable, or if voters are even ready for a woman to lead.

To this end, the *Daily Graphic* recorded one such instance where Mahama had to respond to a gathering on whether a woman can be president. To which she answered "but we never know until we try" (June 18, 2008, p.7). At another point she mentioned:

The issue is not just choosing a woman but a Ghanaian who is capable of delivering the services required of a vice president, she explained and asked, 'what if I had been a man?' (July 7, 2008).

Mahama demonstrates clearly that her gender was a problem in her getting approval. She also confirmed how discussions alienated women, because women were seen as special cases, and their gender always had to qualify them. She appeared to correct that perception by suggesting that the narrative should be about looking for a Ghanaian, ultimately suggesting that women are Ghanaians too.

Moreover, the professional attributes of the men and women also revealed that there was a(n) (un)conscious and systematic efforts to represent men's professional competence in a different context from women. Generally, aside a focus on the career background of the men - which was more diverse, who were positioned as high profile, their political credentials and contributions were given in the light of donations to their constituency party offices, national party activities, their hometowns, services to the youth and every other demographic in the community. What one would realise was that their representation was with matters on a larger scale and encompassing everybody, whereas for the women, it was mainly a directed focus to associate them with women and what they have done just for women, and if beyond it, for children too. Perhaps this was so because the women were Ministers for the Women's Ministry, and the women themselves and their supporters seem to frame their competencies and interests around women and children. However, coverage on the women-for-women frames persisted as a main theme in sections of the media, and this did not seem to be holistic and representative enough, but somehow orchestrated. Even as parliamentarians, these women had already served at least one term, and their contributions to their constituency and their party could not only have been for

women; equally in their previous ministerial roles outside of the gender ministry. It appears though that since the women are normally burdened with whether other women would support them, their supporter groups and media might have also found it necessary to catalogue their work concerning women. Also, since women politicians are normally treated as representing women's views, and are sometimes 'invited' into whichever picture to give 'expert' advice on womanhood, some supporter groups, media and candidates themselves, probably unconscious about being complicit in colluding with patriarchy, felt the need to distinguish themselves in this area, and might have fallen into society's job description for them.

For example, on Jawula, one of his supporter groups explained to the media, thus:

They recalled how the Lepowura single-handedly rented and furnished the Salaga constituency office of the party in addition to 10 bicycles and cash to enable them campaign in the area way back in the year 1992 at a time when his contenders for the position were nowhere to be found in the activities of the party. (The Chronicle, July 14, 2008, p.2)

Then on Asmah, one spokesperson for the supporter group was reported to have told the

*Daily Guide:*

According to her, the Tarkoradi MP had the welfare of all Ghanaians particularly women at heart, hence she single-handedly sponsored a lot of women in the country to enable them learn various kinds of trade through the mobilisation of micro-credit facilities to support them. Madam Fraikue pointed out that because of her love for women and children, Mrs. Asmah was the first to handle the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, and with her current portfolio as Minister of Fisheries, she had put smiles on the faces of fishermen and fishmongers nationwide (August 13, 2008, p.13)

We may be able to rationalise that political men are more likely to have access to more resources than their female counterparts which could have informed the extent of the reach; however, even if women had few resources, the constituency receiving their help may not just be women. These women at a point have served their constituency office and made donations as becoming of aspirants. They might have worked with the youth. Even their professional backgrounds required working with not just a particular demographic and as ministers of different ministries. However; the achievements of these political women were mainly set within the constituency of women.

From Figures 1 and 2 on media coverage of candidates attributes, media coverage focused on different attributes for women and men: for the women it was more personal and for the men more about their political attainment. This finding is corroborated by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross (1996) who revealed however that looking particularly at the way in which newspapers frame women in their narratives, it is argued “women are represented in an unfavourable light and that men are characterised by mentions of occupational and political success” (P. 110).

Beyond the different contextualisation of the contributions of the women and men candidates, the men as candidates addressed a wide range of issues whereas the women were reported as mainly addressing issues of most concern to women and children. Following from there, women’s constituency of support was expected to come from women, whereas for the men candidates, it was for everybody to support them. These three ways: 1) representing women’s contributions to politics as to women; 2) their constituency of support as from women; and 3) the subjects of engagement as only interested in women issues, push the notion of leadership for the sexes being a woman for women only, and men for us all. Against this background, I will offer thoughts for female

political acceptance and how professional attributes were demonstrated in the Conclusions Chapter. I will explicate the three main criteria which seem to be subtly and visibly required of women candidates to meet in order to be successful at the polls for whichever political position they are vying.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented and discussed findings of the coverage of the campaigns of four leading candidates in the running mate position of the NPP. In terms of visibility, the two women candidates took contrasting positions, with Mahama being the most visible candidate and Asmah the least visible, with the two men in between. As in the previous case study on the party leadership campaign of the Convention People's Party, the two women candidates in the race took contrasting positions on visibility as well.

The findings revealed that Mahama's higher visibility was further increased by her exceptional coverage, around the impression that she was the favourite of the presidential candidate, her viability, and then as a Northern Muslim woman and tensions around her divorcee status. Being a Northern Muslim woman and also the favourite of the flagbearer was a site of contention which also highlighted her campaign. Visibility for all candidates was equally populated by their support groups' engagement with the media, and media interviews with candidates among others. Asmah was not focused on as an exceptional candidate as was Mahama. Coverage of the two women's novelty was also minimal, and was more for Mahama than Asmah.

On areas of focus, although there was a marginal difference between the frequency of mention on the women's professional attributes, the women were more framed in personal terms, via character traits, age and familial status, with the exception of appearance frame where Siddique was more covered. Across these attributes, the women and men's were contextualised differently. For instance on personal character traits, both women were depicted in the private domain, while the men were presented in the public domain and as leaders. Familial relations, especially for Mahama, were used to establish credibility for her, whereas the men were seen to use their familial connections for votes for the NPP. Also in terms of age, women candidates would have to appear to be elderly and mature since a younger woman frame may communicate inexperience. However, the men candidates freely vacillated from being elderly to not even young men, but boys, to construct a youthful chic which the women could not present.

Although Alima Mahama was a visible candidate, and also scored more in terms of frequency on her personal and professional attributes, coverage seemed more positive and elaborated in the media for the men, and even for Asmah than for Alima Mahama. It is therefore not surprising that despite a higher visibility, she also did not make it on the ticket. It also was apparent that her gender was also resisted, equally for Asmah, in the considerations for being selected as a VP candidate.

The next chapter discusses the last newspaper findings , which is on the coverage on the presidential candidate race of The National Democratic Congress in 2011.

## **Chapter VII: Findings and discussions on media coverage of the Presidential nominations race of The National Democratic Congress (NDC).**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents findings and discussions on news media coverage of the presidential nominations race of the National Democratic Congress. The presidential primary of the NDC took place in 2011 ahead of the December 2012 national presidential elections. There were two candidates contesting; they were the sitting president of Ghana at the time, Professor John Evans Fifi Atta Mills (of blessed memory) and a former First Lady, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, who was until then a Deputy Chairperson of the party. She had resigned to challenge the president on accusations of incompetence and corruption among his appointees. Running against an incumbent who was just in his first term of office, Konadu Agyeman ran on a slogan 'Be Bold', which encouraged delegates to cut short the presidency of Atta Mills, irrespective of the convention that allowed incumbents to go for a second term unopposed. Konadu Agyeman Rawlings and her husband, former President Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, felt the need to step into the presidential seat again as the original vision bearers of the NDC. According to them, the objective was to restore their party values of probity and accountability to the party grassroots and to Ghanaians, at large, which the Mills administration had failed to do.

Agyeman ran against the incumbent as a political cleaner on a message of restoration and return to party values, giving hope to the grassroots membership, who they felt had been sidelined in favour of a few whose sole concern was for the booty, and who were also regarded as incompetent. *The Chronicle* reported:

She has made it abundantly clear that she is taking the moral high ground to Sunyani, because the sitting head of state is running the country to the ground. She smells corruption in all spheres of

endeavour under the former University don, while party structures are collapsing like a pack of cards under his visionless leadership (July 8, 2011, p.3).

President Rawlings introduced the then Professor Mills to politics by bringing him into the limelight and nominating him as his vice-presidential candidate: Mills then became Vice President, and later became President. The sentiment of the Rawlings' as the ones with the responsibility to salvage the party is evidenced in the *Daily Guide*, as it reported:

The NDC has two faces – Rawlings' and Nana Konadu's: No wonder the party is regarded as the property of the couple who often claim to have built it with the blood of the former Air Force pilot<sup>9</sup> (July 9, 2011, p. para 15).

The NDC is one of the two main political parties in Ghana founded in 1992. Its first appearance on the political stage was as the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) that staged a counter-coup in 1979. The AFRC under a new name, Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), staged another coup in 1981, popularly referred to as the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jerry Rawlings on the political stage, and overthrew, this time, the democratically elected government that the people had put in place at the time the AFRC left power. In 1992, the PNDC metamorphosed into a political party, the National Democratic Congress which promulgated a new constitution under its watch, and then organised, contested and won elections. Its leader Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings removed his military attire and became a civilian head of state, although it has been variously argued that he did not quite change from being a military man, judging by his demeanours. The political background of the Rawlings' presents an important context to understanding their

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<sup>9</sup> President Rawlings was a former Flight Lieutenant in the Armed Forces of Ghana

status, power and role in the NDC as vision bearers, as well as their actions in this race. The NDC has absorbed many important figures and nearly displaced the long-standing left wing parties in Ghana, including that of the party of the first president of Ghana, the Convention People's Party (CPP). This it achieved, among other things, by its long stay in power for about a period of 2 decades as AFRC, PNDC and NDC. When Jerry Rawlings first came to the political scene, prominent politicians of the other parties were invited to help with the economic and political administration of the country. Since it then stayed in power for such a long time, a number of these people did not return to their roots, remaining in the NDC. Moreover, President Rawlings' political background and stature also may help to appreciate some of the depictions of Agyeman in the media; being it the relentless use of the 'wife of' frame and the portrayal of her ticket as a dual candidacy. Also, the status of the Rawlings' places them as influential leaders in both party and national contests. However, Agyemang Rawlings lost this race to the incumbent.

This case study on the NDC presidential primary was important for several reasons. First was the fact that it was the first time a woman contested a presidential primary within the NDC and within the two major political parties in Ghana, the NPP and NDC. Second, it was also the first time a sitting president was challenged in the primary elections of a ruling political party. Incumbents before the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic<sup>10</sup> were ousted by coup d'états when in their first term. But this time, Atta Mills, the sitting president, had to win his party's nomination through the ballot box to be able to contest for a second term in the national elections. The third reason for selecting this case study concerns the political stature of Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, and the large space she is seen to have occupied in the women's movement. When she was First Lady, she was depicted as someone with political

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<sup>10</sup> After every coup d'états that has taken place in Ghana, a new constitution is drawn and the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic represents the institution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Constitution to run the country.

wit who was instrumental in her husband's administration through the mobilisation of grassroots women. It was said her influence was also such that she could both appoint and fire ministers, and she appeared to be a political advisor to her husband. Her women's organisation, the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, is yet to be displaced in record and has seen the largest women's mobilisation and empowerment ever in the history of Ghana, run by a First Lady or any women's organisation. It seems to be redundant after Mr. Rawlings left office. Agyeman has been variously accused of being an ambitious corrupt political wife, just as Argentine's Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Piscopo, 2010), for using state resources to fund their ventures because of their husband's status as Presidents. Cristina Kirchner was accused of using her husband's position to access the relevant resources to launch (successfully) her ambition to succeed her husband as president. Konadu Agyeman is both loved and loathed for the same thing; she has been normally portrayed as a tough woman in a more positive sense, and sometimes, inversely, as a bitch (Jamieson, 1995). Also, she has been largely accepted as a competent woman, who would be able to handle the presidency. It had long been suspected that she would step into the presidential shoes when Mr. Rawlings left office. This seems to have made her bid for the ultimate job an interesting one to study. Fourth, President Rawlings, as the longest serving Head of State in Ghana, his peculiar coup history, and Agyeman's visible political involvement, make another interest in the presidency via his wife seemingly significant because of concerns of a political dynasty being instituted, as suspected earlier.

This study, like the previous ones, was premised on gendered mediation theories which have found that women and men candidates are treated differently by the media.

As in the previous cases, articles were gathered from the four leading newspapers in Ghana determined by their levels of circulation, readership and reputability, namely: *The Daily*

*Graphic, The Daily Guide, The Ghanaian Times, and The Chronicle.* These articles were collected in the month the primary was held, July 2011. A total of 82 articles were collected within the period. These articles were analysed for media coverage and framing of the two candidates vying for the presidential candidate slot of the NDC.

Table 1 shows the distribution of articles across newspaper titles. Collectively, the two private newspapers produced a greater number of the articles than the state-run newspapers. The *Daily Guide* and the *Chronicle* together produced 56 per cent and the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* jointly produced the remaining 44 per cent of total number of stories collected. Individually however, the privately owned newspapers, the *Daily Guide* and the *Chronicle*, took the first and fourth positions in terms of number of articles produced, at 38 per cent and 18 per cent respectively; then the state-run newspapers: the *Ghanaian Times* and the *Daily Graphic*, produced the second and third highest number of articles, respectively at 24 per cent and 20 per cent.

**Table 1 - Distribution of Newspaper articles**

<u>Newspaper Genre</u>	<u>No. of Articles</u>	<u>%</u>
The Daily Graphic	16	20
The Daily Guide	31	38
The Ghanaian Times	20	24
<u>The Chronicle</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>
Total (n)	82	100

The privately owned newspapers which collectively produced more stories out of the total, were sympathetic to the opposition New Patriotic Party. There may be several reasons why the opposition media covered more stories on this race:

First is the potential effect of the exclusion of visibly aligned NDC-prone newspapers, as a result of the criteria for consideration – focused on the first four leading newspapers in Ghana in terms of circulation and readership. The second reason may also be attributed to the effect of the NDC’s regulation which instructed contenders, their supporters and party press to avoid venomous exchanges in order not to arm the opposition party ahead of the national elections. Since the party machinery and not opposition press was likely to safeguard the directive, *The Daily Guide* and *The Chronicle* might have served as sites where candidates might have channelled more adverts or other incriminating content of each other. From the findings, these private newspapers were more balanced and detailed in their coverage of both positive and negative stories on Agyeman and Mills. Although the state-run newspapers appeared fair, one could observe a subtle bias of more positive coverage for Mills than Agyeman in terms of depth. The third reason why more news stories were probably found in opposition media might also be the unprecedented nature of challenging a sitting president alongside the internal rift between the founder of NDC, former President Rawlings and the former First Lady on one hand, and the sitting president on the other. Considering that the former first family and their political protégé were contenders for the same interest, it was an area of discomfort for the NDC as a party, and so of interest to opposition media. Last, the possibility of the notion that ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’ might have played a part. Notably, Agyeman Rawlings was victimised by her party structures and party media because according to them, her bid was untoward and controversial in creating an internal rift to harm their chances in the following year’s elections. The state media could also be considered not to be the appropriate venue to

support her campaign, and might be more inclined to serve the incumbent's interest. On July 14, 2011, the *Chronicle* printed a report from Agyeman's camp which described a set of antagonistic attacks launched at her bid. It indicated:

She knew the journey was not going to be easy. First came the slanderous statements, the impugning of her motives and integrity, the disrespect and sometimes outright contempt for her person and family, but like a true patriot and person of conviction, Nana Konadu stood on principle and spoke her mind with boldness, damning the threatened consequences of ostracism and victimisation. ...These threats of victimisation and ostracism were real and present, and were strongly reflected and culminated during the electoral process (p.3).

As a result, it appears that there was the possibility that Agyeman and the opposition newspapers found themselves in a mutually beneficial relationship. As it was reported in the *Daily Guide*:

Discussions on the primaries suggest that though Nana Konadu is liked within the NDC, the party had not forgiven her for the incessant vitriolic public attacks she unleashed on the Mills administration and its appointees. She is perceived to have given out too much political ammunition to the opposition parties to use against the NDC in 2012 (July 9, 2011, p. 3 paras 12-13).

Agyeman therefore might have become by default an ally to opposition interests, and, as it turned out, Agyeman was indepthly more covered by especially the private newspaper – *Daily Guide* one of the opposition media outlets in this race, than in the rest of the newspapers.

### **Coverage on Candidates' Visibility**

Table 2 shows the visibility of candidates determined as inclusive of: 1) frequency of mention; 2) frequency of focus; and 3) frequency of quote.

**Table 2 - Assessment of Candidates' Visibility as determined by the 3 indicators**

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Mention</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Quoted (actual)</u>
Konadu A. Rawlings	51%	48%	16
John Atta Mills	49%	13%	8
Both candidates	-	21%	-
<u>Primary</u>	-	<u>18%</u>	-
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>24</b>

Agyeman Rawlings was the more visible candidate as she was the more mentioned, more focused on, and more quoted. She was mentioned, though, just a little more than Mills, but seriously focused on three more times than Mills, and quoted twice more than him. Agyeman had 51 per cent of total mentions, 48 per cent of total focus and was quoted 16 times, across articles. Mills on the other hand had 49 per cent of total mentions, 13 per cent of total focus, and was quoted 8 times. In terms of focus, two identifiers were also accounted for, which were articles that focused on both candidates and those that focused on the primary. Twenty-one per cent of articles focused on both candidates and 18 per cent on the primary. Articles focusing on both candidates were mainly about the congress, the horse-race aspects of the campaign and candidates' profiles.

Firstly, Agyeman's exceptionality and resultant higher visibility could be attributed to coverage of the novelty aspects of her bid. Agyeman's exceptionality and special candidacy was in many ways; She was a 'first': 1) first person, not just first woman although her portrayal was always 'first woman' to contest a sitting president in a presidential primary; 2) she was also the first woman to contest a presidential primary in itself in a major party, the NDC; 3) as a former First Lady and also being the first of her kind to launch a political

career; and 4) her very own viable ratings as a candidate meant that she was expected to attract media attention. Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) cited 1) having social significance, and/or 2) showing deviance, as two indicators for carrying the potential to become newsworthy. In as much as political elections are newsworthy in themselves, mixed-gender elections are even more so (Meeks, 2012). The notion of deviance they explained as someone or something that breaks with the norm, and in this case, Agyeman appeared to have become a 'norm breaker'. For instance, the *Daily Graphic* reported:

Nana Konadu herself also made history as the first woman to contest a sitting president for the presidential slot. Some have suggested that it is not proper for a sitting President to be contested at a party primary but others also argue that it would add value to democratic practice within the NDC (*Daily Graphic*, July 11, 2011).

According to Murray (2010) "In keeping with the idea that every woman who stands for executive office is the first woman to do so, the media portray women candidates as representing change and a break from the past" (p. 14). Given that this frame is not always negative, Agyeman received some positive descriptions on her candidature as someone who was willing to bring change to her party and Ghana in the face of the weight of going against her party executives and established tradition. From some of Agyeman's statements referenced earlier in the chapter, Agyeman's agenda itself was change, not necessarily a gendered one that is, change from male dominance to a female administration, but change to new principles of governance and change to the more competent leadership she would have spearheaded.

Second, her candidature was also exceptional because of her status as the only famous, dynamic, and active former First Lady who was now heading towards achieving her own ambition and crafting her own political career. Murray (2010) and Bystrom (2010) noted

that some women build political careers alongside their husbands. Murray (2010) also mentioned that mostly the careers of husbands take off earlier than those of their wives. This is mainly so because women are mostly required to support the goals of the male figures, especially the husbands, in their lives. Hillary Clinton's various political bids and representation for the presidential crown in relation to her previous First Lady status has attracted criticism that she has been merely Bill Clinton's puppet, although at other times, Hillary Clinton has been considered to be too involved in Bill's presidency for her own good. Since Ghana's independence in 1957, it has been generally considered, and the public records show that Agyeman has been a more involved political wife who was not necessarily interested in hosting guests but rather in sharing executive powers with her husband. As already mentioned, in the past, at the time Jerry Rawlings was leaving office in the year 2000, it had been rumoured that Mrs. Rawlings was going to be his immediate successor, or at least in the not too distant future she would stage a comeback for the presidency. However that did not immediately take place as Atta Mills, then the vice-president to President Rawlings, was given the baton in the famous *Swedru declaration*.<sup>11</sup> With this in view, Agyeman's bid captured the past in clearer perspective for many Ghanaians, and it seems the media as well, as it invited into the discourse what was earlier alleged. The story was newsworthy in that the public's suspicions had come to pass. This potentially added to media attraction to Agyeman and contributed to her increased visibility. Agyeman was more attractive to the media because she was a former First Lady who had staged a political career, and the eventual fascination around the notion of the re-emergence of the Rawlings' was expected to have increased frequency of coverage for her.

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<sup>11</sup> Swedru Declaration describes the act of former President Rawlings to have singularly appointed his successor in the person of Prof. Atta Mills without any primary in the year 2000 at their congress grounds at Swedru.

With such interests surrounding her candidature, she was likely to feature more in news as she did, hence her higher visibility.

On its front page, the *Daily Graphic* for instance, reported:

Her presidential ambition has provoked excitement and controversy, with supporters acclaiming a breakthrough for women while her critics are concerned about the prospect of an emerging political dynasty (July 4, 2011, para 8).

These confirm that Agyeman's bid, as an ambition from the past, was also part of the discourse and media interest.

For Atta Mills, as incumbent, he still had the job to run a country, and he had less time compared with Agyeman to engage more in campaign politicking as she had done, which also potentially increased her coverage. Also, Atta Mills was an incurably meek person who had tried to stay away from deepening the rift between him and his former boss, Mr. Rawlings. Hence he was less likely to have raised issues or acted in ways, which would have been more interesting for the media to cover. Although he fared comparatively well at 49 per cent against Agyeman's 51 per cent, he was less focused on as a candidate at 13 per cent, whereas Agyeman enjoyed focus at 48 per cent. Agyeman was also quoted 16 times to Mills' 8 times.

In sum, Agyeman's exceptionality revolving around her novelty as the first to contest a sitting president in a primary, the first woman to contest a presidential primary in a major party, and as First Lady launching a political career amidst the controversy around the implication of her decision on the electoral fortunes of her party in the pending election, was sure to create a buzz. This potentially increased the focus of the media's attention on

her and hence her increased visibility. However, Agyeman lost the bid decisively, even though it was a shaky victory for the incumbent when she first posed the challenge. This was because the Rawlings' are popular among the grassroots. Also, the positive impressions around the viability of Agyeman, and the accusations of corruption among Mills' appointees, blatantly exposed with one scandal after the other, and Mills' somehow visible incompetence in the job, authenticated Agyeman's challenge to him. Coupled with Mills' failure to crack the whip.

However, his victory does not necessarily come as a surprise, as there were numerous accusations of the bribing of delegates by those who managed and controlled the meek Professor's campaign. In addition, Agyeman's party members, who felt that she should have allowed Atta Mills to enjoy the privilege her husband Mr. Rawlings enjoyed, also rejected her as a candidate. Even though it became obvious that the professor was not quite suitable in the presidential seat, and that there were invisible drivers of his administration, sections of the party also felt voting for Agyeman would be bad for the party's chances in the next general election, as, they would have cast a vote of no confidence in their previous administration. For instance, it was reported:

This is the first time in the history of the country that a sitting President is being challenged to lead a party for the second term of the NDC. It all began when former President J. J. Rawlings who introduced President Mills to politics began to criticise him of surrounding himself with 'incompetent people and greedy bastards' and 'shifting from the ideals and principles of the NDC'. (*The Ghanaian Times*, July 9, 2011, p.10).

Again the *Daily Guide* authored:

Her messages to the regional and constituency executives (most of whom from the electorate) are well primed to move them to vote for her. ... 'It is too early to change a sitting President and that no matter the acrimonies within the party, the NDC cannot risk losing power to

the NPP after just a term in the office. A vote for President Mills is in the best interest of the NDC (Daily Guide, July 2, 2011, p.4).

The *Daily Guide* seems to have given an indication for her defeat, thus:

Another concern that has been raised by the delegates is why the NDC would want to experiment with a female presidential candidate in an era where several Ghanaian communities still maintain strong reservations about women in leadership (July 9, 2011, p.3, Para 14).

According to the paper, sections of the delegates did not find it a politically wise decision to trial a female candidate, just as we witnessed in the case of Alima Mahama in the NPP's VP race, where some male national executives cited a conservative culture which they presumed may be less likely to accept female political leadership at the VP level. Its repetition in this chapter may offer some form of credibility to their assertion, but support for women candidates may also be less about a reserved or conservative culture and more about prevailing misogyny and gender stereotypes in a very progressive 21<sup>st</sup> century, coupled with patriarchal gatekeeping by party machineries. It perhaps should be specifically identified for what it potentially is, instead of apparent misogyny being brushed away, perhaps pleading under the unsuspecting wings of a conservative culture. This is because it is not that a conservative culture may not be ingrained with gender biases, but it might be important to explore the extent that it might have been assessed to impact Ghanaian women's political ambitions, and within what contexts.

Ghanaian society, if anything is more conservative around women's morality than their abilities to handle a job. Given enough campaign resources, less corruption and political clientelism, gender stereotypes would possibly be noticeably mitigated. Even normally, it is opposing parties who have an interest in the elections who employ negative gender

stereotypes. At the time Agyeman was contesting, Ghana had women serving as Chief Justice and Speaker of Parliament. Ghana has also had a woman Commissioner for the Ombudsman for the longest time, and a woman Sports Minister. Not too long after the primary, and after the national presidential elections, women were appointed as ministers to the Ministry of Science and Environment, Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is not to discount the existence or the negative impact of gender stereotypes, but that in Ghana's recent history, corruption, party affiliation, and ethnic politicking have been more pronounced.

Although steely abilities are more expected for executive office, and gender bias may be prevalent, perceptions about candidates' qualifications matter. Bystrom's review of public opinion polls of the US Democratic primary in 2008 showed "voters associate preferred presidential traits and issues primarily with male candidates, but that these gender stereotypes can disappear when they are asked about actual candidates" (2010, p. 71). Consequently, this revealed that public perceptions around Hillary Clinton's competence and preparedness for the presidency proved positive, and so, were potentially beneficial. For Agyeman in particular as a woman candidate, there were no visible doubts about her qualification for the presidency. Public perceptions of Agyeman, as already mentioned, were both positive – a strong woman, or negative – a bitch, and one who was competent to succeed at political office. This possibly shows that for someone like her, public impressions in relation to the set of appropriate skills for an executive position were in her favour and as a result, the stereotypes around women's ability in the so-called conservative Ghana would potentially have been discounted, so might have posed a far lesser challenge than expected.

It is therefore likely that, even when a society has made appreciable progress on gender relations, or where a woman candidate is experienced and qualified, as Agyeman was, there might be these power gatekeepers who, in their bid to continue to keep women out, would reference a so-called conservative society, and how little headway has been made to sustain and support women's ambitions for political office. Yet it is rather their gatekeeping that is preventing promotion of women as candidates in the first place. Even earlier, one could safely presume that the anxiety of the gatekeepers was about letting in the opposition, rather than against her as a woman, obviously, both reasons might have worked together against Agyeman, or that the latter (the problem with her gender) was sneaked behind the former.

Furthermore, women generally do not have it any easier in contesting political positions at whatever level; nonetheless, women have also been able to attain public office, being it legislative or executive. Again, even highly-qualified and competitive women have not found it any easier in societies considered not conservative but highly progressive - neither in Britain for Margaret Thatcher, nor the U.S. for Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, Michele Bachmann, Elisabeth Dole or Shirley Chisholm. If a progressive society is one that is more capable of voting women into public office, and a conservative society its opposite, then many more conservative societies in Africa and Latin America and Asia have collectively elected more women into executive positions (Jalalzai, 2004). The gatekeepers' reason of conservatism is more of a lazy rationalisation, and potentially a veil over the real issues of sexism in almost every society, progressive or otherwise. The rationale seeks to suggest, and then hide under, the notion that the public is yet to come round to the belief that a woman is capable of handling high profile political office. Yet the reality could be one of potentially patriarchal gatekeepers, and possible disdain for the disruption of the status quo by women, as the inclusion of women increases the competition for them (men).

Although what is conceptualised here as a conservative society seems vague, going by what it normally might be used to mean, it is perhaps the political status of the women in those societies which might not be entirely representative of those values. According to development economics, poor societies have poorer women and poorer human rights records. In these societies there are apparent trends where women economically hold families together through their entrepreneurship, and sometimes do it alone because of the absence of fathers. In most of these so-called conservative cultures, there also is an appreciable level of trust for women and some sacred respect for their role in their families. Sometimes this extends to traditional governance, for example, among the Hindus of India, largely in African and Latin American cultures, and probably even beyond matrilineal societies. In the light of this, the belief is that the current generations might have grown up in those communal cultures where they have seen clearly the privileges of masculinity that have worked against their maternal folk. As a result, they perhaps have come to appreciate the strength and contributions of women as capable, as they saw their mothers as key figures in their own families. It is my supposition therefore that women are more likely to be voted for in such societies which over the years seem to have involved women more in their political and socio-economic fabric. This might be one of the reasons why there have been many more women executives outside the western world (Jalalzai, 2004). African feminists have articulated that, for instance, women/females as a gender/sex have never had to struggle to be allowed to vote (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013). Although this is not in any way suggesting that women in Africa have had any more progressive lives than their counterparts in the West. This may inform us about the extent of the potential for women's political success in different cultures, given that the women have enough resources to compete and build solid political portfolios. For example, one of the ways Rwanda achieved a female majority in parliamentary representation has been

attributed to campaigns that focused on presenting women as mothers, inviting the men to support their mothers, sisters and daughters (Uvuza, 2015). This strategy taps into the sympathy some men have come to feel for their maternal folk as a result of the burdens they have had to shoulder for their families. With regard to the concern around experimenting with a woman politician therefore, it seems to be that women's bids are less likely to be successful more because of lack of party support and less of lack of public support.

Political parties and structures which have been put in place, more likely have acted as gatekeepers to keep the men in and the women out. When it happens as planned, these parties then form their narratives around assumptions that the public were not too comfortable with a woman leading, or that they are not ready for women, especially in high public offices; although, it is, most likely, their sifting procedures for women aspirants. It is likely that, if women executive aspirants secure their party's bid, the public might be also more willing than estimated to elect them.

As mentioned in the previous case study, in Ghana for instance, voters vote mainly on party and ethnic lines in elections, and this is not in anyway not suggesting a gendered consideration by voters or gendered coverage by media. What this means is that often, and all things being equal, voters are less inclined to be incessantly particular about a candidate as a result of their gender, or even what the person is likely to offer them, in terms of issues and policies. Again, this does not eliminate or erode gender stereotypes; however, party allegiances have insidiously become so deep, apparently mainly because tribal sentiments are mostly expressed through voting for or against a political party. Based on this, the presumption is that if women made it past party machineries, the chances are minimal that they would be mainly rejected by the public because they are

women, but would enjoy the allegiance of the general party membership just as male candidates in a general election, even if this does not necessarily translate into victory.

Also in Ghana, especially in mixed race elections, given equal resources for the women and men candidates, women candidates may be likely to win the day. This is because voters seem to lend their trust more to viable women, on the assumption of the piety and nurturing nature of women, as considered in the gender character traits attribution in Ghana. Although women are not necessarily or intrinsically more honest than men, given the positive stereotype, women candidates could potentially play to the prejudices of the public to their advantage. Dollar, Fisman and Gatti (2001) and Swamy, Knack, Lee and Azfar (2001) found that states which have more women involved in their governmental administration are less disposed to corruption. Implying that, findings of their study play to the impressions around women in the Ghanaian context.

At the time of this presidential race and the rest of the case studies considered, the impression around the piety of women candidates in Ghana was largely uncorrupted. Gender stereotypes are prevalent in Ghana, the type that can restrict women's political ambitions, but its effects appear more potent at the selection levels than it seems to be among the general population, whose electoral preferences are more mitigated by bread and butter from politicians, ethnicity, and candidates' sets of attributes. Admittedly, not all women may have these attributes work for them, since many times one would have to fit into the type to be voted for, even when fitting the type, success at the polls is not guaranteed. It is therefore possible that, as already suggested, the reason cited about women being less successful because of a conservative culture seems to conceal patriarchal shenanigans and a moneyocracy which favours more the male candidates.

Agyeman does not seem to be the only woman candidate who increased her visibility through novelty coverage. Marie-Ségolène Royal of the French Socialist Party lost to Nicolas Sarkozy in the 2007 presidential election after being highly visibly covered as a novelty candidate (Murray, 2010). Meeks (2012) study which analysed news coverage of four female candidates in the US – Dole, Caskill, Clinton and Palin – and their male contenders between 1999 and 2008 across the offices of Senator, Governor, Vice President, or President, found that the women, on the whole, received more news coverage than the male competitors, and the gendered gap was, among other things, high on novelty.

The higher visibility of Agyeman Rawlings could be equated with focus on her exceptionality in breaking the convention, in her novelty, and the resultant horse-race coverage of her chances with delegates.

### **Coverage on Candidates' Attributes**

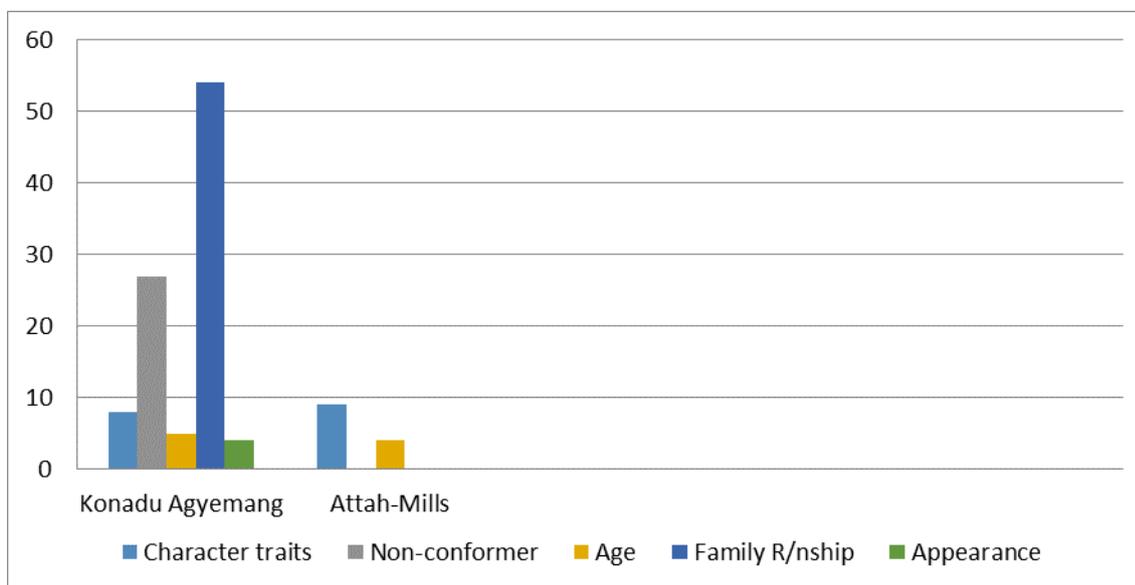
Figure 1 shows areas of focus in terms of personal attributes by the media in the coverage of the two candidates. As described in the previous cases, attributes were determined as personal and professional. Again, specific traits, such as suggestions of the woman candidate as a non-conformist, and descriptions of novelty, were introduced. The non-conformist portrayals constitute a part of character traits, although recorded and discussed separately for the purpose of its specific analysis, i.e. the first time a sitting president was challenged in a primary.

On the whole, the media focused extensively on Agyeman Rawlings’ personal attributes, more than Mills. In terms of professional attributes, the media showed more interest in Mills than Agyeman, although margin was slim.

### Personal Attributes

Figure 1 shows that, with the exception of character traits, all other indicators for personal attributes were referenced more for Agyeman than Mills. However, collectively, all personal attributes mentions for Agyeman was 98 and for Mills 13, with descriptions of Agyeman’s familial relations heavily focused on, followed by her portrayal as a non-conformist, then character traits, age, and lastly, appearance. Atta Mills was only covered on character traits and age respectively.

**Figure 1 – Frequency of attributes: personal – actual numbers**



### ***Character Traits***

Agyeman's character traits were mainly about her personal values. As already mentioned, descriptions of non-conformity are discussed at length separately, although not exclusively from her character traits, as their portrayal, and that of her values to an extent, seem to posit similar impressions.

From Figure 1, the character traits of Atta Mills were marginally mentioned more than Agyeman; 9 times for Mills and 8 times for Agyeman; that is because the key trait focused on for Agyeman, non-conformist, was recorded separately. If not, then Agyeman's character traits count to 35 times being referenced, to Atta Mills' 9 times.

Mills' likeability, the support he had enjoyed as candidate, and his election to the presidency in Ghana, have mainly referenced his personality and less his political preparedness. His person was always more talked about than his politics, and his character much more than his competence, by sections of the public, his party, and the media. Against this backdrop, although not to be expected either, it would have been unsurprising if his character traits were mentioned more than was actually recorded from the newspapers. While this could have occurred, it did not, and this point to findings that in many cases there is more focus on male candidates' professions than their persons (Bystrom, Robertson & Banwart, 2001).

Professor Mills was mainly portrayed by his party machinery, and seemingly perpetuated by government-sponsored media, as a good man; a person of high moral standing. This likely created the impression that he was not a corrupt politician and would be more empathetic to the masses, and therefore a more suitable candidate than Agyeman. In the

*Daily Graphic*, the writer recounted an anecdote about Mills and Agyeman, reporting on the vast difference between the two candidates in terms of their moral standing. In this portrayal, Agyeman appeared completely as a she-devil: a heartless woman, abrasive, cold and without empathy and virtue. Mills, however, was a man of incomparable and unarguable virtue – a saint per se. The writer vividly portrayed this difference. He stated:

Let me cite only three relevant areas for analysis – moral charisma, hard work, and incumbency factors. .... Well, the consensus of lots of people in Ghana is that Atta Mills has a stronger and more brilliant moral charisma than Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, particularly in his show of humility, honesty, and sympathetic attitude as opposed to Nana Konadu's inordinate ambition to be a leader all the while and her non-sympathetic attitude as evidenced in her appreciation of the maltreatment of the boy Jantu whose hair was grazed down by some soldiers with broken bottle scraps. ... This "identification haircut" issue has since then continued to dip down the moral charisma of Nana Konadu, branding her as hard-hearted and cruel personality (July 2, 2011, p.4, para 2).

In this article and particularly in this paragraph, nothing positive was said about Agyeman and nothing negative was said about Mills. On the balance that all human beings are imperfect and in the light of objective journalism and criticism, there should at least have been something positive to be said about Agyeman. This seems to show the imbalance and bias of the writer.

First, it was likely that the writer just might not have favoured Agyeman's candidature, as he sought overtly to compare the morality of the two candidates. He appeared bent on portraying the vast difference in the moral standing of the candidates and he seemed to have been successful, by describing Agyeman all negatively with nothing negative for Atta Mills, as if he were infallible. On the writer's comparative assessment of the candidates' moral charisma for instance, he praises Atta Mills for "his show of humility" and honesty and Agyeman, most likely, the absence of these for having an "inordinate ambition to be a

leader all the while”; implying that Agyeman was not a person to consider as humble and honest, because of her desire to lead. Even though Mills and Agyeman pursued the same goal, i.e. to be the presidential nominee, Agyeman’s came off as immoderate, dishonest and exceeding reasonable limits, and so consequently she was to be judged as a proud woman, whereas Mills’ passed as humble and an ambition within the acceptable code.

The writer here shows clearly a gendered appreciation of ambition, where it was acceptable for a male to have one, but for a female to not have ambition, or perhaps not to have too much. This negative portrayal of Agyeman by the writer was most probably his feeling of dislike for her audacity, and not so much about the kind of person he claimed Agyeman was, or what she might have done. The writer more likely regarded Agyeman’s shot at the top position as being overly ambitious and a contestation of her place in society as a woman. By the writer’s reference to her so-called “inordinate ambition”, Agyeman was expected to have been satisfied with little – probably as former First Lady and 1st Deputy Vice Chair of the NDC at the time – and not want to take on the top job to secure the nomination to contest for the presidency of the country.

Just as Mills, men who put themselves for positions of leadership, which many do more than women, would hardly have their ambition considered as inordinate, as it was for Agyeman. For instance, up until 2008, when he won the presidential elections and became president, Mills had been contesting his party’s primary and the presidency since 2000. Especially for the presidency, he only won at his third attempt in 2008. On the other hand, this was the first time Agyeman put herself forward for a position which would have enabled her to lead outside of the party confines. Previously and for the first time, she had only contested and won one of the vice chairperson offices of her party which she resigned to be able to contest in the primary. With no other record of contesting for any position, or accepting any form of nomination for other political positions within or without her party,

her second attempt was seen as far too many; this was perhaps, as a woman, she was considered to be too ambitious. As a woman, that was probably too much to be seen to be this desirous to lead, and possibly, too much of a progressive rise, considering that she was formerly vice-chair now wanting to have a go at the presidency. This particular portrayal of Agyeman's ambition was not only gendered but also negative, as it also sought to cast aspersions on her moral authority and deflate it for carrying an ambition just as any male.

Aside the inordinate ambition thesis of the *Daily Graphic* writer, he continued to expatiate, this time on the non-sympathetic nature of Agyeman, levelling nothing against Mills as before, other than speaking of him positively, and for Agyeman, negatively. That aside, the writer gave 'evidence' against Agyeman which was not even based on what Agyeman necessarily did, but what over-zealous soldiers were suspected to have done. However, he did not substantiate his claim for the sympathetic nature of Mills. Perhaps, the writer believed that Mills' was obvious, because he says so, or, he deemed it that many Ghanaians might consider it so. Maybe, because Mills as male was the norm, and Agyeman, being female, was to be evaluated fully.

The reporter clearly was biased and imbalanced in his portrayal of Agyeman, as he only catalogued positive attributes for Mills and chronicled negative ones to Agyeman. This potentially reveal that, as earlier pointed out, the writer just did not appreciate the woman's ambition, and was perhaps making sure that he used other indicators to discredit her candidature, without having to clearly express his own bias against her ambition.

On the other hand, Agyeman might not have been any stronger on values in her portrayal but she surely received acknowledgement for the resilience in her character traits. The *Daily Graphic* this time portrayed her as tough and courageous, with a positive tone to her nature. It reported:

On the opposite side stands a woman described by many in Ghanaian politics as the 'Iron Lady' – Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings. (July 4, 2011: p.3, para 7).

It is widely acknowledged that Agyeman was unlike any other First Lady that Ghana has had since gaining independence in 1957. Agyeman, who is largely seen as a tough woman, is rightly presented here as an Iron Lady, a term used also to refer to women who show a strong character disposition, and, more generally, women politicians. Her description as one popularly known as Iron Lady points to her public reputation and political track record as a very visible and instrumental person of her husband's nearly two decades of presidency, coupled with her leadership of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement. Here, she was depicted as tough, strong-minded and independent and one who was less likely, to succumb. As a woman manoeuvring political waters, such a portrayal would be seen to stir people's confidence in her ability to handle the so-called toughness in the political terrain, as she appeared to be performing the gender subtype for balance (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008; Meeks, 2012). At least, it represented her as someone with the political preparedness and ability to navigate those waters. Agyeman's traits were not feminised, unlike for many women politicians, a rare finding, however corroborated by Norris (1997) who revealed, on personal traits of candidates covered that traits focused on did not emphasise the traditional stereotypes of women leaders as pacifying/appeasing, approachable and compassionate, and men as tough and strong. Mainly, the women were portrayed as "ambitious, effective, and often more confrontational than their rivals" (p. 159). As already mentioned, numerous studies have concluded that coverage of women candidates framed their personality traits and issue positions in stereotypically feminine terms (Kahn 1994; Ross 1995; Jamieson 1995; Carroll and Schreiber 1997). However not necessarily Konadu whose portrayal was gendered and mostly negative but not feminised.

As much as the trope of toughness in this case may likely be intended to flatter her and potentially gain her points, it was also apparently blind to the efforts of other political women who have been navigating the male dominated arenas. Her description as 'the' Iron Lady in Ghanaian politics seems to have portrayed her as having reached the political apex of Prime Minister in the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher. Hence this framed Agyeman as the woman who was unlike any other woman, politically, in Ghana, the one woman, who stands tall among the rest. This seems true because she is the first woman to contest for a presidential primary of a major party. Also, as a former First Lady, she had been very dynamic and had taken that job more seriously; she was more visibly involved than the other first ladies of Ghanaian presidencies. Even now, no one beats her record in visible political involvement, community work and female mobilisation. However, it would have been more accurate to refer to her as Iron Lady without the definite article. This is because, with the exception of the privileged position as a First Lady, there are several high-standing and even more qualified career women politicians in the space. This meant that she did not occupy alone that space of viable political women just by contesting the presidential primary, although she can own a title solely among first ladies in Ghana, if being 'the' Iron Lady was used in that context. The media, by the Iron Lady frame, iconised her as the *primus inter pares*, and her achievement as the apex of the political aspirations of all women politicians, and more so, as one who has arrived at that apex. This is particularly problematic, because by adjudging her the first among the rest, the media will likely be restricting others to share the space with her, especially when there are many more women with credentials and portfolios far exceeding Agyeman's. Although Agyeman is inarguably a tough woman and politically aware, the record indicates that she built a political ambition serving as a First Lady (Murray, 2010).

Moreover, the challenge with that iconisation is also that her omissions and commissions would, most likely, be generalised to all women, as she was portrayed as representative and a culmination of the whole female political caucus. Even more, her continued iconisation has the potential to restrict access to other women to be recognised for their varied contribution to breaking the glass ceilings, and this further restricts political actualisation to a very strict few as role models.

In addition, her portrayal as the Iron Lady privileges extroverted women, as it appears blind to the fact that aspirations vary and are subjectively valued by those who hold them and achieve them. In its bias, the Iron Lady frame, which creates the impression that it was the highest form of political astuteness, will likely sideline other women and their efforts, as it places more recognition on the most visible and what is considered topmost effort. It is not that Agyeman did not deserve the positive aspect of having the name Iron Lady, but at this stage where women are not the norm in the political landscape of Ghana, iconising her by that status may hurt the women's movement in working with the media to extend participation for women if they are only fixated on her to represent how actualised and how far the women's movement might have come. To have Agyeman's rise measured as such would be quite overboard and cosmetic.

Again under candidates' character traits, Atta Mills' moral persona was further reiterated by the *Ghanaian Times*, which reported:

Professor John Evans Fiifi Atta Mills, the Presidential Candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for the 2008 General Elections, is a man of high integrity, humble, a liberal minded person who consults and peace is his watch-word. He is known in Ghana as "Asomdweehene" which literally means the 'King of Peace'. He is an academician, sports-man and an astute politician

Atta Mills' immense positive portrayal notwithstanding, his almost perfect self received some scepticism. In the *Daily Guide*, for instance, it was reported:

Some claim he is humble, honest, firm and God-fearing, but his political opponents describe him as vindictive, ungrateful, and indecisive and a hypocrite (July 9, 2011, p.8, para 1).

The personal qualities Mills was deemed to possess came in very handy to propagate, in an electioneering period where the people were concerned about conflicts erupting in the country, if the aspirants were wearing their egos on their sleeves. Mills' campaigners were able to drive home his visibly quiet demeanour as humility and peace loving and which resonated with the people so much so that he became the face of what it meant to be humble and peace loving in Ghana. Especially in radio coverage of Mills, his opponents assumed almost by default his opposite traits. Even beyond Agyeman, the opposition leader in the NPP has largely suffered from this, as he tended towards more outspoken and forthright traits, like Agyeman. This is largely due to the huge propaganda machinery within the NDC in Ghanaian politics that keep spearheading a campaign to tarnish the image of opponents within and without.

The smallest difference in trait to the Professor is mostly highlighted to Ghanaians, who are considered to be mainly peace loving. Mills' dominant traits, as already espoused in the news extracts, are largely feminine, just as some aspects of Boniface Siddique's in the previous chapter – humble, sympathetic and peace loving. Agyeman's being opposite, as she was portrayed more as very tough and a strong-headed person. Considering that men are less evaluated and more thought of as competent leaders by default, Mills was then

assumed as competent and humane; competent, by being male, and humane, by the presence of these feminine traits. For if Agyeman was not, largely, deemed as very much opposite to Mills in terms of these traits, her portrayal would less likely have been this negative “hard-hearted” and “cruel personality”. For Mills to be feminine and humane, and Agyeman the so-called complete opposite, meant that one would be less likely to vote for a woman (and in Agyeman’s case, one who is even deemed unfeminine and also considered politically incompetent by her gender), when there is a man with both competence and expression of empathy. Barack Obama’s performance of the subtype which deviated from the archetypal man saw him as a more family-oriented, relatable personality and easy-going. Hillary Clinton was seen as tougher than she should be, not a family woman, but too career oriented and seemingly inauthentic, even when acting female (Atkeson and Krebs, 2008). Clinton’s so-called rigidity is still an area she has focused on improving in her 2016 presidential bid. It is therefore possible that one of the factors that put Obama ahead of Clinton was about perceptions around their traits. Also, that Obama being male, he became a more suitable candidate by his ability to blend both competence and likeability. Washburn and Washburn (2011) have indicated that voters may find women ill-suited to public office if coverage concentrates on feminine traits for women; however, focusing on attributes such as competent and tough may also alienate them from sections of the female population who have chosen traditional roles. This also constitutes a challenge for the trope of toughness.

### ***Novelty***

As already mentioned, this was the first time a sitting president was challenged in a primary election within his own political party in Ghana. To that extent, there was a bit of

novelty about Mills, however positive or negative. Novelty representations did not evade Agyeman either, and she was largely represented as such. Novelty descriptions entailed a 'gender' labelling such as female and woman, and 'uniqueness' labelling such as first (Meeks, 2012) and making history. Mills' novelty was around his uniqueness whereas Agyeman's was both. The *Daily Guide* reported:

President Mills has become the **first** Ghanaian president ever to face internal challenge from no mean a person than the wife of his own party's founder, in his bid to seek a second term in office (July 9, 2011, p.3, para 4).

Then, in its July 7, 2011 edition, the *Daily Guide* again recounted his novelty:

History will be made if President Mills wins because not only would he have been the **first** sitting President in the country's history to have emerged unscathed and reinvigorated from an internal party contest in his first term in office, but also he would have set an enviable record of holding the highest number of flag-bearer titles - four'. (p.3).

Below is Agyeman's novelty frame that had both the gender and uniqueness labelling that Meeks (2012) identified.

### *Gender Labelling*

The *Daily Guide* on July 9, 2011 had a headline story titled: "A Woman's bravado" (p.9). This seems to have implied that Agyeman had taken a step out of her terrain, in contesting a sitting president in a primary. A woman's bravado was possibly telling or suggesting to us to think of her step as exceptional. Exceptionality isolates and confirms women's unsuitability in the political landscape. Exceptionality descriptions also will likely discount

the positive implications demonstrated, regarding women's capability and fit, in attaining executive positions all over the world. This is because those efforts of women, as argued in the previous chapter, appears not to be considered a collective gain, but are individualised whenever a woman candidate is still covered as new (Jamieson, 1995; Murray, 2010).

In addition, with regard to exceptional descriptions, a burden is further put on women as individuals who are mostly required to do and prove more, and this seems to be because they are still not entirely accepted. Hence the need to prove themselves, on the one hand, while on the other hand, the need to prove the case for other women who may come after them with similar ambitions. Different standards and expectations are then set for women candidates to meet, and they are also likely judged by a different set of criteria, too.

An interesting aspect is, although women's efforts are individualised when they achieve (Jamieson, 1995), the consequence of a so-called failed effort of a woman is mostly generalised for all women. It can be argued that the question, surrounding whether women are fully capable and able to participate in the political process has been answered by the many women around the world who have taken on legislative and executive positions. Yet whenever another woman achieves political prominence, she equally has to answer that question anew for herself (Jamieson, 1995; Murray, 2010). However, it is more likely that she will not only own her mistakes for herself, but on the part of all womankind.

Also, in the pages of the *Daily Guide*, the gender labelling of novelty was highlighted for Agyeman:

Whatever the outcome of Saturday's watershed National Democratic Congress (NDC) polls, the boldness of Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings would go down in history as a rare case of a **female**

Ghanaian politician venturing into the male dominated apex of local politics – the presidency (July 9, 2011, p.9, para 1).

Here, Agyeman was portrayed as a history maker, who regardless of whether she secured the nomination or not would go down into the political annals of the country for breaking the particular glass ceiling of contesting a sitting president and actually daring the presidency. Although this portrayal suggests a positive outlook of her initiative, it was underlined by the assumption that it was an act of boldness on Agyeman's part for contesting in a male dominated arena. Male dominated arenas and their related challenges may not necessarily be scary for every woman which would therefore mean that, for some, they may not consider it brave necessarily to have stepped into that arena and faced the resulting challenges.

Most likely, women step out of line with society on many things which are gender incongruent, but mostly when they do so in politics, it is mostly taken as a show of boldness. It may not be that such efforts cannot be considered bold, but it is problematic when the definition of 'bold' for women is generally when they do what men are thought to do. To an appreciable extent, the lines of traditional gender roles are blurred, and it is likely that women candidates see their capability as not gender-determined. Therefore, it is possible that for some of these women, contesting in a male dominated field could mean many things, but it may not necessarily be a situation they feel afraid to face. If women step into what they also have the ability to do, they may less likely be thinking that they are being bold for doing what comes simply and naturally to them. Yet society may think otherwise, because of the set of roles it boxes women into which could definitely not be true for all womankind. So especially for Agyeman, although without a formal portfolio, she made her name for navigating the political system as one who was apparently 'co-Head-of-State' with the husband. This, with her activities during that time, and the power she was

thought to have wielded for nearly 2 decades, could make one comfortable to suggest that Agyeman might be one of the women who were in the place where they felt they belonged and felt comfortable.

According to Murray (2010) for instance, “the media may change a candidate’s message and frame a candidate in ways which correspond to traditional stereotypes rather than the campaign actually undertaken by the candidate” (p. 8). That said, Agyeman’s slogan during the campaign, however, was actually *Be Bold*. But as already mentioned, *Be Bold* might have just been a statement made to encourage the delegates to step out of line with convention and defy the threats and intimidation of the national executives who were unsupportive of her bid. This therefore implies that her slogan might not have necessarily been about how uncomfortable she was with the decision to contest and break the norm. Given her past record and the character she is portrayed to be, *Be Bold* was likely more about encouraging others to step out of convention and defy the perks and punishments that may come from the party executives.

Understandably, women face enhanced barriers for contesting executive positions. However, it may not necessarily be boldness that they gain to contest, but perhaps a righteous anger towards a societal lid that might have been placed on them, dictating what is appropriate for women to do, when innately for some women, the opposite of what is defined as appropriate for them is what they are cut out to do. Women candidates’ challenge may have less to do with boldness and ability than the lack of support, patriarchal barriers, victimisation, and ostracism.

### *Uniqueness Labelling*

The following captures other novelty descriptions by the uniqueness labelling – ‘first’ or making history.

The *Daily Graphic* reported:

To put her words into action, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings made history on May 3, 2011 when she became the **first** female to pick nomination forms to vie for the flag bearer position of a political party in Ghana’. (July 7, 2011, p.14, para 16)

Then, again:

Nana Konadu herself also made history as the **first** woman to contest a sitting president for the presidential slot. (*Daily Graphic*, July 11, 2011).

The uniqueness labelling raises questions around the potential coverage that might have been given a male candidate in Agyeman’s shoes, and whether it would have been said of him as the ‘first man’ and not the ‘first person’ to contest a sitting president. His gender would, most likely, be absent from the portrayal and reference would have been made to a person, without looking at gender. The reports would perhaps have taken the gender out, and said something like the ‘first time’ a sitting president had faced opposition from within his party. The narrative would then be likely to focus on the event and not the person, i.e. first time. It would also have been less likely to have added that the challenge of the sitting president was by a man, although, reporting about a first man contesting the president would be accurate to say, just as a first woman was. A woman in the same position does not appear to enjoy the same treatment, and would more likely be labelled and referenced by her gender. The man is therefore always the first person when he actually is, and the woman the first woman, even when she is the first person.

### ***Non-Conformer -An Audacious Character***

Agyeman was several times presented as a non-conformist with the framing of her character traits and by her novelty descriptions. Descriptions of her non-conformity were found in 27 articles. There was nothing recorded for Mills on non-conformity. Non-conformity ascriptions were not expected for Mills, as he was an incumbent and male.

The *Daily Graphic* reported:

But the soul-mate of the founder of the NDC, Nana Konadu, has decided to torpedo that convention as she pitched her strength against President Mills' as the first female to contest the flag-bearership of the NDC (July 4, 2011, p.1, para 4).

The *Daily Guide* had earlier reported that the party's "executives don't like her ambition to truncate the administration of the sitting president ..., who must remain unchallenged, just as her husband remained unchallenged after his first four years." Aside from these reports, the national party executives together with constituency executives had issued several press releases to declare their support for candidate Mills. Agyeman herself was reported to have told delegates about reactions to her bid:

The reactions have been noisy and rancorous ..., in her dream to lead the NDC in the 2012 polls, (*Daily Guide*, July 9, 2011, p.9, para 3).

In the light of Agyeman's refusal to be whipped in line with convention by the powers that be, Agyeman stood up against the status quo and for what she believed she should do. She exemplified a non-conformist character especially in a place none had treaded, either male or female.

Also, the *Chronicle* reported:

Former First Lady, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, touted by many as 'Yaa Asantewaa,' due to her boldness (July 8, 2011, p.8, para 4).

Agyeman was characterised after a popular queen of the Asante tribe in Ghana who gathered an army and fought against British imposition in their territory in the 1900s when women did not go to war. The "Yaa Asantewaa" frame is the Ghana version of 'Iron Lady'. Although a name, it is used to generally refer to any woman of varied ages who was seen or deemed to be assertive or did something unconventional. Agyeman showed a so called 'deviance' (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006): 1) as a woman competing to get nominated to contest for the top job in the country; and 2) in the fact that she was by her action overthrowing a convention of sitting presidents to run a second term, unchallenged by elements within their own parties.

Reference to Agyeman as 'bold' in the passage can be considered to also be set within gendered norms. It was definitely correct to envision an unfair playing field for women in politics and also fair to suggest then that they are bold for weathering the related disadvantages against their candidature as a result of their gender. Against this background, Agyeman's portrayal as bold will not be misplaced. However, what is once again problematic is its construction as an adopted trait for women, where women assume it when stepping out of line with dominant expectations. Which are both (in) accurate. First, accurate to the extent that it is fair to regard someone who steps out of societal boundaries to be courageous, and second, inaccurate when suggested as acquired for the task at hand, and not something within the traits of women who show it. By their use, women are further ostracised from the political space as anything of a norm. When male traits are ascribed to women, for example being tough, they appear to achieve two things:

1) they suggest a corrected deficit in the women's traits; and 2) they qualify women in the status of strong and mature for the political game. Simply, it is implied that they have gained the correct dose of maleness to deal in the male game.

### ***Family Relationship***

Under personal attributes was also candidates' familial relationship frame. Atta Mills' marital and fatherhood statuses were inferred in just one article. It, apparently, suggests that his marital status was not important in the context of the race, so was less likely to be of interest to the media. Mills' marriage could also have been taken as something that the public already knew. Again, this might have also been of less interest to the media because, first and foremost, the familial relationships and status of political men have been less of an interest for media coverage, and second, his marriage or marital status did not seem to be an important relationship to his politics, as Agyeman's. The one time that his familial status was mentioned was in the *Chronicle*:

He is married to Ernestina Naadu Mills, an educator and has a 19 year old son, Sam Kofi Atta Mills with Ruby Addo (July 8, 2011, p.9).

On the other hand, Agyeman's marital status as a wife was a key frame of media coverage. Of all Agyeman's personal attributes, she was most represented by her marital status, and coverage could be considered to have been both positive and negative. Reference to her as "soul mate" and mainly as "wife of" and "former First Lady" of the founder of the NDC abounded. She was described as such in 54 of a total of 82 articles (see Table 2 and Figure 1). This does not take into account the number of times reference to her being the wife of

the former president would have actually been repeated in a given article, as demonstrated below.

The stature of Agyeman in Ghana politics would not necessarily require the incessant references to her as wife of President Rawlings, as the data reflect, to help readers better and to easily identify her. Therefore in newspapers, when the subject matter made it even more obvious the person in question, plus the high possibility that readers were not just random, but key followers of politics, point to the possibility that the readers might not have needed the constant reminder of her status as wife, and definitely not so much so as to identify her. This therefore suggests that the persistent framing of Agyeman as wife of former President Rawlings may have been to serve a different purpose, most likely to solicit her patriarch's cover over her as a validation of her candidature. Perhaps it is not so much the media completely avoiding referencing her marriage, but it is the judiciousness in doing so that suggests its lack of innocence; and even if it were innocent, it may not excuse the fact that it likely had implications which might have shaped perceptions about her. For instance, by creating the impression that she is most probably tied to the apron strings of her husband, or that she stands solely on his shoulders and achievements.

Essentially, the persistent description of Agyeman in terms of her husband was a manifestation of expedience, perhaps to go with familiar assumptions that a woman might need the support of a man to achieve her dreams. This consequently framed her as someone enjoying the support of a patriarch and possibly, by extension, seemingly shielded and defended; provided with the tools to play the game men play. In that regard, Mr. Rawlings being perceived as serving as Agyeman's political godfather might not be too hard to conceive as we already learnt that in recent times some women have built political careers alongside their politician husbands. However, Agyeman's familial representation, i.e. news media's reference to her as a wife (when not necessary), lent itself to how her

candidature was constructed, in relation to her husband. Agyeman's candidature was presented as both an addendum to her husband's political career, and in another sense a double ticket with the husband and herself, with the husband portrayed as a political partner and, at other times, as her political patriarch.

First, in the paragraph below, Agyeman was referred to as first lady and then towards the end as 'wife of former president Rawlings'. Reading the paragraph would suggest that especially the latter description or reference was not important.

From the *Daily Guide* thus:

The learned professor handed a crushing defeat to his only contender, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, the former first lady, when he polled a whopping 2861 votes, representing 96.1 per cent, as against a paltry 90 votes, representing 3.6 per cent polled by the wife of former president Rawlings (July 11, 2011, p.16, para 4).

Agyeman's description in relation to her husband repeats itself twice, not seemingly for emphasis needed to help identify her, rather to frame her as a wife and her agency therefore negligible if not under her husband. Projecting an image of wife will less likely arraign before the eyes and in the minds of voters the set of skills, easily relatable, to one being considered capable for the political job. Again, it will less likely portray her as an autonomous person who would be an independent thinker, able to make independent decisions in an executive post.

What this repeated introduction of frame was likely to do was to still present Agyeman as not fully politically mature, as she was seen as reliant on the husband. This impression is not coherent with public perceptions of the couple which hold that the couple are equal, complementary and supportive of each other. It has also been public knowledge that

Agyeman was the more intellectually capable spouse who lent her skills to her husband during his presidency: Mr. Rawlings himself only completed middle school education.

The next set of examples shows how Agyeman's ticket was presented in relation to her connectedness to Mr. Rawlings. Alongside references to her as wife were two forms of representation: one that portrayed the couple as very like-minded and complementary to each other, and in this election considered as running together; and the other description that isolated Agyeman's candidature in the background and highlighted the husband, as if Agyeman was not the candidate to be given preference, as if it was more important to walk in the shadows of her husband

#### *The Power Couple – Like-mindedness*

Agyeman was keenly portrayed as relying on her husband, thinking like her husband and essentially running with her husband for the position. Her candidature was not separated from her husband, and it was the couple's ticket rather than hers alone.

First and foremost, they were portrayed concurring as one and the same, and were identified with each other. For instance, the *Daily Guide* reported:

The NDC has two faces – Rawlings' and Nana Konadu's: No wonder the party is regarded as the property of the couple who often claim to have built it with the blood of the former Air Force pilot (July 9, 2011; p.9, para 15).

In Ghana, the issues and people Agyeman support would be considered as the same issues and people supported by Mr Rawlings. If Mr Rawlings makes public speeches, one could

comfortably assume those are Agyeman's thoughts as well. The subsequent paragraphs in the article from *Daily Guide* support this view:

Shortly after the NDC had won power in 2008, her husband started punching holes in Mills' government. She **naturally** joined in the attacks of what her husband described as a non-performing government, as if in preparation for the day when she would call the bluff of the president (July 9, 2011; p.9, paras 16-17).

The report indicated that Agyeman "naturally" sided with Rawlings, giving credence to the assumption of them as a power couple in Ghana, very equally yoked. The use of this phrase suggested that it was rather unlikely, or would have been surprising, if Agyeman had not joined Mr Rawlings to condemn the then sitting president. The compatibility of the couple is further demonstrated in this paragraph:

Nana Konadu, wife of the party's founder and former President Rawlings, **like her husband** believed it would be extremely difficult for the NDC to market Mills to the Ghanaians since they (her family) had lost confidence in his leadership (*Daily Guide*, July 7, 2011, p.7, para 7).

Agyeman was also depicted with frames which suggested that she was reliant on Mr. Rawlings. The *Daily Guide* reported:

As she descends on Sunyani today she has the support of her husband who has left nobody in doubt about how far he would go to have her win so that the party he founded does not go to pieces (July 9, 2011; p.9, para 24).

Her reliance was further demonstrated:

A beacon of hope for women and celebrated feminist, the 'Iron Lady' may be the underdog in the encounter but with the fire-brand and her main pillar cast in the mould of former President Rawlings

behind her, President Mills may have to wait until the last vote is counted (*Daily Graphic*, July 4 2011, p.1, para 4).

Such descriptions, as already suggested, portrayed that her candidature carried considerable weight because of the support of her husband. Being apparently like-minded, her husband's unflinching support would be expected, regardless of the public knowledge that each possesses a unique political stature. The reverse of the impression of her reliance may also be that, because they were regarded as this compatible, it might have been that Agyeman had a reliable and supportive husband and perhaps not necessarily that she was reliant on him. Although Agyeman is portrayed as relying on the political stature of her husband which seems like a convenient framing to put across for the moment, what was known before the race during the tenure of the former president was Agyeman's own political contribution to his governance. For instance, in the *Daily Guide*, Agyeman was referred to as "the power behind her husband's power" to portray how instrumental she was to the success of Mr Rawlings' administration. As Agyeman made a case in support of her candidature on her campaign trails, the *Daily Guide* also confirmed, thus:

The above are not the words and sentiments of opposition politicians. They are the words of the wife of the founder of the ruling NDC party and the longest serving First Lady of Ghana under the (P)NDC. She was not just a First Lady; she was the power behind her husband's power (*Daily Guide*, July 7, 2011, p.4, para 7).

Again, it was said of Agyeman:

Her influence in the governments her husband led in the course of his career in local politics cannot be brushed aside. There were rumours about her ability to have ministers fired and hired, which saw people seeking top government appointments lobbying for positions through her' (*Daily Guide*, July 9, 2011, p.9, para 12).

Therefore, the attempt to frame Agyeman as either resting very heavily under the protective wings, or riding on the political wings, of her husband would therefore not be entirely accurate. It would have been more absurd to have a former president as a husband who is not visibly supportive of his wife's candidacy, or who did not appear to lend his experience of the political field to his spouse. It would have also been shocking if Mr. Rawlings took a backstage role in Agyeman's bid, given the impression around the couple's same-mindedness on the state of the nation led by Mills.

The reliance frame was likely a handy context within which to frame the extent of support the former president lent to the wife. However, it is possible that Agyeman might have recognised how perhaps to negotiate a positive image outside of the strong-headed and iron lady frames. There might have been the need to balance that image, and so, cowed herself to submit to her political prelate who she would definitely need to be able to make any positive headway, regardless of her own feats in the NDC. It appears political women may sometimes be willingly or subtly coerced by sections of society to submit to patriarchal protection in order to counter concerns around whether their families, especially their husbands, accept their ambition. This also may portray that they have not deviated so much from femininity into maleness to create a likeable impression for those who are watching, and to be able to resist the 'un-submissive woman' tag that is normally attached to political women. In this case, Agyeman had a reason to be complicit. For instance, it was reported that after Agyeman picked up her nomination forms she sent them to her husband. According to the *Daily Graphic*:

Nana Konadu later presented the forms to her husband and Founder of the NDC, former President Jerry John Rawlings, at the Ridge office of the former President, where he congratulated her, saying the task ahead would not be easy.

Agyeman's action suggests her own collusion in potentially managing a more feminine, and hence a more likeable, impression in the eyes of the public. The Rawlings' are considered happily married and they live together. There did not seem to be urgency or a necessary formality to first present her forms to her husband, and in his office in the full glare of the media, as it was reported. Agyeman's act might have solicited an impression from the public, one that she might have hoped would be positive, considering her as humble, and co-operative with Mr. Rawlings; also that she had received the full blessing of her husband to enter the race.

#### *Putting Mr. Rawlings First – Dual Candidacy*

When introducing Agyeman as wife of Mr Rawlings, one other feature was also about representing the couple together, such that, where the two were spotted together, Mr Rawlings was first mentioned before candidate Agyeman. Sometimes, her name was omitted and replaced with her marital status as a wife. This potentially might have diverted some attention from Agyeman, and to some extent 'hid' the candidate Agyeman. It may also have added to the impression that she was under the protective cover and mentorship of Mr. Rawlings. The *Daily Guide* reported:

Former President Rawlings, founder of the party and his wife, Nana Konadu, a contender in the race, were the first VIPs to arrive (July 11, 2011 p.16, para14).

The constant association and side-by-side mention of the former president and the candidate Agyeman portrayed them as on the same ticket, as her candidature did not

appear to have been about her alone. One key feature, evidently problematic, was the fact that he was mostly mentioned first, before candidate Agyeman. This treated her candidature as an appendage of her husband's ambition and political interest. As a key actor, she was trivialised by how she was introduced in the sentence; "a contender in the race", which was obvious and quite needlessly repeated.

In subsequent paragraphs also, when the couple were mentioned, the former president was repeatedly mentioned before candidate Agyeman, and her name omitted:

For the first time in the history of NDC gatherings, the former President and his wife were given a cold reception when they made their way onto the congress grounds .... (July 11, 2011 p.16, para 15).

In fact, the next paragraph, directly after the one above, also followed the same pattern; her name was left out, as if she was just accompanying the husband to a function when she was actually a candidate in a major primary:

Not too long after the arrival of the former President and his wife, the Vice president, John Mahama, also arrived. .... (July 11, 2011, p.16, para 16).

Here also, the contender received second mention after her husband, and not because the husband was performing any function. By this, more seriousness and importance was placed on the stature of Mr. Rawlings as founder and even husband of the candidate than the candidate herself, although it would be less likely so had the opposite been the case. The representation of Agyeman as a tag-along to the husband indicated how inseparable the couple were deemed to be in working together, and how it was important for the media to depict her male-controlled protection from the claws of political macho figures, shielding her from the political torrents. Or perhaps it meant to portray her candidature as

validated by her husband, and that she was not the kind of bad wife who put her ambitions before her husband and children. The media therefore perpetrated an impression that associated the chances of Agyeman's success heavily to the former president. It thereby turned a blind eye to her essence, prowess and weight in the political landscape.

The omissions of her name also suggested that Agyeman was potentially trivialised. As serious a candidate as she was, by her husband's side she did not seem to be considered important, whereas candidate Mills got complete acknowledgement as a full candidate by himself, with, so far, nothing featuring his wife. Obviously, this different treatment was because of Rawlings' political relevance and the space he occupied within the NDC as founder, although focus on him also was potentially beneficial to Agyeman and a distraction from her independent candidacy.

The media clearly demonstrated more interest in Mr. Rawlings' actions than those of the candidate Agyeman. While Agyeman was more visible, Mills had presence as a complete package on his own, whereas Agyeman was rendered seemingly complete only together with the husband on board. Mills was focused on as a single candidate, but Agyeman as joint candidate with Mr. Rawlings. Agyeman appeared to be her husband's 'carry-on' luggage by her being constantly placed alongside him. An impression therefore seemed to have been created that, she was being protected, guided, directed and carried safely in male arms to possibly navigate the masculine fields. It did not appear that Agyeman was presented as autonomous, sufficient and independent. She was portrayed sometimes as being led by the former president.

Agyeman's capability to handle the job was not what would be so much in doubt with her 'hand luggage' status by Mr. Rawlings, but it gave the impression that it would again be another Rawlings' presidency. This echoes concerns among the American public around a

dual presidency at the White House if Hillary Clinton were to win. Political women with active political spouses have to answer the question of whether it is an election or re-election, continuity or change. Although Mr Rawlings is very much liked, it did not seem to be that another presidency under that name was necessarily desired, especially after almost two decades in power.

In the passage below which came immediately after the earlier quote, Agyeman was again depicted with the 'wife of' frame and without a name:

Utter shock was written on the faces of the dignitaries on the high table as the founder and his wife left the dais without bidding farewell to anyone, a development which largely affected President Mills' victory speech presentation (para 26).

In just one article, Agyeman was constantly referenced as a wife, even when the writer could have made a point without it. Also, the trivialisation of Agyeman was evident, as, in the article, her name was substituted a number of times with the "wife of" frame whereas, Mr. Rawlings's name was always mentioned, though he was not the candidate. His name was not once replaced in the article with either his political or marital title. The continuous referral to first, the Former President and the side mention of Agyeman, then, of her as his wife who either came second to him or whose name was not even mentioned potentially demonstrate that, for all her actual worth, she was not taken seriously when by her husband's side; Mr. Rawlings was deemed as weightier than she was. Even if he was, it still constituted an irrelevant media focus, especially when candidate Agyeman was on her campaign, and in this article, a key actor at the venue of the Congress as a candidate, and the person of interest. It is less likely that a male political candidate with a political wife would be thus relegated and trivialised by constant references to him as 'husband of', sometimes without his name when by his wife. It therefore appears that Agyeman's gender

as female, second to the male gender, might have prevailed. Importance was put on Mr. Rawlings as male, political, and thus first, followed by Agyeman as female, political and so second. There appeared to be a gendered political hierarchy of importance which decided where Agyeman, being female, even though the candidate, should be placed in relation to her husband.

In conclusion, first, by identifying her with her husband when not necessary; second, by making her candidature a double ticket with her husband; and third, by making the race sometimes about the husband instead of her, with the husband taking precedence; possibly suggested that women are perhaps encouraged to leave it to important men to speak or act on their behalf. This may be because men are easily more identified with the political terrain, pointing to a possibility that a political woman alongside a political man may still not be considered politically mature on her own. Having a political nonentity as a husband would perhaps release women candidates to be viewed and credited with their own efforts and achievements. When Agyeman was First lady it was alleged she ran the Presidency, especially given Mr. Rawlings' limited education. Now that she wants to be president, the narrative is that it is the husband who would run the show.

Obviously, there is political capital to be made from Mr. Rawlings' stature, but political women with political spouses might find it harder to prove their autonomy and maturity in their career. Angela Merkel, whose husband was less visible and a nonentity in political terms, did not struggle with any question of a dual presidency, or whether she might not be fully independent (Wiliarty, 2010). Those with politically vibrant husbands continue to struggle, such as Cristina Fernández Kirchner, Hillary Clinton and Konadu Agyeman Rawlings. Maybe it would be easier to appreciate the careers of these women as outside of the continuity of their husbands' if they had less political and less visible spouses. Both Presidents Bill Clinton and Kirchner have been accused of diluting the spotlight on their

wives while campaigning for them (Bystrom 2010, Piscopo, 2010). Mr. Rawlings is called 'Mr. Boom' in Ghana to signify his verbal antics which over the years have always attracted the media, as anything he says on platforms has been sensational. Maybe sometimes these former presidents still acted as candidates themselves, rather than their wives. It is not in doubt that Agyeman was an assertive woman, even to her husband, who she would publicly correct on national television. It would seem that her portrayal both as assertive and very strong, and also as submissive to her husband, might be quite conflicting. Yet, this may not be, as the submissive frames were more deduced from where the media placed her in relation to her husband in coverage of her campaign, and not necessarily a direct reference to her as a character trait she possessed. However, references to the toughness trope were mainly evident in her actions in contesting this race. Agyeman's connection to her important male figure seem to have been both beneficial and a distraction.

### ***Appearance***

Appearance also featured under the personal attributes on candidates. Appearance was not a major focus as the familial relationship frame, however, among the other indicators, it has been comparably important, given the number of times it was mentioned – 4. Also, given the context, it was cursory. There was no reference to Atta Mills' appearance. Even though appearance was not a major focus, it found its way in the coverage for Agyeman, and the fact that there was nothing about the male candidate may still suggest an importance. Although references were not hostile or seemingly detrimental, the fact that it still was given some attention could perhaps still make the point that women's appearance would still matter to the media if given the opportunity. However, as mentioned in the earlier chapters, appearance is less of a focus for the Ghanaian media, possibly as a result

of the very traditional way most women politicians dress, where they are mostly in clothes sewn as long skirts and blouses.

Agyeman's red beret, part of the official dress of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, was cursorily mentioned in reports that she put down her red beret to enter the political ring. This may subtly have communicated that she has entered a feistier phase of her life, moving from leading women to now entering a male domain – the political ring.

Then in the *Chronicle*, reference was made to a report about "...Mrs. Rawlings' 'charm' and 'substance'":

Noting Mrs. Rawling's 'charm' and 'substance', the New York Amsterdam News reported that she was praised by Ghana's permanent representative to the United Nations, ... [that] For the past 12 years she has stood by her husband in the struggle to restore Ghana. She has led a group of active women to help empower Ghanaian women, freeing them from being hewers of wood and drawers of water to be[ing] actors in the political arena (July 8, 2011, p.8, para 13).

From the statement above, given the outlet – an official news source, and the occasion of praising Agyeman, there was no need to reference her charm. This is because Agyeman was being praised for the work that she had done alongside her husband when he was president for a number of years. Referring to her substance appeared to be evidenced by her works, but using same works to evidence her charm was not quite a fit. It appears to be that there was a gendered protocol for showing appreciation of women where it might not be enough to compliment a woman's brain without her beauty, and if one did, the compliment might not seem to be complete. This notion taps into the gendered norm surrounding what women are sometimes considered to appreciate as compliments or what

women are deemed and are supposed to have - beauty; also an impression that women need affirmation about their beauty; Such that it is perceived to not be enough to compliment a woman and leave out a so-called feminine essence which is to be beautiful.

Also from the *Chronicle*, it was reported:

Mrs. Rawlings appeared, dressed in white apparel, with white head-gear and beaming with smiles. The former first lady wriggled her way to the high table, attended to by a courtier of attendants, followers and sympathisers who thronged the Ridge offices of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, venue of the post-congress press conference (July 14, 2011, p.3).

Agyeman was portrayed as happy and seemingly recovered from her defeat as she was spotted in "white apparel, a white head-gear and beaming with smiles". Agyeman was also depicted as being feminine through the use of how she was seen to have "wriggled her way". In wriggling and twisting her way to the high table, feminine imagery was conveyed, paying attention to her walking and her waist movements. It drew attention to her body and for one to imagine it. She actually might or might not have twisted her waist, but being female, feminine words of imagery might have been employed for how she walked. This, perhaps, was to communicate that, although she is tough and so seen somehow as masculine, she is a woman because after all, she wriggles her waist.

### ***Age***

In terms of age for both candidates, Agyeman's was mentioned in 5 articles and Mills' in 4.

Age took the form of date of births in biographical reports. For instance for Agyeman:

Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings was born on the November 17, 1948 to the late J.O.T. Agyeman and his wife. (*Chronicle* July 8, 2011, p.8)

Notice here, J.O.T. Agyeman's wife's name was also not mentioned. Although, not directly related to the point being made about Agyeman, another woman, also alongside her husband – who was no political figure or deemed any more relevant than Agyeman's mother, who was an influential educationist, – was left out. It appears when women are wives, their credentials are easily ignored and also, they are most likely rendered as other (Trimble and Treiberg, 2010), even if equally important, figures. Agyeman did not seem to matter and so was rendered invisible when she was beside Mr. Rawlings, as positions of her familial representations showed.

For Atta Mills, the *Daily Guide* reported: "President Mills was born on July 21, 1944" (July 9, 2011, p.8).

Then again in the *Chronicle* it was reported:

At age 27, he was awarded his PhD after successfully defending his doctoral thesis (July 8, 2011 p.8).

The reference to candidates' age was more of information for readers rather than, perhaps, making a political point.

## **Professional Attributes**

Professional attributes constituted the aspects of coverage on candidates that were not on personal terms, but referenced their political, occupational and educational attainment. Mills' professional attributes took a little more profile than Agyeman's: Mills' was mentioned 5 times and Agyeman's 4 times. Although the difference was not wide in terms of the frequency recorded, however, Mills had extensive and more structured career/occupational descriptions than Agyeman. Mills was a Professor of Tax Law at the University of Ghana. Agyeman was mainly known as leader of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement which brought thousands of women together across the country to run community day care and nursery centres. They also developed a host of social infrastructure and political programmes for women. Agyeman was also the organiser of these women as grassroots supporters for Mr Rawlings' political party.

The *Daily Graphic* reported:

But Nana Konadu has remained unfazed; the woman of steel cut her political teeth while massing up thousands of Ghanaian women behind her husband during the days of the revolution and the aftermath'. (July 4, 2011: p.1. para 9).

Mills' professional profile had more content and was particularly structured. Contents were grouped under headings for Mills, whereas for Agyeman they were mostly cursory, and lumped together. For instance, in stories more tailored as a biographical account, profiles, Mills' content would normally be organised around these headings: Education; Career as a lecturer; IRS (internal Revenue Service) Career; Seeking the highest office in Ghana; Personal Life; Publications; and Mills' critics (*Daily Guide*, July 9, 2011, p.8). Then also in the *Chronicle*, in another biographical account, Mills had a detailed account under 9

headings and Agyeman had four (July 8, 2011, p.8). Agyeman's covered 'family', 'education', 'career' and 'life works'. Not only was Agyeman not covered extensively in terms of headings but in terms of dedicated pages. While Mills had about 2 pages, Agyeman had just about half a page.

This somehow is telling of how the writer might have conceived Agyeman's attainments; that Mills had done more, and so a lot could be said about him, whereas Agyeman had supposedly done little, and so not much could be said about her. Considering the kind of content for example, under 'Publications', where Mills' was listed, which was silly, if it were the achievements of Agyeman as First Lady, and leader of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, and the varied projects they carried out all over Ghana, then there would have been an endless report of outputs of her social work, matching the extent of the Professor's academic work. This suggests some form of bias, where possibly, Mills' achievements and life details were more highly regarded than Agyeman's; Mills' being a professor - academia and a masculine terrain and Agyeman a social worker - feminised domain.

It also suggests that more effort might have gone into researching and writing about Mills than was devoted to Agyeman, which still speaks to what the journalist regarded as "work". It could also be that more might have been expected in terms of professional attainment for Mills as a man, as men would be deemed to have built a career.

Writing more about Agyeman and her political and professional life did not appear to be of interest to the media, and this might explain how fewer lines were dedicated to her than to Mills. The absence of media interest could possibly tell us that Agyeman's professional preparation might not have been as important to them as her familial connection. Just as

Nkrumah and Mahama's. In profile articles, just about the same number of pages would have been expected for both candidates. It would appear more understandable to suggest that less substantive works of Agyeman might have been featured because, perhaps, her competence was not in question. Or it could be that the media had more significant things to focus on, such as her important connection to the husband and her so-called "inordinate ambition" to institute a political dynasty or break conventions. However, this would be a valid argument when considering the whole news corpus, but not when even in biographical accounts on candidates, a far lesser focus was given to her political, educational and professional attainment. Agyeman's attainments might not have been regarded as being of the same level as Mill's in terms of relevance or importance.

Again, when it comes to women candidates, generally, the effort is made to match their achievements to what is considered feminine, hence although more diverse background could have been written about Agyeman, it was mainly restricted to her involvement as leader of a women's movement. What this may suggest is that, women might be considered to have skills to serve women only, attained through working on women's issues. According to Norris (1997), women's other accomplishments are normally relegated, and their successes are deferred to mainly family names. It seems news media might be liable for fashioning and modelling women's achievements along the feminine: their gender and family.

Overall on attributes, Agyeman's marital status and her connectedness to Mr. Rawlings was heavily focused on in comparison to the rest of the indicators under personal attributes. The age of candidates was the least covered for any political capital. Agyeman's traits were

framed as tougher and Mills' as meeker. Under professional attributes, evidence from their coverage on attainment was higher for Mills than Agyeman.

Different attributes were focused on for Agyeman; on personal attributes, Agyeman was far more covered than Mills, and on professional attributes Mills was more covered than Agyeman, but with a slim margin, only in terms of frequency.

### **Conclusion**

On coverage of Agyeman with regard to fashioning out a model for or media coverage on women's political participation, she was matched by feminine-valued work, achievements and projects; she was also matched by her desire to restore decency and piety in politics. However, what did not feature were the endorsements of women's groups. Although there were reports of fan clubs, set up to campaign, with other individuals circulating their personal endorsements of the Agyeman and Mills camps, there were no active auxiliary groups of the type found especially in the case of the NPP in the previous chapter.

In terms of visibility, Agyeman was the more mentioned, focused on and quoted candidate. Agyeman increased her visibility due to a number of exceptional factors inclusive of the fact that she was a former first lady who was launching a political career. Also, she was the first person challenging a sitting president and a presidential candidate of her party on a second term bid. Again, she was the first woman contesting a presidential candidate slot in her party, while her recognised viability also attracted media attention. Yet media attention did not seem to have helped her, as a result of the mostly negative coverage,

resistance from patriarchal gatekeepers, and the anxiety her party had over letting opposition parties in on their mishaps.

Mills did not enjoy any extra factors other than being an incumbent which might have potentially translated in better coverage from state-run media than the frequency Agyeman enjoyed, as she combined a number of very sensational factors to earn her visibility. Despite Agyeman's higher visibility suggesting that she did 'better' than Mills in terms of publicity, the tone and content of media discourse about her appears to be considerably negative. So while she scored highly on frequency, content appears to have been mostly unfavourable.

On attributes, coverage focused far more on Agyeman's personal attributes than Mills', whereas it appeared that Mills' professional attainment was more regarded than Agyeman's.

The next chapter presents findings and discussions on interviews held with women parliamentary candidates in Ghana for the 2012 parliamentary elections.

## **Chapter VIII: Findings and discussions on interviews with women candidates of the 2012 elections.**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents findings of the qualitative thematic analysis of interviews held with 18 women candidates who represented the two major political parties in Ghana during the parliamentary elections of December 7, 2012. The findings contribute answers to the main interview question posed to respondents: how do you perceive women politicians are portrayed in the media?

The women candidates interviewed were acquainted with the political landscape and media interactions. Details of the political and media experience of all interview participants can be found in Appendix F (page 383). One of the women was interviewed in *Asante Twi*, one of the local languages in Ghana. A linguistics student at the University of Ghana verified the transcript of this interview that I had translated.

This chapter is divided into 3 main sections. The first covers women's use and experience of the media. The second section is on women's perceptions of media portrayal of mainly female politicians. Under the second section, the researcher sets out thematically the discourses of the women into sub-themes. Although interwoven, these discourses have been introduced to untangle the women's views to provide some form of distinction, and enhance clarity in the complexity of their responses. Therefore, the sub-theming is not necessarily to break away from the chapter's discursive intent. The chapter concludes with a summary of its sections and key themes, and implications.

In this findings chapter, the researcher aspires to sparingly situate interpretations and analysis within the theoretical contexts of *ideology* and *discourse*. borrowing from the intersecting notions of “social production of knowledge and the perpetuation of inequitable power relations” (Stoddart, 2007, p.192) comprehending upon whom society bestows privilege, and who suffers injustice through the production and circulation of cultural knowledge by the media in Ghana. The media in Ghana, like anywhere else, produce and circulate cultural knowledge. As Hall stated, the media

...operate within a framework of power because they are a part of a political and social system (1973, p.15).

Therefore, against the backdrop of these theories, the interpretations, analysis and discussions are achieved by soliciting meanings from the women’s perceptions of their media depictions and treatment, and by exploring the implications of such treatment and portrayal for women’s status in the Ghanaian society.

Throughout the chapter, the researcher employs the use of pseudonyms. The excerpts have only been altered, grammatically, where necessary for intelligibility, as most of the women spoke, generally in everyday Ghanaian English and conversational styles. An example of a transcript of an interview can be found as Appendix C (page 373)

### **Background to Women’s Media Use and Experience**

The women engaged with the different traditional forms of media: television, radio and newspapers. They discussed the set of their media experiences as an aggregation of their interactions with reporters from the different forms of media. However, there were

instances where the women specifically referred to reporters of particular newspapers, TV stations and radio. Again, from the interviews, the women did not reference a particular form of media to have shown the most forms of bias. However, women candidates were likely to have had more interaction with radio stations because they are ubiquitous and readily accessible across communities all over Ghana, while TV stations and newspapers are not. Also, radio stations have more local than national content, unlike TV and newspapers. Moreover, it being a parliamentary election, the campaigns were in the constituencies, and media coverage is useful for local members who would be voting. Hence it was more likely that reporters from radio stations would be more engaged with the women than would the television stations and newspaper houses.

While women's shared experiences also covered their previous public roles, these roles seemed focused more locally than nationally, and so radio stations might have engaged them more often, though not to the entire exclusion of television and newspapers. The number and reach of television stations in Ghana could further substantiate the likelihood that the women might have used radio more often. There are 5 major analogue TV stations in Ghana. The only TV station with nationwide coverage is the state-owned *Ghana Television (GTV)*. The rest are within a few towns and cities. Also, the few newspapers available are mostly read by the few urban elites, and, more importantly, do not form the bloc of the voting masses. Radio presenters therefore might have influenced women's media experiences more.

Generally, the women used the media to market themselves and their projects/policies, and also to respond to allegations.

The women in the passages below demonstrated these forms of media use:

First, some of the women reported media approaches offering them interview opportunities in order both to market themselves as candidates, and to address their constituents and relay their plans. One of the women explained:

Most times when there is a program going on in the constituency, they will call and interview you on what your plans are for the constituency and why this program is coming on. The media is very good, it helps you to do so many things like market yourself and address your people, and it gets far (Serwaa Agyapong<sup>12</sup>, NDC).

Moreover, another respondent also pointed out that being an emerging woman politician, she made use of the media for publicity purposes, as there were not many women in politics. She reported that she used the media:

first, to project myself. As an up and coming female politician, and with very few female politicians in Ashanti region, I actually use them to project myself and to articulate my ideas, objectives, (and) vision and to also have the platform to exhibit my capabilities (Mary Agyapong, NPP).

Lastly, another respondent added that she was invited to media houses to contribute to political discussions. Her invitation was to join in:

as a panellist to analyse the newspapers; newspaper review. Yes, we normally go there, pick about 4 topics from the newspapers and we analyse them and say what we think about the stories (Abrafi Appiah, NDC).

These portray the women as engaged with the media in different capacities in their contribution to media content. In Ghana, media productions are littered with political programmes throughout the day with a huge audience involvement through phone-in sessions. It is highly likely with the least amount of exaggeration to suggest that with the

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<sup>12</sup> Pseudonyms have been used throughout the presentation of findings in this chapter.

exception of Christian radio, every other radio and television station in Ghana runs a political morning show with representatives from political parties featured in constant banter. Then late mornings to early afternoons, the airwaves are filled with a number of political Disc Jockeys or some other form of music presenters who are political activists and satirists in their own right, picking on the sticky political issues of the day. Late afternoons and evenings have their own share of political shows across these media forms, as well. Newspapers also write mainly political news. The newspapers also have their share of presenting political news, as the radio and TV morning shows are mainly newspaper reviews with different politicians representing the different political orientations.

In Ghana, a number of politicians have come to prominence through their constant media engagement. Hence a considerable number of national politicians in Ghana have built careers around the media, and they go to work throughout the day by constantly running between one or other radio or television show and interviews with newspapers. In Ghana, one unending constant may be waking up to the voices of politicians on radio and television. However, for women politicians in general, in the case of their using the media, very few of them get the same opportunity of an active and busy media life as the men, unless during electioneering periods when they are candidates, or when they have an expert opinion, and even that, they are less likely consulted (Byerly & Ross, 2006). Men constantly are present in radio and television stations; just as in the newspapers, stories about men and power also abound (Tuchman, 1978; GMBS, 2003; Byerly, 2007; Gadzekpo, 2013). According to Byerly and Ross (2006) “given what has become conventional wisdom about sourcing more generally – that is, that journalists will tend to use people like themselves who share the same opinions ... – source selection (meaning choosing men)

begins to become a little more explicable. As most journalists are men and most politicians and/or leaders and/or senior executives are also men, then a male-ordered circle is repeated endlessly in this buddy-buddy world.” (p. 47)

In women’s media use therefore, most of them were rarely part of the political party communication teams generally addressing issues all over the media stations. Thus they were likely to be featured on shows as panellists and interviewed by newspaper houses, television and radio stations on issues relevant to their campaigns. Some studies which focus on the gender dimension of engaging the public in political discourses, i.e. who is asked to speak, have reported that men are much more likely to be invited than women (Lavie & Lehman-Wilzig, 2003; Byerly, 2004; De Bruin & Ross, 2004).

Furthermore, the majority of the women reported that they also got opportunities to project themselves on the radio and media platforms by participating in candidates’ debates. Those who were the existing MPs, as reported by the women, would at some point be asked to comment on women’s issues by the parliamentary press corps. Women’s shared media experiences mainly captured the journeys of seeking political office, such as when they were candidates or parliamentarians. Therefore, while all the women have relevant experience to share, this was more related to their own political candidature, and less to being everyday representatives of their parties as members of party communication teams, or as important political figures whose opinions were sought, except a minute few.

Beyond interviews to market themselves and their projects, and media invitations to participate in debates, another observation made was that the media also used their

platform to vet the women's suitability for office, especially as most women would be likely to be considered as novelties in politics. One of the women reported:

Well, you know we are in Ghana! So far as you are coming in new, of course, they are interested to know who you are; why you want to go into the political terrain. Especially, knowing that women going into politics in Ghana carry a different perception, because it's a male-dominated area, they doubt your ability. So, they like to ask you questions: are you able to cope or are you able to match the men boot for boot, and in general, they just want to know about you, to start with (Oberemponmaa Baanieh, NDC).

The above passage demonstrates that women are less likely to be considered as the norm for political office (Ross, 2002; Murray, 2010). By this, the women demonstrated and recognised in their media use that a pervasive impression about women is that they are less likely to be in possession of the skill set for political office, and as a result are constantly barraged with media probing of their capability to act as equal to men in the political field. Sometimes, these impressions are out of genuine concern; other times out of mockery.

As much as this section has demonstrated how women used the media and how the media also engaged with them, it goes further to show that: 1) the women were politically active, although they had less important communicative roles than men; 2) they were no strangers to media interaction and were able to offer their perceptions on their media experience; 3) women are less likely to have the opportunities available to men in the media either by way of representing their political parties or being a crucial part in the media space throughout the political year until electioneering periods; and 4) like the society that the media mirrors (Graber, 2005), they are still more likely to consider women

as not having the right political experience and abilities, hence the constant probing they face.

### **Portrayal of Women Politicians**

This section covers the main interest of the researcher. One of the questions I asked the women was how they perceived the media portrayal of women politicians. The respondents mentioned that women politicians were portrayed as prostitutes, women without husbands, quarrelsome, Iron Ladies/Margaret Thatcher,<sup>13</sup> smokers, witches, and absent. The very pervasive theme was the sexualisation of the female politicians which was dominated by their portrayal as prostitutes. The other prevalent themes were also their portrayal as women-without-husbands, and as non-conformists who were identified as Iron ladies and Margaret Thatcher. Again, the women's appearance was of some interest. These portrayals demonstrate that the women experienced the sexualised, familial, non-conformist and sartorial frames in news media portrayal of women (Ross, 2002; Murray, 2010).

The women also mentioned that these descriptions were the shared perceptions of the public, their opponents, and the media. Aside from the media's own indulgence, they allowed reports of such portrayals in news by opponents of the women, and the public. Some of the women recognised media complicity in this regard, and appropriately placed the blame at the doorstep of the media for allowing such reports. This indicates that some of the women appreciated the responsibility of the media to sift news, and if they did not would hold them accountable. Apart from these negative portrayals, two of the women mentioned some positive portrayal as well.

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<sup>13</sup> Iron Ladies/Margaret Thatcher: Although Iron Lady and Margaret Thatcher seem to be interchangeably used, there are instances where the use of Iron Lady might be used by people who know nothing about Margaret Thatcher. But their use signifies references to the same traits of toughness.

This section is organised under positive and negative portrayals. Under positive portrayal is a straightforward presentation of the women as dutiful: “queens of good service”. The negative portrayal however, has been grouped under the following frames: sexualisation, familial, smokers and witches, non-conformist, lone women, and sartorial. Findings of each frame are presented with sub-headings, especially under the familial frame, because of the density and variety with which that frame lent itself in the women’s portrayal. As already mentioned in the introduction to the whole chapter, the sub-headings are not intended to break away from the discursive presentation, but to enable more clarity.

Below are the perceptions of the interviewees on media portrayal of political women.

## **Positive portrayal**

### ***Mediating women politicians: “Sompahemaa”<sup>14</sup> – the Queens of Good Service***

Two of the female candidates mentioned that they were sometimes covered favourably outside of the generally bad ones in which women politicians seemed to be framed. One woman felt that the media used exactly the information she had provided for them to write about her profile. According to her, she was portrayed as someone who had distinguished herself in service in her political party, and also as a dedicated member. The other respondent also felt that she had a positive portrayal because she was represented as someone who was serviceable, and who had discharged her duties diligently.

First and foremost, one of the respondents explained:

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<sup>14</sup> “Sompahemaa” - Translated as the Queen of Service, implying one who has served well or one who oversees others’ well-being or the development of a place.

I was branded as a “Sompahemaa”... we've had some media deliberations ... about those qualities and the reasons to be branded that way; I think that sometimes such portrayal is positive (Mary Agyapong, NPP).

Again, another respondent demonstrated how she felt the media had positively portrayed her, by expounding:

they actually portrayed me as someone who has really worked. They described me as someone who has gone through the mill in the NDC, and they put down exactly what I had told them about me; things that I have done, what I have gone through and so the story was, in fact, the story was very captivating. Many people wanted to read it, and the picture was very nice, so most people that week asked; who is this lady, and others called. ...It was quite a good portrayal ... however; I haven't had so much of it (Abrafi Agyapong, NDC).

From the passages, the women's portrayal as dutiful cast them in a very good light. This is because, for either of the women, the impression that they have been of service to the needs of their political party or the people under their care in their public roles, was a narrative that will sit positively in the minds of the public; in Ghana, the notion of service signifies some form of humanity and humility in the personality of the person referenced as giving it. Therefore, the impression that a woman has been dutiful would be likely to elicit approval from society.

Portrayal of these women as people who have served creditably would also be most likely to have enhanced their appeal both in their parties and the media. Normally in Ghana, when a woman is in office, it is mostly regarded as a chance for her to prove herself and make a case for other women to be voted to public offices. The portrayals of these women as people who have performed laudably would have exonerated them. Consequently,

these two women were elected in primaries as candidates, and later as Members of Parliament.

However, as much as these two women were commended for their good works, not many of the women interviewed, who, I believe, have equally worked hard in their parties or in other public capacities, shared the same sentiments, at least given the findings.

During election periods in Ghana, there are embassies and civil society organisations which support women by paying for some airtime for them in order to increase their visibility and likeability which otherwise might be limited (Byerly, 2007). Other times, there are the media's own initiatives to present profiles of women in newspapers, and other times to invite them into their studios for conversations about the process. Even though quite a number of the women had benefited from this arrangement which would likely have yielded them some positive coverage, it did not seem to be sufficient, as the majority of the women still felt that women politicians were less visible and dominantly negatively portrayed compared to their male colleagues. Some of the women spoke about this trend: the fact that they can expect some affirmative action from the media and also benefit from the kind gestures of other organisations to gain access to the media, but in the end, they were disappointed about the results. They reported that they "were told that especially, this year, the media houses and other media men are going to be liberal when it comes to the female aspirants" (Nana Akosua Adoma, NDC). In the same vein, another woman candidate revealed that "a week to elections, it was Action Aid which gave us free time. Another NGO gave us 30 minutes airtime" (Agartha Sey, NPP). This was confirmed by the reporter for the Gender pages of the *Daily Graphic* that it was a think tank that funded the women's profile pages in their newspaper and which was replicated in other newspapers (Interview, December 2012).

Again, even though the women have been positively portrayed, the content of the portrayal and what it may be likely to reveal about the status of the women in the society in relation to their male counterparts, is important. From the passages, women's acts of service may not be seen with a leadership eye and posture by the public and society as a whole. With the women's constant references to media descriptions of them as women who have served well and as queens of service ("sompahemaa"), it suggested that their positive portrayal was less about framing them as efficient leaders and more about being efficient servants. That is most probably the reason why, even as a Municipal Chief Executive (MCE)/Mayor of the second biggest municipality in Ghana, one of the women was referred to as one who showed great sense of service, rather than a great sense of leadership. This is despite her executive position more involving leadership acts, rather than service per se, such as taking initiatives, making tough decisions over the use of resources, giving directives, and leading a team, among others.

Leadership could mean service and vice versa but it is my supposition that they have a gendered nuance and service would be more likely used for women and leadership, for men. It is quite evident that the portrayal of these women had a gendered turn. In the Ghanaian society, it is highly likely to see a sense of service in a man as leadership, but less likely for society to consider the same for a woman. So leadership on the part of a woman may normally be seen as service, while service on the part of a man would be likely to be regarded as a show of leadership. Considering that in Ghana, as in many other places, the norm is that women serve, rather than lead as men do, women's leadership would most likely be contextualised in the spirit of service borrowing from perceptions on women's communal inclinations and sense of appreciation for relationships. Hence, as seems to have been the case of the two women above, they would be portrayed less as authority figures.

The perception that women serve and do not necessarily lead would be likely to pose conflicting situations when women are leaders who have to take tougher decisions. That is because it would be likely to inhibit people around the women to accept their authority and appreciate their tougher stances. Madam Mary Agyapong, one of the women with the positive portrayal, intimated that aside from being called “sompahemaa” she also came to be referred to as “Rosalinda”<sup>15</sup> and then later, as “Margaret Thatcher”; the latter reflecting the media’s perceptions of her so-called change in leadership style from a soft one to a tougher one in the municipality.

Of her portrayal as Rosalinda, she said:

I believe that it makes me a weakling, it puts me in a weakling position so when you have to take certain hard decisions, it’s like after all she’s not that Rosalinda but (Margaret Thatcher). So, it is a kind of brand as a weakling, for which, it is a bit embarrassing because depending on the crowd, I get a bit embarrassed. But you can’t get them to stop, so you have to deal with it (Mary Agyapong, NPP).

Labels like “Rosalinda” and “sompahemaa”, although seeming to give a sense of a pleasant and hardworking woman, respectively, also may project an image of an expectation from the media; this, she suggested, had been difficult to meet. That was probably because she was beyond Rosalinda and had a more serious side that was unaccounted for. Hence, when called to take tougher decisions as the MCE and candidate, it appeared not to go down well with the media and public, who then accused her of showing a “thatcherous” self, when to them she should remain the adorable, mostly sweet, and implicitly soft, Rosalinda. Being the queen of service and Rosalinda to the media and public therefore estranged her from any ability or quality of her own to deal toughly in her decision-making. In Ghanaian

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<sup>15</sup> Rosalinda was the desired, adorable and pretty leading female character in a Mexican soap opera shown on Ghanaian television.

society, many women may feel begged to be 'woman'; thus, soft and compensating, and if one acted somehow away from it, people can feel let down and become genuinely disappointed.

By these labelling and reactions from media and public, women are likely taught and instructed, somehow subtly, on how to behave and be a woman. It appears that the requirement for this is to behave and act as soft. The consequence is that most women in authority positions may become trivialised and be undermined by being thought of as soft. When women act the opposite, they may earn bad names, or sometimes, concerned observers including the media may act disappointed and could bad-mouth the women, as appeared to have happened in Mary Agyapong's case.

## **Negative portrayal**

### ***Sexualisation Frame: Women as Prostitutes***

There were 15 respondents who mentioned that women politicians were portrayed as prostitutes by the media. The popularity of this frame was so compelling, as almost all the women referred to it. It was also very much woven into other portrayals of the women candidates, as the whole findings would show. Under this portrayal, the women mentioned that it was nearly impossible as a woman politician to escape the portrayal as a prostitute. They felt it was a prominent perception held of them and a favourite insult that normally they would receive from sections of the media, the public, and their opponents.

Again, others mentioned that the media also pander to this frame as they allowed their airwaves to circulate the insults and accusations of them as "prostitutes and husband

snatchers” (Oberemponmaa Baanieh, NDC), and at other times the newspapers would caricature women in that light.

Below, some of the women candidates detailed their portrayal as prostitutes.

First, one of the women candidates said that some of the portrayals were:

“very nasty that” she “wouldn’t want to repeat them”. She indicated: “as for prostitution, they have it on their fingertips” and continued to explain that “the NDC candidate was all over my constituency (saying); she is a prostitute. She has been prostituting in Accra. ... I mean all sorts of things”. Consequently, she concluded of the media: “surprisingly the media do not really protect women”. (Mabel Donkor, NPP).

Secondly, another candidate also stated that her opponent:

started calling me “ashawo”.<sup>16</sup> She estimated: “probably I had the largest or highest or intense one”. Additionally, she reported: “I went to some area, my stronghold, and the guys were like, oh my God! The things we heard about you. We heard it on Oman FM: one presenter, I’ve forgotten his name, that president “ato fie ama me” (president has bought me a house). He buys (airplane) ticket for me, if the first lady is (not around) (Fulera Yakubu, NDC).

Last, demonstrating their portrayal as prostitutes, another respondent also confirmed saying:

Other women are being described as harlots... other women are being described as whores, and what have you! A lot of things, dirty things, dirty words that mustn’t be. Others were, like the previous ones, also described as barren women, people who cannot give birth, so on and so forth. With me, they had few... They would have said it but most of it didn’t come to my knowledge. (Abrafi Appiah, NDC)

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<sup>16</sup> Ashawo is prostitute in the Twi language, a major language widely spoken in Ghana.

From the passages, these women candidates demonstrated that being called a prostitute is prevalent in their portrayal, and it was the go-to insult used for a woman. The passages also confirm that the media, the public and their opponents name-called them as such. Their portrayal as prostitutes constituted both insults and accusations being thrown about and in an effort to taint their image. Also, it may be that those who chose to indulge in this insult might have done so out of spite for the women's so-called audacity to enter the domain of men and challenging male authority. They were called prostitutes, it seems, because, just as a prostitute defies society's instruction on controlling women's bodies, the women candidates were seen to be doing same against any societal oppression that seeks to restrict their access to public office.

The women's portrayal as prostitutes, as the passages show, did not distinguish between married and single women. From the interviews, both single and married women mentioned that women politicians would normally be referred to as prostitutes, and according to them that was simply because they were women, and who have chosen to be politicians. This portrayal would, most likely, have a basis in 1) the perception that women's bodies are their greatest assets for pursuing power and privilege; and 2) society's requirement of women is to be its caretakers and moral custodians (Kahn, 1994b, 1996; Meeks, 2013). Ross (2002) revealed that, whether fair or not, the public expect higher moral standards from women; hence when called a prostitute, it was an affront to the woman and a devaluation of her status and morality.

Below, another woman also confirmed that the insult of choice was the depiction as prostitutes. This time, it was characterised by an attempt to deflate their motivation to pursue a political career. The passage below exemplifies the scenario of calling women politicians as prostitutes, out of spite.

She explained:

...the favourite tactic of choice for your male opponent is to denigrate you as a person. So you will find insults being hurled at you that you are a prostitute; you only got this chance because you slept your way to the top. It is so demeaning and demoralising. It's happened to almost every female leader, not just political leader in this country, because that's how people feel they can clip your wings or shove you back into the mode of being a wife, mother, (and) homemaker. That is your place, that's the pigeonhole that you fit in, so stay there, (and) don't aspire to get into the world of decision making, that's male domain. So once you get in there, you are seen as some kind of tougher-than-nails' kind of woman. You do need to develop a thick skin because you will have darts thrown at you from all angles. (Ziona Nhyira, NPP).

From the passage, Nhyira suggested that a section of Ghanaian society was more comfortable with a woman being a homemaker than being a political figure. According to her, the former is considered the woman's place, and the world of decision-making as a male domain. Again, from the passage, one may also deduce that women's suitability for public office may be affected by perceptions that the woman handles domestic affairs. According to Murray (2010), because women are seen to have more responsibilities at home than men, it is normally perceived by voters that women do not have enough time to spare for public office and should not even concern themselves with it, but to take care of their families. Also, by being perceived as not having the skills for political office, but having skills which are dominantly suited for domestic roles as homemakers, wives and mothers, some opponents have likely concluded that the women slept their way up. This position potentially confirms the earlier suggestion that the portrayal of women as prostitutes is likely to be based on the perception that perhaps a woman's greatest asset is her body, and therefore if she desired any power or privilege, it would be this asset she would likely have bargained with.

The women pointed out that the media, their opponents, and constituents all hold this perception about them. The passages point to instances when women accused, especially male opponents, of referring to them as prostitutes. Another passage also mentioned that some media reporters also have indulged in such accusations themselves. Although, from the passage, Yakubu referenced one male reporter, it doesn't necessarily exclude the possibility of female reporters, and especially female members of the public, from engaging in the same, although this is very unlikely. It is less likely for women journalists to engage in portraying women as prostitutes because it appears that women are, in both obvious and subtle ways, instructed to be supportive of one another. It is also likely that these women journalists in the course of their career have suffered from this frame and so would be seen to be sympathetic to other women.

Moreover, mostly women journalists cover gender news – mostly women and children, and they seem to have demonstrated understanding of women's challenges and so would be more likely to be supportive. From the news corpus gathered for the campaigns, all the women writers were complimentary about the candidatures of the women. Generally, it is in the light of women reporters supporting women that they are assigned to the gender desk. Therefore, it is less likely that such perception, even if held by women reporters, would actually be carried on air. Women journalists, from the news corpus tended to give gendered coverage the kind that constitutes positive stereotypes, but they hardly covered women negatively.

From the interview sessions I observed that some of the women were hesitant to repeat some of the descriptions that they said were used on them. From their reaction, they might have felt judged, and sometimes hopeless, by those descriptions. Also, they appeared to almost be feeling that they became the descriptions, or admitted to them, if they expressed them. Some of the women recounted instances where they felt that pursuing a political

office was not worth it because of the demonisation. They also mentioned instances where several other women have chosen not to pursue a political ambition because of the negative portrayal they encountered, and consequently have declined the mentor support they were offered.

One of the women (Agarther Sey, NPP) mentioned that one of her protégés opted out of public office because, according to her, she would commit suicide if the untold negativity she saw being meted out to her mentor was one day going to be meted out to her. Ross (2002) revealed, “yet, despite their own often trenchant critiques of their media coverage, few women MPs were willing to accept that they were especially trivialised” (p. 112).

Aside from being reluctant to admit to their negative depictions they appeared also to have consoled themselves by sometimes remarking that their media depictions were part of the occupational hazards that they needed to brace, in order to pursue their political ambition, and again, according to them, to carry through their singular responsibility to pave a way for other women. Ross (2002) has suggested that when it comes to acknowledging sexism, women believe that politics is tough and so those who seek to engage should “better toughen up” (p. 196).

The women’s portrayal as prostitutes and the complicity of the media, public and opponents in this, potentially show how they act as agents for a patriarchal system. By their actions and inactions in engaging this frame, out of spite or insults and accusations, as the women suggested, to cripple their motivation and to instruct them to stay away from what is so-called duly men’s, these agents might have entrenched patriarchal ideals. Women’s decision to contest in the public sphere suggests that it is a successful attack on the hegemonic dominance of patriarchy; otherwise this array of negativity would be less likely to have occurred.

### ***Familial Portrayal***

Familial frames were the second mode of description of the women politicians. There are 5 sections which capture the various ways their familial portrayal manifested itself which are that, they were mostly portrayed as: 1) women-without-husbands; 2) women who were unsuitable for office, being unmarried; 3) women who were immature and irresponsible, being unmarried; 4) women in need of, or who take, proxy husbands and political boyfriends for political benefits; and 5) bad mothers (home makers).

#### *Familial Portrayal: Women-without-Husbands*

The first frame under the familial portrayal is the representation of political women, as generally, women-without-husbands. Whether married or not, political women would normally be seen and referred to as women who do not have husbands. Some of the women explained that women politicians are so portrayed because there is the impression that successful women are louder, so they get divorced, or do not get husbands. This may have a basis in the public perception that women politicians are, most of the time, vocal and less submissive in the home, hence most men are less likely to take them as wives. By the perception that men would normally not marry them, it is almost concluded that most of them are unmarried. Besides the perception of quarrelsome characters, again, one of the women intimated that the stigma is also as a result of the fact that they have busy schedules, and it can be problematic having a husband and a public role; sometimes, some husbands are not supportive of the work they do outside of the home. This suggests that when the women are not available as much as is expected in the home to take care of its concerns, conflicts are likely to arise, and they are more likely to lose their husbands. Consequently, they end up becoming the so-called women-without-husbands.

For instance, under this portrayal, one of the interviewees, although married, still had to prove to the constituents that she was married, because to many people in the society, being a political woman could safely be implied that one is probably unmarried. It therefore, became important, according to her, to let them know that she was married. As elsewhere in the world, being married signifies many positive things in Ghana; conversely, being unmarried as a woman also signifies many negative things.

First, recounting her experience with regard to this depiction, one respondent pointed out that women politicians are synonymous with the frame women-without-husbands, and their presence in a place heralds such name-calling.

Explaining the portrayal, she stated:

As soon as they (media and public including male colleagues) see you as a woman politician, (they assume, then) you don't have a husband. They have some kind of tag, a serious stigma, that, only them understand why they use it. .... But you see, the men themselves ... they (men in society who are potential husbands) shouldn't fear us at all; that we are powerful, and we have influence, and we carry power, so they can't control us in the house. ... So I am of the view of addressing that kind of stigma they have about us. It is never so. ...It's just that, it is time-consuming. It takes most of your time, but if you have a man who also understands then (fine). (But if not) we go out there taking care of the constituency, taking care of parliamentary work, your committee work is tearing you apart, you are doing all this, and you get extremely tired and you feel like your bones are tired and then, you get home and there is like, there is no peace? (Persis Arthur, NPP).

From the quote above, Arthur confirmed the normality of the perception on the part of the general public, including the media and their colleagues (most probably male) that women politicians are mostly without husbands. She also confirmed the possible reasons associated with why women politicians are regarded, mainly, as women without husbands.

She indicated that the appearance of a woman politician would more likely than not have people thinking, first, about here comes the woman without a husband. From the passage also, she confirmed that it is a ubiquitous opinion, in all spheres of the Ghanaian psyche; being so seems to indicate how likely the opinion is to reflect in media portrayal of these women.

Although, from the passage, these women appear to also be portrayed as powerful and influential, it seems to be that those same attributes which she referenced inhibit men from marrying them. This suggests that the characteristics are not necessarily admired in women, although they are the very attributes greatly admired in men in Ghana (Bawa and Sanyare, 2013). These attributes are thus not appreciated, because, they seemingly conflict with a woman becoming a good wife: one who is available to attend to the needs of her husband, and one who knows how to align with society to excuse men, act “condescendingly” and not speak up; the kind of woman that women politicians are seen not to be. In Ghana, women elites are called ‘I-know-my-rights-women’, which means that they earn, have an education, speak up and feel less compelled to cater to men in the traditional ways of the older generations. Since women politicians are considered as those elite women, this has potentially facilitated the perception that they are not wife material, and so would be unmarried.

One married respondent recounted the doubts expressed over her marital status which prompted her constituents’ wish for verification. To them, it seemed to be important for her to prove that she was not a “woman-without-husband” and this public innuendo was circulated on media platforms.

She stated:

Even me, they said I don't have a husband. With a ring! Even now (they still say it)! So I had to force my husband to come down on the day of the voting. ...He drove down to the constituency and then people saw us together. Even when I stood for the previous primaries in 2008, it became a big campaign issue that I am not married so I brought him in, that day, for the primaries ... so they were on it. Even recently, somebody called me, and asked; ... is Dr Nokwafo Ampratwum married, is she a married woman? .... I responded yes. He said thank you and then he put the phone off which shows that there has been a long debate or argument about my marital status. ...This one it is just the local news (gossip). It became a campaign issue. ... some local media and even my chief ..." (Dr. Nokwafo Ampratwum, NDC).

As already mentioned in the introduction to this portrayal, it is likely that even married women politicians still have the default perception assumed for them; generally, women politicians have been thought of as unmarried until one is spotted with a ring or some identifier. Sometimes, it was even alleged that they found men just to tick it off, as it happened in 2008, where it was purported that a female vice-presidential aspirant, according to media reports, was "in need" of a husband and so had quickly arranged for marriage in order to secure the bid which had seemed so tilted in her favour, except that she was divorced and still not married (Chapter V).

Marriage seems to be important in Ghanaian society because it mostly signifies a person's association with maturity, respectability, and sense of responsibility. Being married generally gives an assent of maturity which society expects politicians to emit. Hence the apparent interest in verifying that these women are married. Marriage is suggested as a woman's first calling, constructed in society's discourse as a badge of honour for women to pursue and jealously guard. In Ghanaian society, this thinking around marriage mainly have determined how men are treated and, sometimes, tolerated by women, because they are the ones who are deemed appropriate to bestow this honour on womankind. Marriage in Ghana also seem to give an indication that a woman is feminine and perhaps mostly

inclined to societal arrangements of gender which makes her gender congruent and so likeable.

Moreover, in a culture where the least 'error', whether real or perceived, on the part of a woman can immediately solicit an insult of being a prostitute, marriage may mediate, somehow, the tone and the incessantness of that insult. Again, if married, the woman may be less likely to feel obliged to prove to anyone that she is not a prostitute, whereas the single woman is more likely to carry the burden to care.

The Ghanaian society has not accounted fully for why women politicians in its narratives are normally unmarried, beyond the imputed 'I know my rights' character. Women politicians, just as male politicians, have challenging schedules, as Persis Arthur mentioned earlier. However, it is evident that because women take a larger chunk of home chores and childcare, required of them by their gender, they are most likely to receive less support when they have working hours not compatible with family life (Murray, 2010). Whereas for the men, fewer duties in the home have always meant that they can comfortably take on more tasks outside of it without potential tensions in the home. These clashes point to possible reasons why some professional women are divorced, and does indicate that men are not as supportive of their wives' careers as women are of their husbands'. Perhaps, why men are less likely to be supportive should be the issue of concern and not that women are unmarried because they choose to be more useful outside of the home.

It appears therefore that this situation has facilitated women's framing that they are usually divorcees or unmarried. Madam Persis Arthur earlier alluded to this; the difficulty can also be inferred from gaining the support of male spouses when women have very demanding schedules.

Also, in a society where it is ingrained in the very thinking fabric that the man is the one with power, control, access, prestige and privilege, one could understand why men may likely be generally instructed by societal codes to “run away” from powerful women. When they do get married to them they may struggle to adjust to the high status society accords their more powerful wives.

In the Ghanaian case, the popular narrative is women who go beyond the popular roles for their gender emasculate men, consistent with the matriarch frame of African American women (Meyers, 2013). Because the women are equally resourceful, the men may less likely shoulder all the control in decisions in the home, and this may be difficult for some of them who may not be placed to handle it.

Although these are the perceptions around women politicians, for the current crop of women parliamentarians – which, of course, is not all, the women candidates interviewed or women politicians in Ghana – most of them are married. There are 30 women in a 275-member parliament. On the parliamentary website, 22 of the current women parliamentarians are married, 2 divorced, 1 separated, and 5 single; 3 of those single women with at least one child. Of the five who were single, 3 of them were women in their early thirties.

Therefore, the idea that these women are not married is entirely inaccurate in respect of the women parliamentarians of the current parliament. In this sense, it presents a potential case and an insight to challenge the strongly-held view on one hand, and also perhaps, a suggestion to the effect that times are changing; where men seem to be growing somewhat more tolerant of the dynamics of a changing world with changing gender roles. In this instance, one may argue that the lucrative nature of politics in Ghana, especially in this last decade, could be motivation for men to be more tolerant of the absences of their wives.

The men benefit from their wives' huge perks of fat salaries, travel with ease as VIPs, easy access to justice, riding in very expensive cars, living in government bungalows, discounted import duties, access to high and important places, security guards, and enormous ex gratia benefits, to mention a few. In a culture where titles and status: who you are, whom you know, who knows you and where you come from, are important, those privileges are enough for a man to sacrifice a little 'manliness'. Especially, when in one gender code in Ghana, it is said to comfort the patriarchy that even when a woman buys a gun it is a man who keeps it.

#### *Familial Portrayal: Unmarried, so Unsuitable*

The second frame under the familial portrayal is the representation of some political women as unsuitable for political office because of their single marital status. Some of the single women politicians, by being unmarried, were portrayed as quite unsuited for political positions not necessarily by an absence of skills but more about what is considered appropriate priorities. Political women were normally thought of as mostly unmarried women, but when actually unmarried, were most likely deemed as not prepared to take on a political office. Marriage therefore does not only gauge a woman's character to society, as explained in the women-without-husband frame, it also seems to be used as a qualifying criterion for political office.

One respondent indicated that although she was addressing issues and asking for votes, some of the people she was interacting with were interested, first and foremost, in finding out and verifying whether she was married. Perhaps it might be because, as a young woman, they were suggesting to her that she should be more interested in marriage at this age than politics, perhaps before it is too late for her. In Ghanaian society, sometimes such

expressions arise as a genuine concern from the public and family that if you are a woman and become powerful, you may not get a man to marry, or that a woman should marry early before she 'expires' in the eyes of most men. This is because it is considered by society that at a certain age, especially from 30 years, one's 'glory', as it is referred to, starts to wane, and men's interest start to fade. Also, when such concerns are expressed, it is suggestive of society's way of telling single women to abide by its priority for them which is to first get married; then they may be supported to do other things outside of the home.

Not married as a woman of a certain age, and pursuing educational degrees or career, is thought to not be a smarter or wiser choice to sections of Ghanaian public, because in society it is not in your interest if you may want one day to marry a man. The example of Alima Mahama (Chapter V) also comes to mind here, where one of the reasons being ill-fitted for the VP candidacy was because she was a single mother, unmarried and a divorcée.

This was also because; aside from the perception that if she did not stay married then she is assumed to have some bad character. She might be potentially less likeable as a viable candidate, not that it would be impossible, especially given the set of personal attributes of the particular candidate.

Explaining their portrayal, two women candidates said:

First:

Especially, if you are not married, like me, they look at you and the first (question) – I remember I met one group, after all, what I told them was I will lobby to get them streets and everything – but the man just raised his hand, 'are you married?' I looked at the man and was wondering what correlation has politics got to do with my marital status. I was like wow! ..... It is sometimes disheartening, because, you don't expect it and it comes (Nana Akosua Adama, NDC)

Second:

Moreover, that also impacts on the north. For e.g., in 2008, the NPP seriously considered taking a woman as a running mate, Alima, but they said, she didn't have a husband. For the north, it was important, she didn't have a husband but she had children, I think she has two children or something. ... So you get to the glass ceiling, they are going to hit you with this because for them, for our society, if you didn't stay married then, you know, there is something lacking ... So this is why Alima lost. ... Because you are not married, then they label you in all kinds of ways (Cassandra Baffour, NPP).

So in sum, it is quite evident that the Ghanaian society suggests that a woman politician should be married, in order, to evade their doubts. It appears that her status at home as a wife appears to be an important qualification for media and public vetting. Even when obviously qualified by political experience, the lack of a husband engineered doubts about how perhaps suitable the woman was and concerns around her priorities, mainly. Age and marital status are considerably important mediating factors among a range of other important reasons in women's political success. A considerably younger age for a female politician coupled with a single status may not impress much, because to sections of the public, both age and marriage seem to negotiate a person's association with maturity, authority and respectability. Being older and married may shed off a little more negativity in the political field because a person's candidacy may be normalised.

When women politicians appear to be depicted as unsuited for political positions because they are unmarried, it may be that, as in the case of previous women, patriarchal validation needs to be solicited. Patriarchal covering, validation and authentication may be suggested, both openly and subtly, as significant criteria for acceptance into the political space. To this

end, the public and the media in the boomerang of information exchange may infer knowing whether the woman politician has been given male permission.

Although the political affiliation of the candidate and the political affiliation of the majority of the people in the constituency largely determine how successful candidates are at the polls in Ghana, it may be that women who are not considered to fit the range of types for voting women would be less likely to be nominated in the first place by their parties to contest, because of perceived media and public attitudes.

Against this backdrop, women politicians seem to be constantly taught to conform and are likely to be whipped into line to accept and seek husbands as a form of validation, since that appears to represent the power and authority that others (men and women) seem to respect and respond to because if not, who needs a ring to perform parliamentary work.

Moreover, the concern of the media and the public to verify the marital status of the women might as well be derived from concerns about whom the woman's protector is, as "men are seen as society's protectors" (Meeks, 2013, p. 5). Underlining this thinking may be that the Ghanaian society like most others may generally perceive women as vulnerable and insufficient to do or see through certain tasks considered outside of their gender roles. The male therefore may be society's guarantor for a woman's political success irrespective of how interested or disinterested, qualified or unqualified he might be. Jamieson (1995) metaphorises society's propensity to default ability and strength to men by stating:

It is silly to expect a female rather than a male to land a knockout punch or draw the first blood, even if the male's yearly athletic workout consists of signing his tax return and the woman is an accomplished cross-country skier. But by describing the political world in terms we comfortably associate with even the most unathletic of men, women are subtly defined as creatures alien to that habitat (p. 175).

Furthermore, society might be making sure that once there is another male authority covering the woman, other men may not harass her, mainly sexually, because she has, supposedly a protector, since men are most likely to respect the authority of another man. In addition, because society is more interested in how a woman uses her body, coupled with the perception that women are generally vulnerable, the presence of a husband in a woman politician's life is, perhaps, a measure to protect the woman from the sexual advances of other men; that if she doesn't have a husband she may likely succumb to male sexual advances that would taint her honour which she is instructed to guard. A couple of the women candidates mentioned that some of the reports that circulated about them actually stated that, when they (the women) make it to parliament they will prostitute or be in search for husbands. It appears, once they have husbands, then it is considered the women would be less vulnerable to being preyed on by their male colleagues.

#### *Familial Portrayal: Unmarried, and so Immature and Irresponsible*

The third frame under the familial portrayal is the representation of young unmarried political women as immature and irresponsible. This is not necessarily surprising, as already mentioned, marriage is seen as an important tool for measuring maturity and giving respect in Ghanaian society. For those with children and yet unmarried, it is equally problematic to have had a child outside of wedlock. In fact, never-married young women with children are mostly tagged as immature, immoral and irresponsible in Ghana.

Animuonyam Addai (NDC) said this of her portrayal:

...they were saying "born 1". I have a child. Others went to the extreme and said "born 1"; if you are not married you are not responsible; that I am not matured. They were using so many words; "na obaa no ony3 matured", "oy3 small girl" (That woman

is not matured, she is a small girl).... They were also saying “ko ko ware, ko hw<sup>3</sup> wo kunu ne wo mma”- (go and marry and take care of your husband and children), all sorts of words.

Another single and young woman candidate also reiterated:

My opponent... she waged a moral war against me. It started with a war of immaturity, a press conference; Fulera is an immature girl coming here. Then criminalisation, I was declared that the police was looking for me... and it was so difficult to track and put it out there because their platform refused to take my response. (Fulera Yakubu, NDC)

If you were once married, as Cassandra Baffour mentioned earlier, and are now divorced, not staying married meant that you had a bad character. The never-married woman with child might also be perceived as irresponsible by sections of the society. Animounyam Addai for instance was asked to go home to take care of her child. Murray (2010) corroborated “younger women candidates are assumed to be inexperienced, unviable, and are expected to be at home raising children” (p. 17); perhaps when they are not, they are seen as irresponsible for first, having them out of wedlock and two, neglecting them to take political duties. The sexuality of those without children is equally called into question. Women like Angela Merkel and particularly, Helen Clark have been demonised, as a result. These portrayals have the potential to trivialise their candidature as unserious.

Younger women were referred to as girls, and were portrayed as immature and without experience which in Ghanaian society in general may not necessarily be said of single younger men. As in other places, age does not seem to work for women the same way it does for men, older or younger. For instance in the newspaper findings (Chapter V), although both the female and male candidates were middle-aged, the men portrayed themselves as younger, and so attractive to the youth, with the least impression being

created that they were immature and unserious. The female candidates could not risk having this posture, and so were more inclined to portray themselves as elderly and mature. Although age may sometimes correspond with experience, being of a young age as a woman in the instances above somehow portrayed them both as a joke and superficial, and they were more trivialised. Just after the 2012 elections, a sizeable number of young men were appointed to ministries as ministers and deputy ministers; this received a good amount of applause as the old bloc had been criticised for occupying too much of the political space. However, among that new crop one young woman was appointed. She was heavily sexualised and written off as a joke just because she was too young and pretty to be intelligent enough to have earned the appointment: this young woman was Fulera Yakubu.

There is a fear perhaps in the consciousness of sections of the Ghanaian society which they wish to protect the family that a woman not staying married or not having a man or desiring to keep one means she may have a character that society does not want to promote. The gatekeepers appear to not want society 'that way'; the altering of the patriarchal order where women can do away with marriage if they so choose. The 'unknown' in terms of the extent of effects of women's independent choices perhaps makes society anxious and uncomfortable.

The potential consequences presented to women for not marrying or staying married suggest that marriage is likely to be the first ideal to be suggested for a woman to pursue when growing up, and also, when even as adults, to cherish marriage more than a career or some other chosen path. These obvious and subtle codes whip women into line, and regulate society to sustain its patriarchal culture and interest.

Regardless of society's interest in women politicians and their married life, the women who were interviewed still competed and, as already explained under their portrayal as

prostitutes, it was less likely that these portrayals did not affect women emotionally and psychologically; however, they chose to be resilient.

The media do considerable damage to these women by such negative descriptions. While there are women who make it to our parliaments and top political jobs, as some of these women went ahead to win, Ross and Comrie (2012) argued, “not only do these exceptions prove the rule but also that such women often succeed despite, rather than because of, their media representation” (p. 197).

Furthermore, Murray (2010) posited, “gender stereotyping can pose barriers but also create opportunities, depending on other features of the political contest” (p. 6). There are also numerous times when sections of society, maybe observers or the women’s supporters, also stand up against others for tainting the image of political women.

#### *Familial Portrayal: Women in need of Men; the Political Patriarchy: Political Boyfriends and Godfathers*

The fourth frame under the familial portrayal captured the apparent need of the women to have political boyfriends and/or godfathers to support them financially or help them get appointments. First, most of the women were represented as people who maintained friends-with-benefits relationships with influential male figures in their respective political parties for political advantage. Second, one woman was portrayed by her opponent as an unsuitable candidate to be voted to Parliament because, according to him, she was without a male political mentor while he had several.

Although most women felt that the accusation of pursuing romantic relations for political advantage was mainly perception rather than reality, they felt that the media and public

still indulged it because some of these important figures actually asked for sexual favours in return for their help.

Some of the women added that although there were these important male figures that asked for sexual favours, mostly the influential figures they were accused with were their godfathers and not boyfriends, and further intimated that other times they were people with whom they had no contact whatsoever. A good number of the women felt that for every woman politician, the media and public seem to feel the need to connect them to an influential male figure as their political boyfriend. This may be to suit the perception that women would normally not make it on their own accord and would need the help of male figures either as husbands, fathers or boyfriends to navigate their way in important corridors of male power.

The popular perception in the news in Ghana is that some women politicians get to rise on the back of so-called political boyfriends, i.e. men recruited for the sole purpose of advancing their careers: proxy husbands; and political (god) fathers. This perception details that any woman politician appointed to mainly and especially important ministerial positions or another position of relevance has very important male connection and the backing of an influential male in her party, because if not, she would not be invited to share the political booty. According to the perception, this influential male figure is regarded as one who is either mentoring or sleeping with her. In many cases, the media and public believe the latter. The perception which is very pervasive in the Ghanaian political space, also complements the reasons why generally, women candidates are portrayed as prostitutes, because most of them are regarded as people who give their bodies in exchange for access to power and that is also because women are thought to be with domestic skills and without political competence and so unsuited for the public spaces and offices.

One of the women reported:

...they will link you with one particular person .... Some people were saying I was dating the president, and then later, they said that I was also dating General Nunoo Mensah, because he used to come to my programmes. Because I am pleasant, I had a lot of big men supporting me but they interpreted it as me sleeping with big men (Animuonyam Addai, NDC).

She also mentioned:

My godfathers also did well. I have strong people behind me, I wouldn't mention their names but I have strong people behind me and they also encouraged me and advised me.

From the passage, Addai confirmed that she was supported by influential figures who were considered to be her friends-with-benefit-partners, but who were not. In the subsequent passage, she indicated that these strong men behind her were godfathers, and clarified that she received moral support rather than what the media and social critics assumed. Obviously, since those men would be older, more politically experienced, and with political status, being the go-to people for the women for some form of guidance was especially likely when there are not as many women as influential as these male figures.

Another woman also stated:

...and then morality, even after, now you find people on air saying all sorts of things, and officially, they have pegged me as the girlfriend of the president on their platforms; that he's bought a house for me..... Media presenters will say it, panellists will say it. ... Almost every woman, once you are a woman in politics, they will manage to give you a boyfriend somewhere. ... The other women who were saved from that, it was because their seats were not competitive, because once the media is not interested in the outcome of the seat, the elections, (then) there you are saved (Fulera Yakubu, NDC).

From the passage, Yakubu also pointed out that it was both the public and the media who engaged in accusations about the women that they were maintaining sexual relations for political advantage with men in the hallways of power. Again, she confirmed the point made by other women that it was more a perception than a reality when she stated “almost every woman, once you are a woman in politics, they will manage to give you a boyfriend somewhere. ... The other women who were saved from that, it was because their seats were not competitive”. She might have revealed that women are perceived to need men to lend them a hand, in order to succeed, as it appears that the public and media have thought that, if the other women’s seats were competitive, they would have needed important male figures to back them. This is also suggestive that mainly these accusations might be mere propaganda against competitive and viable women. This would make sense because, as it was earlier suggested, accusations of prostitution has been mere insults and an attempt to deflate their motivation to oust mostly men from their seats.

From the interviews, although the majority of the women mentioned that women politicians were thought of as needing the help of these figures, those who gave personal accounts in this regard were some of the younger women, mostly unmarried, and also considered to have little political experience. These young women mainly, also belonged to one political party. This background may be instructive because, although the assumption that they had little political experience has been one of the reasons why the media and public characterise them as being open to pursuing opportunistic relationships, these young women had male counterparts in the same political party who have been appointed as ministers and deputy ministers. However, those men had not, thus, been accused.

Although the party has given opportunities to a new crop of female and male politicians, the narratives have appeared different for both genders, i.e. the women slept their way in, while the men worked hard and were given the opportunity in the party. These double

standards portray each of these women as having attained their positions by sleeping with men, when in reality that may be a completely inaccurate representation.

The reality and perception of the existence of political boyfriends and/or fathers for political promotion for some of the women is however confirmed in the excerpt below, where one of the women expounded:

Yes! That challenge is there. For you to maintain that position you may have to do things like that. A father is better than anything. ...I hear big men will chase you ... I hear before you become a minister, you have to take a boyfriend but I haven't experienced it. ...They like to use women... But, that one is real because somebody told me: ah! You! You want to be a minister without taking a boyfriend? How? That is what somebody told me. Saying: ah! You think you can just become minister, without anything? .... Even drivers, they tend to have power. Oh! I have one's number here, whether he is the real driver or not. He called me that he is the 2nd driver of the president. This morning he even called that you see, I should bring my CV. I said, you, a driver! You know, it is so funny and I said, no, no, no! Thank you (Dr. Nokwafo Ampratwum, NDC).

From the extract, Ampratwum suggested that there are, actually, important figures who were godfathers and not boyfriends when she stated, "a father is better than anything". She also confirmed that it is politically challenging to rise to the top to become, for instance, a minister, if they did not have a push. She suggested that women were more likely to be ignored in meetings of the (mainly male) kingmakers, unless they have a godfather or a boyfriend with a seat in there. Although she does not admit that the women actually fall prey to the demands, as she indicated that she had not engaged in it, herself. She clearly pointed out that those men who hold favours however, like "to use women" and their demands for sex pose a challenge to the political journeys of women. This potentially means that, although women may rise to important political positions, the other route would always be working far too much for far too long a time, unlike their male colleagues.

The latter may begin at the same time but are likely to rise faster, because men would normally not be asked for sexual favours, or encounter the impediments put in the way of women for being women.

Although there are men who start from where the women start, given that men are deemed more competent and suitable for political office, it is most likely that they may be given more opportunities and may rise faster than women, equally competent. This is also facilitated by the tendency of men to support men (Ross & Comrie, 2012). With the opportunities available to men, in their parties and beyond, they would be more likely to accumulate their own resources faster, and wean off.

Mostly, because women are more likely to come into political races with limited resources, coupled with being seen as less competent, these gendered challenges may constitute what the important figures may take advantage of. These male figures subsequently proceed to place requests for sexual favours in exchange for their masculine privilege to help the women navigate the male terrains of politics. Against this background, and as the extracts portray, it is apparent that there are both 'big men'<sup>17</sup> and 'small men'<sup>18</sup> who try to have a field day with women. These men somehow seem to taunt the women to give in to their sexual requests or take them as boyfriends, without which, supposedly, they may not be appointed to important positions.

Apart from the representation of some of the women as having opportunistic relationships with important men, another representation constituted that one of the women was unsuitable for political office because, according to her opponent, she was without a male political mentor. It suggests, therefore, that if not political boyfriends, then actual political

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<sup>17</sup> Big men – Important male political figures.

<sup>18</sup> Small men – political nonentities who pose as being influential. Sometimes, they may be an ordinary employer of an influential male politician, eg. the driver of the President Dr. Nokwafo Ampratwum mentioned.

fathers (godfathers) seem to be required of women to have to navigate their way in the political arena. In the end, a male seems to be required as a political backer.

Fafa Adamafo, (NPP) stated:

He goes to places and tells the people that I have no father, and that is just because, nobody was an NPP parliamentary candidate before me. But he was counting his past NDC candidates. So those were his fathers and mentors; that was what he was telling the people. And at a time too, he told them that I had no child and that have they ever seen me with a child? You know, he went to some village ... it was my stronghold, so they told him, that all of them standing there were my grandchildren.

Potentially, because women are more likely to attract negative attention and labelling for being seen as ambitious and aggressive, they might be perhaps inclined to solicit men to confront their peers on their behalf.

From the newspaper findings (Chapters IV and VI), two of the women had influential male relatives. Samia Nkrumah had a political father and Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings had a political husband, both men former presidents of Ghana. In the coverage of these two women, their patriarchs' validation of their candidature was heavily sought after. For Agyeman, though the candidate, the husband was mostly mentioned first before her and was covered as well by the media as co-candidate. For Samia Nkrumah, every effort was made to associate every attribute of hers to her father. She was covered as dancing, organising, eating with local people, and looking like her father. Therefore, it appears that for women whose actual fathers or closely related influential male figures were a reality, they were heavily drawn in as their male backers and validators to provide some grounding to their candidacies, even when needless. Also, women who had actual godfather not necessarily ones who were close relations as the interview excerpts show, gained resources, advice and prominence. The excerpts confirm that if a political woman

had a male backer who sat at the decision-making table, then she would so-called be likely to attain important positions. For the women for whom important male figures may be absent, or who withdrew from having either a political father or boyfriend, they may go through the mill and wait much longer than their male counterparts with comparable CVs and women colleagues with influential male backers.

From the women's denial and resistance to media's representation of them as opportunistic, these women, particularly who reject male influence, reflect a resilience to how the masculine political system undermines their sense of worth and accomplishment. By staging their agency, they are less likely to defer their competence to male backing and sexual favours in order to earn a seat at the table.

In conclusion, the familial portrayal revolved around the considered importance of the domestic status of a woman to her political career. It also extended this status, symbolically, into the political space where the presence of a male figure as husband or political godfather in a woman politician's career attainment was necessary, and the consequence of the presence or absence defined her portrayal. I shall offer thoughts in the Conclusion chapter on female access to political offices and portfolios which advances that as long as masculine values and traits remain entrenched in the political terrain, female achievement may employ some form of it to traverse successfully and that women may have to gather more resources and build extensive portfolios to constrain the possibility of always deferring their achievements to so called male-backers, either real or perceived.

### *Familial Portrayal: Bad Home Makers*

The fifth and last frame under familial portrayal was the framing of the women as bad homemakers. Under women as guilty mothers, one of the women candidates reported that women politicians were represented as women who do not care about their families. Some explained that women are burdened to feel guilty for leaving their homes and wanting to do anything that takes them outside of domestic duties for husband, and children. One of the respondents stated that they are portrayed as:

...arrogant and because we are politicians we cannot even be in our marital home. We don't care about our family. And I won't say it's true because if we are politicians we shouldn't always sit in the house; you have to go out and then... and the most serious one that I know is about the prostitution (Barikisu Tamakloe, NPP).

In a content analysis of coverage of Sarah Palin in 2008, Woodall, Fridkin and Carle (2010) reported that the media questioned her choice and ability to be Vice President, because she had a child with Down's syndrome and a teenage pregnant daughter, and was accused of neglecting her family duties. Women are mostly questioned on how they could manage it all as mothers, wives and workers. Men are hardly questioned because it is mostly assumed that their wives would take care of the home (Murray, 2010).

### *Being on Spiritual and Narcotics-high: Witches and Smokers*

The third frame that the women mentioned aside their sexualisation and familial portrayals was as witches and smokers. Under witches and smokers, the women were portrayed as social deviants. Although not many women mentioned that they were thus

portrayed, it is equally a popular frame in Ghana used for women who speak directly to issues and who are seen as strong-minded. A number of the women mentioned that women who were straight talkers would normally be called witches and narcotic smokers, most likely implying that they would less likely be that bold if they were not on narcotics.

One of the respondents said:

So (if you are) a woman (and you) dare and say you are coming up in politics, there are names they will call you. Me like this, they said that I was a witch, because I know I am not a witch, I don't care. They said that I was a weedsmoker. Once I don't even know weed and don't smoke weed, I don't care. I am a prostitute, I said, yes, I am married, it's only my husband who can tell whether I am a prostitute or not. Whether I am a prostitute or not, you, you have not slept with me, and even if I am a prostitute, I choose men I like, not your type. So when they got to know that nothing will push me round, they said, they don't understand the type of woman I am. (Agartha Sey, NPP)

Agartha Sey evidently have found a way to trivialise the media's own indulgence in trivialities. As from her narrative, her way of playing with the media was potentially one of the ways the women were likely navigating the negativity of the media and social criticism by showing resilience rooted in either ignoring untruths or turning them to their advantage. In both instances, like Agarther Sey, the women appeared unfazed and continued to pursue their ambition. In Ghana, some women politicians are known to play around with accusations. It was reported in the media that her male opponent had called one of the popular female politicians, Hawa Yakubu of blessed memory, a prostitute. She was reported to have responded to him on her campaign platforms that in Ghana everyone is aware that, when men have money, most of them spend it outside of the home, but when a woman earns, she spends on the family. She continued to say that so when she goes to prostitute, as her male opponent has accused her, she will bring her earnings to the constituency for projects and so she was a better candidate than her male opponent. She

went ahead and won the seat; she was one of the women in Ghana known to fight off male bullying, by turning the tables against them.

Another woman candidate also explained:

Women are portrayed as soft, calm, and anybody who wants to deviate a little is seen in a very negative way. You may permit me to mention a name, there is a lady called Ursula, she is very strong. She is for NPP ... everybody is like, this lady is bad and people were praying that she should even be defeated. There were two of them; Ursula and Essiam. If these two ladies get to parliament, parliament will burn because they talk and they are on top of issues too and they are so vocal and so men see them in a very negative way. You will be hearing negative stories (about them): even for Essiam, we hear she smokes weed and all manner of things that you can't imagine. ...But for the majority who are like me, I know I can be vocal if I want to but, I tend not to do that, the media just gives us the normal reportage (Dr. Nokwafo Ampratwum, NDC).

From the passage, Ampratwum confirmed the kinds of attributes women show to warrant abuse and tags such as narcotic smokers and witches. She, like some other women who know the consequence of being vocal, may have underplayed her voice to avoid media victimisation. From the interviews, even though a number of the women would describe themselves as vocal they also were careful of abuse. As Persis Arthur suggested that, as women, criticisms supposedly affect them greatly and hence they take a cue from it in organising their interactions.

From the excerpts above, the women who were considered to have acted extremely in transgressing gendered expectations of them were sometimes described as engaging in vices in the society like narcotic smoking, witchcraft, and prostitution. The women pinpointed that a vocal woman is an anathema to sections of the Ghanaian society. According to Gidengil and Everitt (2000) "to the extent that women behave aggressively in

politics, they are violating deeply rooted conceptions of how women should behave". As Butler and Geis (1990) argued, women who behave in non-stereotypical manners present a "basic schema incompatibility" (p. 48), which accentuates the unexpected behaviour. Accordingly, what is perceived as merely being assertive on the part of a man may be construed as downright aggressive on the part of a woman. Women's actions considered masculine are mainly evaluated more harshly because they are women, and a different gender performance seems to be expected from them.

On being a witch: first, a woman is likely to be deemed powerless and thought to need the protection of male figures, but as a witch, she has powers to stand and protect herself. The woman, who is not making her career in her home, but mainly outside of it, appears to be positioning herself to not be dependent on male provision and protection. Like the witch, she has what it takes to do the things men traditionally do for women; protect and provide (Meeks, 2013). The thought of that independence is, perhaps most likely, concluded as that the habitat in support of patriarchy might lose some grip on them, in terms of their choices for home and career. It does not seem to be that the woman's desire to enter politics and contribute to public policy is what is disturbing, but most likely the potential and threat it poses to gender roles which by a woman's interest in pursuing a political career may give her more independence, and may translate as the husband or the male overseer losing control, once she steps out of the home. Anything which is not under control, or functioning as per the society manual of gender roles, is potentially considered to be altering the status quo. The perceived implications for societal cohesion therefore appear to be what the sections of the society do not wish to see or tolerate.

On being a narcotics user, women are generally thought to lack backbone, and so it appears that a woman who asserts her voice regardless of the admired cliché in Ghana that a 'woman is to be seen and not heard' is thought of as tougher than expected, and this appears to be the reason why Ghanaian society projects narcotic use on them as influences orchestrating their so-called uncharacteristic behaviour. This is because the idea is that a woman's natural inclination and part of societal expectation is to be docile.

***The Lone Woman, the Non-Conformer, Margaret Thatcher, Iron Lady, "Alomo-Gyata"***

Last but not least, the next frame that the women mentioned was on non-conformist portrayal, where women politicians were presented as possessing strong characters. Some were called by names, such as Margaret Thatcher, Iron Lady and/or "Alomo Gyata".<sup>19</sup> Some of their representations also depicted them as quarrelsome, uncontrollable and arrogant characters. All of these depictions potentially presented an image of the women as not in conformity to society's expectations of their gender. This is so because gendered behaviour required of women in Ghana, as in most societies, tilts towards a compliant, passive and submissive posture. Being portrayed as Margaret Thatcher, Iron women, quarrelsome and arrogant by these frames, would normally mean that they were believed to be women who do not necessarily kowtow to gendered expectations, and were thus represented as non-conformists in the varied symbolisms above by the media and the public.

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<sup>19</sup> "Alomo gyata" is a Twi word and translates as a woman who emasculates men and matriarch. "Alomo" separately translates as my love, and "gyata" is lion.

First, one of the women candidates explained that women politicians are described with the strong woman frame with such related behaviours as quarrelsome and not submissive. She added that this was so because politics is assumed to field such characters.

Cassandra Baffour (NPP) stated:

Oh! The standard frame; it is a dirty game. So this is why even though they say, women should take part, they can't accept the idea of women playing. So once you go in there, then you are prepared to play dirty, so then they label you. They use these labels on you: she is a prostitute. You know, yesterday they were talking again about Ursula: "ei obaadenden" (strong/tough woman)! Congratulating her but still saying "obaadenden". But then you see, for "obaadenden" in our society, immediately there is that perception, (it means) "y3b) wo so a 3mmo" (that you are out of control, quarrelsome and argumentative).

Furthermore, another woman candidate explained that women politicians were projected to possess masculine dispositions and were thus stereotyped as matriarchs and Iron Ladies. These descriptions, as implied by the women, potentially presented the women in politics as some form of lone women who are isolated from the traits of womanhood by their so-called masculine dispositions. Overall, to demonstrate the representation as matriarchs and Iron Ladies, another respondent explained:

they call us prostitutes, you know, husband snatchers, all sorts of things. Like I said "alomo gyata" which portrays you like a man-woman; an Iron Lady (Oberemponmaaa Baanieh, NDC).

Again, another candidate confirmed:

A media man just said Iron Lady. He just described me as Iron Lady. So that is how they see us... There is this perception of an Iron Lady tag, and it's always around women of our nature. ... I started in 2004. I contested the primaries and I lost to a male. Then, I came back in 2008, and I beat him. So I won in 2008. Then

2012 elections, I had to contest again with four other men, and I won. So that's why they refer to me as iron woman (Persis Arthur, NPP).

An iron woman in this particular context mainly signified that she was a woman who was able to beat the men, suggesting that she was hard enough to have pulled men down, electorally. Women politicians are mostly constructed as not like the ordinary woman, and that they are special cases from womankind and more like men, as alluded to above. Adams' (2010) study of coverage of Johnson Sirleaf, for instance, revealed of her portrayal: "In fact, it was more likely to characterise her as an 'iron lady' who was tough, rational, and tenacious". Adams reported one journalist said this of Madam Sirleaf: "I always thought the nickname 'Iron Lady' referred to her indomitable state of mind. I had no idea that it also referred to her physical toughness. She never stops to eat or drink" (p. 171). This corroborate that women viewed as resilient in a variety of ways attract the iron lady label.

Last, some of the women were also framed as "Margaret Thatchers". One of the women candidates explained:

The issue is actually, the other side of political life, and how men see you. Any woman who is in politics, you are too hard, you are a Margaret Thatcher and they use it in a negative sense. Even the women feel that, you know, why is the woman doing this? ... Our culture is such that women are supposed to be, more on the quiet side, caring for children and stuff like that. So those are the things, and then the men take advantage and insult you... and then it is reported in the media (Safarawu Lamptey, NPP).

Persis Arthur earlier stated, "a media man just referred to me as Iron Lady", and Safarawu Lamptey also indicated that men would normally use these non-conformist frames on women. These two women, and other excerpts discussed earlier, point to both media and public connivance in the name-calling, and sometimes the abuse, of women politicians.

Although from a Ghanaian cultural understanding one may assume that being referred to, as Margaret Thatcher or Iron Lady may seem preferable to being called prostitute, it would be very difficult for a woman politician to have a preference among “Alomo Gyata” (Matriarch), prostitute, witch and narcotic smoker.

In effect, as evidenced by the women’s narratives, they do not feel inclined to have a preference for any particular abuse to the other. The women’s own personalities and circumstances may mediate the effects and the tolerability of the abuse they receive. For instance, Agather Sey, who was called a prostitute, witch and narcotics smoker, played around with the media, although by that she did not suggest she preferred the tags, or was pleased to be called as such. Other women, Safarawu Lamptey for instance, was neither pleased by being called prostitute or Margaret Thatcher. From the interviews the women were generally embarrassed and displeased with the labelling. However, as already explained in the chapter, they also felt it was an occupational hazard, and since they could not stop the media, opponents and public, they mostly thought they have to set their eyes on their political goals instead.

Under the non-conformist portrayal, the representation of women in politics with labels such as tough, strong, quarrelsome, uncontrollable, iron ladies, among others, depicting them as almost being opposite to what women are supposed and thought to be in society, suggests that other women of opposite character (mild, soft, complaint) would also be less likely to be perceived as viable and able to thrive in the political terrain. As Cassandra Baffour intimated “Oh! The standard frame; it is a dirty game. So this is why even though they say women should take part, they can’t accept the idea of women playing”.

Furthermore, Baffour’s excerpt also demonstrated the anomaly for masculine imagery to be applied to female candidates. This is because women are not associated with playing

dirty, combative and aggressive, but men are, so once such imagery is associated with politics, women can be disadvantaged. There are limited traits or characteristics which the mind can readily recall to validate women's preparedness, fitness and suitability (Gidengil and Everitt 1999). However, the inverse is also that, when female politicians also present themselves as performing what is stereotypically considered masculine characteristics, they are also reviewed negatively. Their portrayal is equally overstated even for doing a set of actions similar to male politicians, because that is not the expectation of the woman (Gidengil & Everitt, 1999, 2000; Murray, 2010).

According to the masculine nature of politics, women are still faced, in this instance, with a femininity/competence double bind, where it is not enough to be feminine, and they are generally abused for showing masculine traits (Jamieson, 1995; Murray, 2010). Yet without such traits, the perception of a woman as competent would likely be lost on the media, opponents and public. Women therefore walk a tightrope on what aspects of their own gender and the masculine gender they should exhibit in order to be considered both likeable and competent (Meeks, 2013).

### ***Sartorial Frames: Scarfs and Cloths; Slut Dressing; Mermaid***

The last frame the women mentioned was related to their appearance. A few of the women mentioned that their physical appearance was of some interest to the media and party executives. Women's appearance is known to receive attention in the media and they are likely to be sexualised (Ross, 2002; Woodall, Firdkin & Carle, 2010; Piscopo, 2010). One respondent mentioned that, she was cartooned in newspapers; another reported that she received instructions on how to dress. Again, another respondent mentioned that the

media do not like to focus on issues with women, but like taking beautiful pictures of them, as if they are in a beauty contest.

One of the women complained that there was a focus on her looks: what she wore and how she dressed:

Yea, you know, because you are a woman, they (potentially public and media) tend to talk about your looks; she is always nicely dressed whereas for a man it is not important. In fact! When I started on this campaign, some NPP gurus<sup>20</sup> found it necessary to come and tell me: Cassandra, you should tone down the way you dress, you should tone down the way you speak. When you go to the village, be in cloth and tie a scarf around your head. I said no, I am going to go as me. I will go as me, they take me as me. You know, what annoys me is when people say that, when she wanted to be elected, she was all humble, but now that she has been elected, they keep saying: they have the car glass tinted and when they see you, they roll up. No, I will present myself as me, you know what you get, take it or leave it! (Cassandra Baffour, NPP)

Aside from the fact that she felt there was so much focus on how she looked, because according to her, she was a woman, while for men, she felt, it was not important, Madam Cassandra Baffour was asked to dress tying a scarf around the head and be in cloth. This was a call for more modest dressing, as much as potentially for something beyond, such as stripping her of the status as a highly accomplished woman. This was obvious in her personal effects, because depending on how they are worn, cloths in Ghana are not necessarily modest; neither are they the only way modesty is communicated in a woman's dressing.

One other candidate also expounded her frustration with the focus on what she wore and consequently, her sexualisation by the media presenters. Being a woman of a young age, she was easily perceived as indecent even by wearing common jeans. The candidature of a

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<sup>20</sup> Guru – used to refer to important personalities in any given area in Ghana.

young and fashionable woman could lend itself to impressions around her as unserious, especially when being young is also associated with political inexperience (Murray, 2010), for which in earlier parts of the chapter many of these young women have been labelled as prostituting for political advantage to make up for it. Her portrayal employed the ‘beauty can’t have brains’ double bind (Jamieson, 1995; Murray, 2010). Even as a woman in politics, one is most likely to be portrayed as a prostitute already in Ghana – as someone sleeping your way to the top; as a joke, and an unserious and immature candidate. Therefore, how the young age and the young body are packaged becomes their evidence or otherwise in their claims and suspicions; as confirmed earlier in the chapter by Ross (2002), women are sometimes covered in sex-related scandals.

She said that the media called her:

“Apuskeleke girl!”<sup>21</sup> So, I ceased even wearing jeans. Even rallies, you see Animuonyam wearing cloth on rally (grounds) which was abnormal but I had to because I had no other option and the NPP also capitalized on that and they were also saying , “small girl no , oy3 pitripitri,” – (she is too-known). So I wanted to be like an old person. I wanted the people to know that maturity is not about age (too). So I dressed nicely. Apart from keep fit, you won’t see me in jeans and t-shirt, always in cloth... (Animuonyam Addai, NDC).

Although Cassandra Baffour did not heed to calls to alter the way she dressed, Animuonyam Addai did. First, for Baffour, concerns were about her high-class fashion, not necessarily indecent, so, according to party executives, she could fit in with the so-called rural people. However, for Addai, her choice of clothing was regarded not necessarily as a high-end fashion, but rather an indecent one. Although interest in both was on appearance, the focus or interpretation was different. Aside from that, with Addai being younger, she

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<sup>21</sup> “Apuskeleke” – A young girl who dresses to entice, one thought to dress indecently

more likely fitted the bill where a section of the current crop of young women are easily accused of indecent dressing because they have picked more western taste.

Another candidate, whose appearance was also focused on and equally faced a beauty without brains double bind amidst high sexualisation, even after the parliamentary elections, was Fulera Yakubu (NDC).

She stated:

and apart from that, they used the media, *Daily Guide* to cartoon me as “Maame Water” (Mermaid or Water goddess) ...my opponent called me Maame Water on her platforms. She started calling me “ashawo” (prostitute). They drew that cartoon and then printed a lot of it and distributed in the whole constituency that I am involved in some occultism. So, it’s unfortunate the language they (media) understand is money.

From Yakubu’s narrative she accused another female, who was her opponent, of verbally attacking her, and also implying that she had bribed the media to publish cartoon characters of her to represent her in a sexualised and unfavourable light. The *Daily Guide* was an opposition newspaper and it was possible it might not have necessarily been bribes, especially when for her in particular, across the board all forms of media and the public showed an interest in her unique body features. Yakubu’s representation observed in media and from her narratives showed she was not a particularly likeable candidate. Her body mostly trivialised her so much, and somehow, her own politics.

Also, it might have been the tendency of parts of the media to take a different angle to covering women who are opponents to each other as catfights. According to Braden (1996), normally the media would trivialise a woman’s campaign when she is in contest with a man. Where the battle is between two women, news reports take on a different angle and coverage is given as of two sisters attacking each other. Braden indicated that

the media's interest is the gender factor, those who are engaging in an attack, and not the attack itself.

Furthermore, Yakubu was mainly referred to in public and media circles with sexualised tones as a result of her unusually thick and rounded buttocks. Also, she naturally looked like an Indian goddess, given her rounded body and very defined facial features. Although Ghanaian, she is also of Hindi religious belief. The dominant religions which exist respectfully among each other, are Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religion. It seems to be that her description as occultist was very likely, as many Ghanaians will not even recognise an Indian religion.

Also, her representation as a water goddess/mermaid in Ghana refers to a sexually perverted woman. These attractive women are reckoned to have been sent as agents of the Water Goddess to seduce *man-kind*. She being considered very sexually appealing was therefore seen as the Eve with the apple; the goddess who makes men fall.

Lastly, one of the women also accused the media of taking an interest outside of asking the women critical questions, and rather than concentrating on their family and educational backgrounds, snapping pictures of them. She said:

I think the media can do more by looking at the issues like women's participation (in politics), not just a beauty contest. They come and take beautiful pictures but the issues on politics, what the women have done (are absent),. (They should do) more than just you know profiles and stuff like that. .. *The Spectator* will come (and ask), where did you school, where did you... just unnecessary things, she is married with 3 children, and then my husband would be there and then my kids and then we would snap pictures. But they should ask questions. What are your plans? .... Someone wrote Miss Ghana turns MP and that's what they were saying about Benita. Yes! And that's big news. That's big news. She is always on, in the media but those are not the issues (Dr. Nokwafo Ampratwum, NDC).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented qualitative thematic findings on women candidates' perceptions on their media portrayal.

The majority of the women regarded their relationship with the media as cordial, although the majority of them also acknowledged that there was a gendered treatment that favoured their male counterparts in terms of the quantity of coverage and quality of portrayal; that the men were more visible and favourably covered. The women's portrayal was not only gendered, but also, negative. From the newspaper findings however, the candidates who were most visible were mainly the more viable women, who increased their visibility through a number of factors such as novelty, celebrity and negative coverage on their personal lives. This may sparingly indicate that apart from novelty and celebrity, women candidates are less likely to receive more coverage compared with their male counterparts, and when they are more visible it may be as a result of mostly negative personalised coverage.

Throughout the interview findings, gender bias has mainly mediated the women's portrayal as prostitutes, women-without-husbands, non-conformists, smokers, witches, and the focus on their appearance. Also from the findings, sections of the media, opponents, and public, shared common opinions about the women. This reflects how society influences media and the media, society.

The interview chapter points out that society, inclusive of the media, public and opponents, have effectively worked as agents of a hegemonic patriarchal ideological system prevalent in Ghana, where through media products, the status quo was sought to be maintained, and women's entry to the political arena solicited a negative array of descriptions to deter them from the public space deemed as men's.

There also was some gap between women politicians' own perceptions of the media framing of themselves and other women politicians, and my own analysis of actual media discourse. This is because, especially in the first two findings chapters, there was a bit more positive media representation of the women than in the rest of the chapters, especially the interview chapter. It appears such differences were more mediated by the personality type of candidates and even more by the type of media. As already mentioned, the type of newspapers selected were quality newspapers considered reputable, and so were less likely to carry explicitly negative depictions of women as the women discussed in their interviews. The gap is also not surprising since the depictions of the women in the interview chapter constituted an aggregation of media, public, and opponents, with candidates putting the blame at the door of the media for allowing their platforms to be used. Again, mainly the women's negative portrayal was potentially more carried out on radio, and this is likely to be because the radio allows for more unintentional discourses than newspapers.

But with a wider representation of newspapers to include tabloids, the story would potentially be different.

## **Chapter IX: Conclusions**

### **Concluding Remarks and Research Contribution**

This conclusions chapter offers brief remarks, as already, arguments and discussions were articulated in the 'Findings and Discussions' chapters. Reflections were also offered under 'Self-Reflection' in the Methodology Chapter (Chapter IV).

In this thesis, I explored an African context in which less research has been conducted on the relationship between women, media and politics. This study focused on two areas of concern for feminist media scholars on the media framing of women candidates for political office, which are the amount and the nature of media coverage. Considering a variety of campaigns of a mixed gender nature at different levels, I interrogated newspaper articles to explore how women and men candidates were framed. I also explored women's perceptions of their depictions by the media, with data gathered through interviews with women respondents. Four national dailies were selected on the main basis of their circulation, and readership. I also interviewed 18 women candidates, representing the two main political parties in the 2012 election. The study has been original in contributing empirical knowledge to the relationship between women, media and politics from a cultural and political media system very under-researched. The study has also been comprehensive in combining both news and interview data while, in the same vein, exploring the women, media and politics relationship via both legislative and internal executive campaigns of various forms. Hardly do any feminist media research combine in one study a variety of data collection and data analytical methods on one hand, for instance, both interviews and news stories, interrogated by content, frame and discourse analyses, and on the other hand, consider both legislative and executive campaigns. This study is also original in this regard.

Chapter I gave an overview of the background, the setting and the rationale of the research. It also gave a brief introduction of the different chapters covered in this thesis. Chapters II and III reviewed the extant literature on the media-politics relationship, and the women, media and politics relationship. Chapter II explored the notions that underpin the earlier relationship. The aim of the chapter was to discuss the set of factors that shape news, whether it is a commercial focus, public interest, or some other form of organisational policy. We discovered that commercially focused media in democratic societies, mainly, presented news in entertainment and scandal frames for which Ghana is not an exception. The chapter also reviewed the mutually beneficial ways in which journalists and politicians work together: journalists want catchy stories from politicians, while politicians want to take advantage of media platforms to promote themselves and their careers. The chapter also captured the ways in which politicians and journalists clash in this relationship of pursuing news and contributing to news production.

Chapter III began by discussing research analysing the media framing of women around the world. The chapter discussed how gender stereotypes both inform voters and media in their assessment of women candidates. Since media are also a part of society, the chapter articulated that the media act to circulate dominant ideologies which are masculine and often unfavourable to women. It also reviewed studies that analyse the gendered differences in media coverage regarding (in)visibility, tone of coverage, and areas of media focus on women candidates vis-à-vis their male counterparts. The literature pointed to the fact that, overall, women tend to receive lesser coverage than their male colleagues, except sometimes in exceptional and novelty cases where women contest more prominent positions. The chapter also revealed that, compared with their male counterparts, women candidates are largely framed in such personal terms as family and appearance, while coverage for men focuses more on professional attributes. It also mentioned that where

coverage for women does focus on issues, they are framed in feminine terms where matters deemed to be in the domain of femininity are linked to women (eg. so-called women's issues), and vice versa. The chapter also touched on the effects that gender stereotypes have in creating impressions to suggest that women are less suitable than men for political office. The gender stereotypes also detailed that women are seen to have some specific traits, and consequently are viewed to have expertise only in areas related to those traits.

The aim of Chapter IV was to discuss my methodological choices, noting my use of a mixed-methods approach. The combination of news and interview data to explore women's visibility and depiction in the media both elaborated and corroborated findings in each other. For instance, the sexualisation frame was almost absent in news content, yet through the interviews we discovered that it was a major depiction of women candidates. Also, women as non-conformists, and the variety of familial frames via political husbands, fathers and godfathers, were both prevalent in news and interview data. Each method by itself contributed to finding out how women were depicted in the media, and together when corroborating, revealed more about each theme in the findings. There was an alignment in coverage for women candidates with these two data sources, as I already evidenced above. This suggests that where two data findings were aligned, new and different things could be learnt, and more detailed information could be gained.

Chapters V, VI, VII and VIII of the study constitute the findings chapters, where the first three, concern the news data, and the last, is on the interview data. These chapters present findings on media coverage of the women and men candidates of the various campaigns considered under the study. Attention was paid to the amount of media coverage of the candidates using indicators such as candidate mention, candidate focused on, and candidate quoted, to determine which candidates were the most or least visible. Also, the

focus/areas of media coverage on candidates pointed to a number of areas related to candidates' personal attributes on one hand, – such as character traits, appearance, age and familial status or relations, and on the other hand, candidates' professional attributes (educational, occupational, and political background). Across the news data, viable women were more visible and non-viable women were the least covered. The viable women increased their visibility through coverage on their novelty, viability, and other exceptional factors. For instance, on the exceptional factors, Samia Nkrumah increased her visibility by her celebrity status via her political father, then Alima Mahama's divorcée and Northern Muslim statuses also made the media pay considerable attention to her. Lastly, Agyeman, as former First Lady, and also as a norm-breaker of the convention on incumbents and second terms, increased her visibility with the focus of coverage on these areas.

In chapters V and VI which had two women and two men in the race, the less viable women were always the least covered, and always after the male candidates. The women also were more elderly, menopausal and less attractive by prevailing standards, even in their coverage which might have mediated unfavourably the amount of coverage they received, as media tend to cover more attractive women. The study confirmed previous findings that novelty coverage (Murray, 2010) and exceptional factors (Gidengil & Everitt, 1999, 2000) increase women's visibility, otherwise women tend to receive less coverage, as a lot more existing research would show. However, attributes such as novelty and celebrity coverage sideline the credentials of women. Focus on novelty, celebrity and other exceptional factors means that attention is paid to their newness, flashiness and disadvantages, creating the impression that they are inexperienced. As less coverage was given to their professional attributes as well, this potentially alienated the women from the political field, portraying them as politically dependent on others, especially as coverage for two of the viable women, also, focused on their familial connection to important male figures as father and

husband (Jamieson, 1995; Murray, 2010). Of the women in the news data, only Nkrumah, who was even more covered as a celebrity than novelty, won the position of chairperson. Given also that these women (especially Nkrumah and Agyeman) were for instance heavily framed in terms of the attributes of the important male figures in their lives (Nkrumah's father and Agyeman's husband), their achievements also were considerably deferred to these men. Women's visibility in news therefore is mediated by a number of factors such as their novelty, exceptional attributes, personal characteristics and celebrity.

In terms of visibility, gender inspired the novelty coverage used on mainly, the viable women, who as women, were depicted in the 'first woman' frame. Especially in Agyeman's novelty uniqueness-labelling, she was actually not just the first woman, but the first person to have contested an incumbent in a primary which would have terminated the incumbents presidency at his first term. It is very unlikely that if Agyeman were male, coverage would have mentioned his gender – as the first man to contest an incumbent. It would most likely have been, the first time an incumbent has been contested or that, the first person contesting an incumbent.

Again, the other factors that influenced the women's visibility were also gender inspired. For instance in the coverage of Mahama's exceptionality as an unmarried mother, Northern and Muslim woman, and Agyeman and Nkrumah's celebrity and familial coverage via important male figures. Also, the age of the less viable women which tended to have affected their coverage, was inspired by their gender as women, who are mostly despised for media set in their old age. Gender was therefore influential in how the factors affecting the women's visibility were framed.

On the dominant frames or focus on candidates, some aspects of the study also confirmed that women were more often framed by their non-issue coverage (with a focus on such

personal attributes as family, appearance, age, character traits) than men. Across the three news data, there was also a visible attempt to frame the women in feminine terms. For instance, in their invitation to the political field as moral appendages as in the case of Mahama, either to bring renewal or peace to their parties or to places where there was conflict. Again, the coverage of the women candidates on their professional attributes also negotiated their constituency of support as being from other women, and their political achievements and experiences were more tailored to their work and activities related to women, and their families.

Most of the literature reveals that gender stereotypes dictate that women's expertise and subject of interests are determined by traits that women are assumed to have.

In the study, findings brought up a different side to the framing of women in feminine terms, such as political cleaners. Such media coverage persistently focuses on cataloguing women's achievements mainly in the domain of their activity with or for women, and on the support of other women as more important for women candidates. This is an important finding and contribution to the literature because it potentially indicates new trends or ways in which the media may be diversifying, extending, or adapting coverage of women candidates.

In terms of the areas of media focus, coverage was gendered in: 1. actual frequency of focus of media on women's personal attributes than professional ones, and 2, in actual framing of contexts given to female and male candidates.

In chapter VIII which also contains the interview findings, the areas of media focus were broadly in terms of themes related to those in the news data, although the details of the portrayal were different. For instance, the women reported that the media focused on their families and their appearance which we can also confirm from the other three findings

chapters on the news data. However, especially on appearance, the interview data revealed a more negative interest by the media than occurred in the news data.

The interview data also revealed a heavy sexualisation of women candidates where they felt the dominant portrayal of women politicians was as prostitutes. The news data was silent on this particular frame. The interview data brought in more explicit details of media coverage of the women; exposing more media negativity against women politicians than did the news data. This points to media behaviour where possibly their negativity is less documented in quality newspapers, even though such negativity does exist and is very much felt by the women through interactions with the variety of other media outlets.

Women's perspectives and news content were in alignment in extending themes and corroborating others. Gender, equally persisted in the framing of women respondents as prostitutes, Iron Ladies, Women-without-husbands, women who pursue political boyfriends and godfathers, queens of good service, witches and smokers, and bad homemakers.

Based on the systematic reading of how the media covered the women especially in the news data, I provide below a summary of how the Ghanaian media evidenced women and men candidates' professional attributes which may also constitute three strategies the Ghanaian media would be likely to employ, to explore women's political acceptance during their campaign coverage. This may also serve as a strategy for women to position themselves in line for potentially increased media coverage and acceptance, if playing to the positive stereotypes becomes an electoral advantage. The women's own set of attributes, viability, and the level of office contested, among others, should also mediate the success of their campaigns, even while employing this strategy.

First, coverage presented a catalogue of contributions by women politicians to women's (or children's) right, Coverage would show women politicians as having worked for the general welfare and empowerment of women. Such coverage, on the other hand, may inform women politicians and may require them to sift their backgrounds and achievements in line with this strategy.

Second, coverage highlighted women as better spokespersons for women's issues. This is not new, and this strategy, in turn, may emphasise to women candidates that they should be seen to be talking about women's issues, identifying themselves as women who understand the so-called unique plight of women in various circumstances.

Lastly, coverage focused and so may explore women's support from female voters. This may then instruct women candidates that women's groups should be seen to publicly declare support and visibly campaign for the woman candidate, to defy the notion of 'women being their own enemies', and so to invite men, to vote for women candidates; men, who in Ghana mainly excuse themselves from voting for women by saying that women should seek their support from their fellow women, and men wouldn't have a problem voting for women.

Men's professional backgrounds and political experience were evidenced by 1. , a catalogue of diverse political activities with all constituents and not a particular gender; 2., political activities involved work with and for their parties and financial support to same; and 3. ,as people who have fully courted the youth. The model for male political acceptance portrayed in and by the media was mainly explored from 1) the strength of their resources,

especially their contributions in kind to their political parties; and 2) being seen as a star/role model, or enjoying a celebrity status, especially among the youth.

These different contexts for female and males constituted one of the ways coverage was gendered. Coverage exploring the professional and political backgrounds was a 'charity begins at home' scenario for women to fulfil, where, if a woman wants to lead, it appears to be the case that she should have served women first, in whatever way. This form of coverage points to why, although with diverse backgrounds, the women's contributions were systematically modelled to suit their so-called expertise in women's affairs. Ultimately, women and women's issues are used to explore the extent of women's acceptance, qualification and experience also used to filter women so that the lack of visible support from women or work within that background may perhaps be used as basis to deny other forms of support from such constituencies as men and the youth.

The way and manner in which women's political preparedness is explored will likely screen women candidates, suggesting that women candidates have competencies relevant in leading women only. Hence, portraying that women are not suitable to lead all constituencies: women lead women, and men lead us all. This may create barriers to women breaking through the 'glass ceiling' in contesting political and executive positions.

Also, when women are constructed as speaking to women's issues, it sanctions women to lead women and restrict them to discussing issues deemed more relevant to women. This would likely present women's capabilities as if they are always apprentices and never fully-blown leaders who can speak on all subjects; seen as capable to lead just one section of society, never to lead all.

I hope that by offering an overview, constitutive of strategy on women's political acceptance and possibly increased media coverage; I can contribute new information to enhance women's campaigns.

In addition, the four 'Findings and Discussions' chapters revealed that women's connections to important men seem to be required or trumpeted to enhance one's success in navigating the political terrain. Based on the women's extensive acknowledgement of perceptions, and narratives around, influential male figures, and the phenomenon of political godfathers as guides and guards for women in the corridors of power, I posit a basis for a potential model for female politicians' access to higher political portfolios in Ghana. Already, we know that one of the ways women have attained power was through a paternal family name or that of a husband. The findings also point to important male figures in the campaigns of especially the viable women. Moreover, the findings revealed another aspect of male backers who were perceived as political boyfriends and godfathers to women. I suggest that further study could explore the extent to which, if any, male hands have pushed women's careers, and how to combat this by women claiming their achievements as their own. I hope to offer some comments as contributory information to this exercise in exploring the phenomenon of male supporters to women's career chances, if so, and develop ways to combat this, so women would not have their achievements deferred to men.

First, most political women in Ghana are viewed to have rapidly attained higher portfolios if they have the backing of influential male figures/political godfathers in their political parties. This is generally perception which is taken as entirely true, and it would be important to conduct some study in finding out, how much truth lie in this perception that

drives public knowledge and deny women of their own contributions, experience and expertise in public offices. This perception seems real, as a result of the fact that there are many more male than female key figures in political parties. It is also because male authority and validation are more respected in political circles and in society; hence an important male voice is estimated to pave the way within society.

One would observe that these influential male figures, who are spoken of are not just influential in the parties by virtue of their official roles and titles, but also by their social capital and their financial resources, and the long span of their political careers and key roles in their parties and the nation's political space. Consequently, they are powerful because of their unique and privileged positions which give them the ability to reward and punish in a way that their peers, either in government or their political parties, may not be able to. These godfathers in Ghana are perceived to be the ones who run the presidency; they are sometimes close friends and family of the president, and other times party bigwigs with the ear of the chair. Hence they can fast track anyone's appointment or otherwise. It is the public perception that these men are the ones that mostly female politicians look up to to support their campaigns or attain ministerial appointments, It would therefore be important for women to accumulate their own resources and political capital in order to have less need of these men whose privileges seem reinforced by the patriarchal system.

Second, the idea of male support is perceived to influence female achievement, because in Ghana it is likely that almost every young politician, especially in college or just out of University, would look for some form of political godfather at every stage. However, the men seem to progress quickly. This is perhaps because men are mostly given more important opportunities on the assumption that men are generally more capable. Through this, men are able to gain prominence and accumulate their own resources faster than women. Moreover, because authority is deferred to men, given the necessary resources, a

man may gain political ground and respect more easily than a woman. Therefore, a man is likely to move faster to gain the respected male authority. Additionally, in sections of Ghanaian society, the stereotype is that women are weaker and need the protection of a man to shield them from challenges in a masculine terrain. Therefore, it seems that women, however competent and however strong their attributes, may be required to respond to the gender code of sometimes playing 'soft' in order to evade victimisation, name-calling and labelling, and appropriately place themselves in their gender identity. This reinforces the perception that the women are dependent on male backers, who remain constantly relevant throughout a woman's political career, unless a woman defied the gender code. This also points to the need for women to accumulate their resources, since economic power would lend them an authoritative and independent voice to attain political power.

Another reason why male backing is perceived to influence female achievement is because most women lack both experience and (especially) resources compared with men. To progress their careers in the same way as their male counterparts, women require the same backing: the support of other men ahead of them both to mentor and finance their careers. In this regard, more female mentors would be needed to dilute the influence of male backers so women can own their achievements with less, or no, recourse to male resources.

Third, male backing is supported by, and finds a basis in, Ghanaian political culture, as it helps to provide a context to situate the biases of the public and the media; given that the norm is male assistance in navigating male dominance. Given also women's lack of resources, it is less likely to be their own incompetence or inability when women employ masculine hands to open doors masculinity itself have closed. Sometimes, it appears that

the reliance of women on men is an impression society wishes them to give. However, the persistence of this impression reinforces women's unsuitability for the political terrain. Therefore women candidates should constantly push to portray their independence from male power.

When women build important political portfolios, gain political prominence, and accumulate resources, they will potentially have the right tools to contend the patriarchy and in shaping any perceptions to the advantage of women on how women attain higher political portfolios.

From all the above, gender was central to the women's portrayal, and to the issues of their expertise and acceptance in the political space.

### **Reflections and Future Research**

In the interview chapter it was clear that women seemed to have been more influenced by the radio, a point I have already made in the concluding remarks. The specific frames identified in the interviews were different from those identified in the newspapers. The interviews were more negative. One of the reasons for this is because of the absence of tabloids as part of the newspaper source, a point I also referenced in the methodology chapter. Also because the women spoke from their experiences from a number of different media forms which offered a different texture to their media depiction.

Comparing the interview and newspaper data, one is likely to realise that the quality newspapers selected seem to have a different agenda from radio. This is because, from the interview findings, the few women who had positive portrayal mentioned the fact that the contents they provided the newspapers with were the same contents they used to write

about them, unlike the radio. Of course, it is not all the time that one gets the opportunity to be interviewed or profiled in order to influence content, however this evidence portrays that radio might be more important in the political communication of Ghanaian women in how they are mostly framed to their publics. Different media platforms therefore could have different agendas. The turn to radio for future research as a matter of fact is something that shouts at me from the interview chapter. Had I realised that how significant radio analysis would have been I would have turned to it as the interview chapter points me to. However I didn't because a lot of the current western literature has used newspapers in interrogating media depictions of women. Newspaper seems to have been suggested as the only real media that matters and media as somehow monolithic when it comes to political communication. This I believe is dominantly a western notion or an American one that newspapers are agenda setting particularly during electoral periods. Yes, newspapers are important but for the women politicians in Ghana, radio seemed to be extremely important in how they are framed to their constituents.

Also the Ghanaian media system is different. The American political media system or even that of Western Europe might be what defines the incessant focus on newspapers as I suppose radio stations are not as politically vibrant as they are in Ghana. Freedom of speech has also been practised in the west for centuries and it is only since 2000 that the criminal libel law in Ghana was repealed and this has facilitated the emergence of radio with constant interaction of the public, celebrity politicians and political party representatives trooping there each unending in political discussions. Radio stations seem to be more entertainment focused in the west.

Aside the absence of politically vibrant radios, western politics is more elitist and tilts towards the literate those who can read and write and so seems more the the reading rather than the listening public. It is also elitist, as more focus seems to be given to more

national political players neglecting the role of Councilors and Representatives or Mayors and the local constituentus who may depend on radio more for political information and education.

I didn't quite know that by looking at the feminist political communication literature, which is dominantly western, I was overlooking what media matters most to women, their political careers and their constitutents. It is my supposition that emerging African feminist media scholars should interrogate western methods and choices and challenge the domainat model of newspapers, which is not very suited to a largely African media and political system and values. During such critical analysis would reveal one more value absent in the western model which further constrains the political ambition of African women and that is the issue of *solli*, where largely monies exchange hands between politicians and journalists in order for politicians to enjoy a lot more positive coverage. African feminist media scholars should therefore pay attention to the similarities and differences no matter the extent of western and African women's esperiences.

Several studies have been conducted in analysing the relationship between women, media and politics, and specifically the framing of women politicians in the news media. These studies have contributed to our knowledge of women's circumstances in the media around the world, though they have largely been dominated by North America. As already mentioned, while quite a number of sponsored reports exist in Ghana on women and the economy, maternal health, and gender and education, and a growing number on women working in the media and women's representation in parliament, there is regrettably scant research reviewing political women's depiction in the media. The work reported on in this

thesis constitutes an attempt to analyse so far some of the mixed gender campaigns in Ghana. My study appears to be original in breaking this new ground in Ghana.

This thesis therefore invites other researchers to conduct further studies to cover other inter-gender campaigns that will both shape current findings and broaden the scope of knowledge that my study has contributed. Other researchers could explore more specific and in-depth studies in the varied areas of tone, visibility, traits and issue associations, among others, in order to see patterns and trends across cases on different forms of coverage relative to my study, and as a way of contributing knowledge from Ghana to existing literature.

Additionally, further research could be undertaken to cover the representation of women in broadcast media, and in particular radio, as many women candidates for parliament use them more often. It would be interesting to establish similarities and differences in the general coverage, and specifically in the tone, visibility and areas of focus in coverage of women's campaigns on radio. Since political radio is highly interactive and in-depth in Ghana, it promises to offer a rich texture to knowledge about women's representation in the media and in society in general.

Suggestions here represent only a few possible areas that might be investigated to add to the strength and depth to the findings of the current study. It is my hope that this thesis has served a good basis on which to invite other research. I hope even more to have contributed to the broader literature from a Ghanaian perspective and possibly offer another window into gendered mediation in Africa.

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## Appendice

### Appendix A: Example of Coding Guide

#### Coding Guide for Presidential primary race of the NDC

##### STORY

**A. Item Number**

**B. Newspaper Title**

**C. Date**

**D. Page Number**

**E. Election Sub-theme** (how was it covered?)

1 = horse-race (about how well different candidates/parties are competing against each other, strategies, manoeuvrings, of a game, battle and sports, successes, losses)

2 = party policy rhetoric - general (we will do this, that and the other, ie intent, regardless of policy topic)

3 = women's issues/women as voters/gender equality

4 = personal profile/biog

5 = reporting a public gathering/speech making/campaign meeting

**F. Tone of headline:** positive -1, negative 2, neutral -3

Descriptors

- ✓ Cantankerous, not placed in a positive light
- ✓ Reports of actions not placed in a good light or regarded to be in bad taste
- ✓ When report or story is judgemental on the actions of a candidate or event
- ✓ Mockery, disappointing
- ✓ Accusations without defence from the other side

##### PEOPLE

**G. Sex – Journalist.** 1- female , 2 – male

**H. Women mentioned** Yes – 1, No – 0

**I. Sex of people mentioned** 1- female, 2- male

**J. Age** Yes – 1, No -2

**K. Occupation** Find descriptions beneath

**L. Fxn or role in story** Find descriptions beneath

**M. Quoted/ source** Yes – 1, No - 0

**N. Family relationship** Yes – 1, No - 0

## **CANDIDATE**

### **O. Tone of cov.**

Descriptors (favourable or unfavourable, Mockery)

- ✓ Konadu= positive - 1, negative - 2,
- ✓ Mills = positive - 4, negative - 5,

### **P. Mention of presidential Candidates** 1- Konadu, 2- Mills,

### **Q. Who story focuses on**

Konadu= 1, Mills - 2,

### **R. Quoted** Konadu - 1, Mills - 2,

### **S. Familial relationship.** Konadu - 1, Mills - 2,

### **T. Sartorial rep.** Konadu - 1, Mills - 2

### **U. Sainly depiction/ noble cause** Konadu - 1, Mills - 2

### **V. Monster/non-conformist/ adamant, iron lady, ambitious/audacious** - Konadu - 1, Mills - 2

### **W. Age**

### **X. Photo** yes - 1, No - 0

### **Y. Photo type** - If the person mentioned is included in a photo, in what way, eg sole content (1); part of family group (2); with other candidates (3); other group picture (4); adding more codes as you go along.

### **Z. Equality/Inequality** - Yes - 1, No- 0

### **AA. Stereotype** Yes - 1, No-0

### **BB. Further Analysis** - Yes -1, No -0

## Appendix B: Example of Coding Sheet

### Coding Sheet for presidential primary race of the NDC

Item number	Newspaper Story	Date	Page Number	Election Sub-theme	Tone of Headline	Sex of Journalist	Tone on Candidate	Candidate Mentioned	Candidate Mentioned	Focus on whom	Candidate Quoted	Fam. R/nship - Cand	Appearance - Cand	Saintly Rep-Candidate	Non-Conformist- Candidate	Age of Candidate	Photo	Attributes - Personal - Cand
1	The Chronicle	11-Jul	1	Reports	Negative	Male	Negative Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidates	Konadu		Konadu						
2	The Chronicle	14-Jul	1	Reports	Negative	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidates	Konadu		Konadu			Konadu			1
3	The Chronicle	Jul-12	1	Reports	Negative	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidates	Konadu		Konadu						
4	The Chronicle	Jul-11	2	Reports	Negative	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidates	Konadu Mills		Konadu						1
5	The Chronicle	Jul-08	1	Horse-race	Neutral	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidates	Both Candidates		Konadu						1
6	The Chronicle	Jul-08	1	Horse-race	Neutral	Not Stated	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidates	Both Candidates	Konadu	Konadu	Number		Konadu			



13	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-15	12	Reports	Neutral	Not Stated	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Konadu	Konadu		Konadu						
14	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-15	12	Reports	Neutral	Not Stated	Negative Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Mills								
15	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-14	1	Horse- race	Negative	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Konadu	Konadu		Konadu					1
16	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-11	12	Reports	Positive	Male			Primaries	Primaries								
17	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-11	12	Reports	Neutral	Not Stated	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Konadu								
18	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-11	1	Horse- race	Negative	Male	Positive Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Mills	Mills							1
19	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-11	1	Horse- race	Negative	Male	Positive Positive	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Primaries			Konadu					
20	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-09	1	Horse- race	Neutral	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Primaries		Konadu		Konadu				1
21	The Ghanaian Times	Jul-09	3	Reports	Neutral	Male	Neutral Neutral	Konadu Mills	Both Candidat es	Primaries		Konadu						

## Appendix C: Example of Interview Transcript

[REDACTED] INTERVIEW  
TRANSCRIPT

How do you use the media? Do you use it at all.

Yes, I use the media but not much on the television. I go to radio stations, even Tuesday; I was at Garden City Radio.

So you use the local media?

Yes, the local media, because, you know, with this thing that even though it is national, you should look for a media that you will be able to channel your message through to your people. I remember even during our primaries, there was this allegation on, is it Kessben, that I've been going round even buying votes. I heard it. It was a news item. That was the first day that I was pushed to go to a media. I am confessing to you, had it not been that, (I thought) it was cool; I thought it was just fellow party men and they will not take it to that level. I didn't know it was so serious. They took it so personal that they had to lie about me. Somebody called me that I saw a publication about you in the Chronicle that you have done this, I said wow, then the next day, somebody from one FM station came to me that, young lady, we are going to use this allegation as a news item, if you don't come out to react against it, then you will be in trouble. That was the first day, oh I realized the importance of the media in relation to the politics that I am doing. Had it not been for that incidence, oh, I'm telling you, it wasn't easy. So my first media encounter was based on an allegation that I had to go and defend myself and I will say it worked very well for me. That was the time that I also discovered that I could use it to market myself. Then after Kessben, I went to Fox Fm, and from Fox Fm, I am now at Garden City. If it is the radio stations in Ashanti region, then I am really doing my best.

So how would you characterize / describe your relationship with the media?

I will say it is cordial, but you would also note that, they like demanding for money, sweetheart. If you go, that day that I was there to defend myself, I am not destroying anybody's work, what happened was, you would realise that, you would go to this media station, and after you've done your work, they are demanding for money. Meanwhile, we were told that especially, this year, the media houses and other media men are going to be liberal when it comes to the female aspirants. But ask Vida, if she told you the truth, I was with her that day, I went and should I say, fortunately or unfortunately, she was also there, and after the program, I was even lucky that I gave them money. She told them point blank that today is not a good day, but you see, some of these things deter, like you will not be moved to go to such places, because it's like that they are not working for you, no, they are not ready to project you, but they just want the money, and it is not the best, it's not, it's not the best.

So what has your experience being like with the media in terms of, yes, they r very cordial but which other experiences?

Some, you know, the media is supposed to be a place where they are supposed to tell the truth, nothing but the truth, like I was telling you, I had to go there and defend myself, it is like now, it is for the highest bidder. If you are able to give them more, and you even want them to lie, they are going to do it just to suit a candidate. It's very serious to the extent that, if and the funny thing is, it will work for some people, they will talk positively about them, but for those of us who don't have, let me put it this way, friends in the media and enough resources to also go into paying them before, oh, it is hell for you. Sweetheart, I am telling you. It is not easy. You have to, personally, I would say that I don't trust most of these media houses.

Is it as a result of the fact that, perhaps because you are in Ashanti Region, which is a stronghold for the opposing political party?

## Bias (Party-wise monkey influence)

Yes, another political party. So they will go to every length, to destroy you because they have been paid to do that to you, so even you get to one station, I remember, I will not mention the station, and the man was like, ho, how old are you? I said, by then I was 27. He said ei, and you think you can challenge a former finance minister, and I said, I'm here on a different mission and he said no. By the mere, he had already stereotyped his mind that he is for party A, and then he started discouraging me, and I told him, you know what? There is nothing that you are going to tell me that will put my mind off, what I'm coming to do, I'm here as a candidate and I am here to market myself. Whatever it is that you want to tell me, hold it till I am finished with what I am coming to do.

After the program he was like, wow, so you even have your master's. Oh I am moved. You should have been an NPP lady. I said, you know what, you don't judge people by mere appearance. Even though you belong to a party, so long as I am in this house, you should put all that aside and let me communicate, let me talk to the people, and ever since, the man has been my friend, but you see, it's not everybody who would be able to withstand some of these times, no, not at all. Some of us, you see, if you want to do politics, and you are a lady, you should be ready for everything, the insults, the, oh, the name calling, oh, every kind, the heckling, you will go to a place and just because of this cloth (Ic as in being a woman), it's not easy, especially for those of us in Ashanti Region, it is not easy at all.

I'm quite interested in the heckling aspect. Do you perceive that it is because of your gender?

Gender and not party makes the difference (as in women's participation)

It's very annoying. No it is because of gender, no not party, no. Fine, the party is one aspect, but gender, like, u know one thing? The women, well I would say the female aspirants, it's like we have a group, u know politics is male dominated when it comes to Ghana, about, should I say 90% of politicians we have in Ghana are male, and so if you are a female and you come to the scene, it's like, then they ask you "who are you"? It is like an association of men and you want to enter when you don't belong. They want you to know that this is not your field, and they will tell you point blank, they will tell you, and it is sometimes disheartening. If you are really practicing democracy, I know that democracy didn't start, we are learning, it is a gradual process, it is high time we learn to embrace some of these realities in politics. It is not fine. It is male dominated in Ghana but it is not only a field for men, no. I personally don't buy that idea, no.

In terms of how your gender was at play, or should I say, how has your gender featured in being a politician, how has your experiences being because you are a woman and you want to enter politics?

Asrayal

You know in Ghana here, I would say, almost every female is tagged as a prostitute. That is one sad aspect of the job. And the painful aspect of it is that especially if you are not married, like me, they look at you and the first, I remember I met one group, and then a man, after all what I told them was, I will lobby to get them streets and everything, the man just raised his hand, 'are you married'? I looked at the man and was wondering what correlation has politics got to do with my marital status, I was like wow, so I told the man, you know what, even though I am not married for now, but I'm painting a picture to whoever will come and marry me to know that, he is not marrying me alone, he is marrying me and the constituency including you, he is marrying me plus all the problems we have here. Then the man said wow. So you see, even though we are confronted with some of these challenges, it is about how you approach them. It is disheartening sometimes, because you don't expect it and it comes, so your reaction, how you even react to them would even give you, I don't know, it just came to me that I should tell him that, so I just said, oh, man, whoever will marry me today, will know that he is not marrying only Memuna but he is marrying me, the constituency, the problems we have here, plus all of you because you are his children. The

man was just laughing that eiii! (exclaimed). He said, Maame, wo bo 3y3 den paaa. sometimes, it is part of the heckling because the person thinks he is going to say that to intimidate you, and to also bring your morale down but me, I always have a nice way of approaching issues. You know, because, if it is because of the philosophy I read in legon, I have a nice way. I will negotiate in a nice way and the man said wow. Then tell the man, you have a lot of children, then I said; you see, now you agree with me that you are part of the (children) and he said yes, so it's all about how you even approach some of these issues. It's not easy oh, Carol. I am telling you. If you had met the people I work with, I know some of them will even cry, it's sometimes...

*Bias (media narrative)*

What do you perceive to be the representation of politics in the media?

I will say for now, the media is supposed to be neutral but you realise that in Gh, it is not like that. If a politician becomes so rich, he can own TV, Radio, and so I will say most of these programs that they would be having would be biased towards a political party, that is one of the challenges we have in Gh. They are supposed to be neutral. I don't know if you have been monitoring them, the activities, which have been going on, from the radio to TV. I can mention stations to you that are geared towards party A. If you go to NET2, it is owned by an NPP man, and what they do is that, they are only promoting NPP. Even if the government does anything good, there is no way that that media station or house would project it, no, no way. So in a way, I personally feel that they are gradually diverting from their cause, which is of giving free reportage. That is not what they are doing. They are biased. It is also now for the highest bidder. Aside the fact that it is for party A, if you don't have money, then forget it.

How are politicians and politics portrayed?

If you are a politician in Ghana, the assumption is that you are rich. That is the funny aspect of the whole thing. It means that, in a nutshell, you need to be rich to be a politician. It's not always the case, you can have a vision on how to help your community or constituency without necessarily being rich, but all politicians are perceived to be rich people, and they are all generally assumed to be liars, so you go to a place and then. Politics in Ghana, in relation to the media, the media is not being fair to the politicians. You realize that the media is biased towards political parties. They are supposed to be free, fair and non-partisan, but in Ghana here, it's not like that, you will expect to, if you go to, I don't know for the TV stations, I will not speak for them. I know one Net work in Ghana, it is poorly NPP, It is owned by an NPP, Kennedy Agyapong. If you should monitor that station. I am giving you an assignment, you just monitor their station, their radio station and all, it is geared towards the achievements of their party. In a way, they are violating the acts. They are not being fair, so if I am an NDC lady and I go to that station, you can imagine how they are going to treat you. It's not fair. But on the other hand, there are other stations too that are also

Which other portrayals do the media give of politics and politicians? How are politicians portrayed in the media.

Apart from the fact that they see you to be a very rich person, sometimes, or most of the time, they see as as liars, that is our tag, so you go to a place and you say, I want to bring this dev't A,B,C to the constituency, then somebody would just tell you, you know what, you just give us our share, because we know if we vote for you, you are not going to do this. And sometimes, you will see it, it is everywhere. it is not only with your constituencies, if you go to the media houses, you are tagged that way, so what happens is, it's sometimes, it's not the best at all.

When it comes to the women politicians, how are you portrayed in the news media?

## Portrayal - Absence

You know, I will say, they've not been fair to us, the women. They've not. There is a saying that, if Mohammed doesn't go to the mountain, the mountain will go to Mohammed, maybe the women we are not doing our best as candidates to approach them, but what have they done, the media, in relation to publicizing, you know, I am a candidate, even if I have not been to your media, you have people working underground for you, you can send some of your men, you've been tasked, go look for madam A, make sure you give her this platform or tell them, there is nothing like that in relation to gender. (They sideline the women, quick to go to the men, disregard that there are women contesting too), and sometimes, you sit there and you ask yourself, ah, these media houses, tomorrow if I should win, can they come to me, that is why the late president helped to sack one presenter, because at a point in time it seems, the lady did something to him and he was not happy, so when he won, and it's like, this same lady is now trying to get closer to him, he told them that, he is not going to grant her, the lady was like what! I'm this and that, and why. Then he had to sit her down and then advise her before later, he allowed her to interview, but you see, sometimes, it's very funny, because we are the same people, you know what? Because you are a lady, the perception is that, the assumption is that, they know you are not going to win. Me for instance, I was telling my team that I'm going to pull a surprise in Ghana because its going to be a big shock if I should win over this man, and one man was like wow, then CNN will come down to even look for you, and I said it is not about CNN. It's about what is the person doing for the constituency. What is the relationship with the people.. This is somebody we don't know from anywhere who was dumped on the constituency, because this constituency was created..... This election is not only going to be about gender, it's going to be issue based. But the media, the media.

### What other kind of portrayal comes in the media about women politicians?

Aside that we are prostitutes, you see, the funny thing is, the media if they are only going to be fair, or they are going to promote women politicians, at least, they should be advertising their programs and if possible, even if we are not coming, you are a researcher, you came from the UK and you have found where to reach us and you have come, they should do, draft a similar program like that for the female aspirants. IEA is trying its best in terms of getting us the media, in terms of having this relationship with the media, but it is not enough. You know, for those of us who are female, the fear is that, if I want to showcase on TV3, maybe I will be charged, what if I don't have the money, then the bottom-line is that, you will not even have such coverage. So the thing is they should try their best to, organize programs that would like market the women and even give them a better picture. We have other NGOs who have taken it upon themselves to help us. We have CEDEP, we have Upage, Most of the NGOs are fair ... the need to relate to the media that is why some of us, even if I won't go to tv3, at least I can try and go to these radio stations.

### Media Effect

#### How you have been represented, any impact on your electoral success?

Not really! You know, I remember my first encounter with the media as I told you; I was there to defend myself. You know the funny thing, when I came back, the first comment that somebody made to me was, young lady, it is not the radio that is going to vote for you, concentrate on us, your delegates, and we promise that we are going to vote for you. Don't bother yourself with these media houses. They will not say the truth about you because they don't know you so don't go and waste your time and effort on them, and I was like wow, and you know, they will say in twi that - radio nto aba, 3y3 y3n nnipa no, na y3b3to aba no ama wo. So in a way, fine, you go there to market yourself but you should ask yourself, how many people are really listening into the program.

Even if they are, how about your personal contact. You saw I was relating with the women there, sometimes, it's not about what you tell them, they want a sense of your humanity in you so that is to me, in my own perception, that is more I will say, it forms about 60% of the work that we are doing (relationships :). you can go on air and make, I was telling my regional secretary, he was like madam, you have this, you have that, why is that you don't want to go to the radio, eh, look at, and he cited the eg of Ras Mubarak that he is doing well that he is always here, and I told him, you know what, I'm not saying Ras Mubarak should lose the election, but it will shock you to know that at the end of the day, he can lose the election, not because he is not popular, no, but because he doesn't have one on one relationship with the people. The man looked at me and said, wow, so that is my strategy and I said me, that is the surest way and how I personally feel I can deal with the people so what as part of the program, what we do is we visit churches, we go to naming ceremonies, any funeral, even if you don't invite me, you will come and see me there so long as it is within the constituency, so I go there, I use that opportunity to market myself. Fine, so personally, I have a feeling that fine, the media can contribute but this will not affect me as a person, no, not really.

(Also maybe the issue in the media and the gravity of it)

Do u contend it can affect public opinion though?

Yes, it can, because they did it to me. You know the funny thing is when the allegation was published in chronicle, my dad passed away almost two months now, may his soul rip, he called me on the phone that, young lady, I just went to buy Daily Graphic and I saw a story about you in Chronicle that this that and I said wow, and he even read it to me, he said no, I should not sit down, I should also go to another media house and then like defend myself, and I said, wow. Can u imagine, somebody in Accra calling me in Kumasi. It's very serious. So you go like, fine, it has an impact but for some of us down here, you know we are dealing with especially this constituency; we are dealing with about should I say a lot of illiterates. oh I was told, one man came to the , one of my programmes was like, you know what, this election , you can win because you are number 1 on the ballot sheet and most of these voters are illiterates so if they go and even if they don't know you, they can just vote for you, so you see, and how many people even read, how many people even , you know, there is this saying that if you want to hide something from a black man put it in a book, it's not that it's an insult, fine, when it comes to racism, it's against us but let's look at it this way, how many of us are even ready to read? How many of us? come to this constituency, just last week, I heard a story in Ghanaian Times, I had to even buy the paper and bring it to my constituency executives, because they will tell you that they will not even buy it, How many people are really ready to, kind of, it's not easy.

What was the story about in Ghanaian times?

They said I have given about 40 computers to 4 secondary schools in this constituency, but you know, hmm, I was even telling my manager, that me, it's not about it coming in the papers, get the one-on-one feeling and good will from your own people and they will do the work for you,. Me, I am telling me, if I should win tomorrow, you will say this lady said it, it's not about, no, and you know, most of the things that we also do in Gh, it is about whom you know, now it's no longer whom you know, it's who knows you, that's the funny aspect of it, so some of us, we will win and people will learn, come to and will learn to know us, it's not, I don't s... though it will make an impact, I don't see it to be so significant, giving the fact that there are a lot of illiterates especially with regards to

Radio (yes)  
Newspaper  
was  
limited  
in  
impact

However

media effects

9

my constituency, I can count the number, those of us who have excelled to higher heights in terms of education. Would you believe it? We can count them. So that tells you the extent of backward, that we are, yea. It's very very serious.

How the media covers politics has impact on politics itself. what kind impacts or representation that is given to politics, with the thing shtta come up both pos and neg. how does it make people think about politics.

*non-fiction*

You know, I will say that, there is a saying, bad news sells, there is nothing so good that serves (sells) as news, no. it's only, even if you follow most of the reportage, its mostly about, should I say the bad incidences, its only few times that you hear the good things, especially when it comes to Ghana. I will say the media has an impact on our political, even as a party, I remember when we were going for congress, I would say the media played its role, and I would say, some of, especially, the illiterates, even if the person didn't understand what was said, the person can even look at just the mere crowd or the gathering to say, this year, maybe NDC is winning, let me vote for NDC. So the media in a way, even though we are surrounded by a lot of illiteracy, but I would say picture speaks, esp. if you watch, so they market the political parties in a way, so whatever they do can positively and negatively affect every program of a political party. So the media has a role, or it has, its key to even marketing of the party. its very very key.

In terms of expectation, differences between what they expect from a man and you as a woman politician? People's expectations?

Yea! If you (are) a female candidate, the funny thing is there is a saying that there is no free lunch. I would say most of the people that we front to help us as godfathers, as sponsors, the person would give u maybe ghs1000, or 10,000, the next minute, the person is like I want this favour, that is why, the media portrays us as prostitutes because the men expect sexual favours from us, and sometimes the funny thing is, personally, I would never give in to such, no no, no, but there are other women, because at a point in time, if you are so frustrated and then you want to prove a point or do something, then some of them tend to fall in to the trap. And it's very very funny, the men outnumber us, one, but those same people if you go to them to sponsor you, they demand some of these things from you. So the media in a way, even though, they always say the negative things about us the females, but in a way, there is a saying that behind every rumour, there is an iota of truth, they know that the men are demanding these things from us, and so, but where they also go wrong is they commit fallacy of hasty generalization, they generalise that because maybe madam A took Mr A's money and did this and this, all women do that. If some of us are to fall into some of these things that I won't be complaining of money but it's about your values. What do you stand for? Are you in to fight for your people or you are in to sell your reputation and dignity because you want to get to where you are, u see.

*Men's women  
challenges  
Respectful  
Analysis*

What about in terms of your constituents?

*Abstract*

They expect more from us. You know, because if you go round, we tell them that, umm the women are caring, they are loving you see we try to portray, you saw me talk to the women, the motherly spirit so they expect that even after winning you should come to that level and you know, right now, there are seasons for everything, fine, today I can be with you, I would give you whatever, but after winning, I don't work in the constituency, I go to Accra to represent the whole constituency, so your level of how you frequently meet them can also affect you and the next time you contest, you can lose because they will tell you point blank that we expected you to always be with us and you didn't do that, so they expect this closeness, and they expect it so much that I know even a candidate or

an MP who lost because of that thing<sup>2</sup>, and not only that, they also expect the monetary aspect. They are demanding, and they have a funny feeling that because you are a female aspirant, if you don't have money you wouldn't have contested, so they will demand, they will go to every length to demand things from you, but they don't do that to the male aspirants, so that's where I have problem with those of these electorates, and then but the good thing is that, in the nutshell, we are trying to educate them that what a man can do, a woman can equally do it and even do it better, because Dr Aggrey said, if you educate a man, an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate the whole nation. So it's like we try to tell them that fine, you want money from us, now we don't have, maybe you want us to always, but at a point in time, don't expect so much, because as a member of parliament, my work is to go and then but as an MP, I can only lobby to get things for the constituency, but if you don't see so much coming, don't be disappointed, I always tell them because the expectation is so much that. So the burden is so much.

(LC - Men can be excused and are in fact excused. They are allowed to be what they are and what to be, and we can tolerate their vices, but for a woman it's like you have sense that they putting their hopes in you)

*media errands*  
Any differences in how the media interacts with women and men?

*media treatment*  
As I started with.. The media is for the highest bidder in Gh here so number 1, if you don't have money then they r not even going to look for you at all, (LC: and women don't have resources so then??? lol) and they've given the men more room to operate than the women, like they will always call them for programs, give them airtime to talk and they are not doing it for free (so bcos they pay lol) they know after the interview they will get something. ( LC: They have a language, the media, that the men understand for which women don't. ) That is one of the problems that we have with them and it's so funny, very very funny, they are not treating us fairly, for that one de3, I will tell you, they are not.

Affirmative action, do u support it?

I said this at the IEA program and I still stand by it. Even though we are all fighting for the affirmative action, that is the law to come into being but if you are talking about the quota system, are we saying that, as much as we are fighting for us women, the women should also portray themselves, or should package themselves in such a way that they can fit into key positions, right now, the men are trying to sabotage us or suppress us, because if you ask them, then they tell you, now weikora school b3n na wako, what can she bring? we had a woman aspiring to be a presidential candidate, what was she bringing on board, this is a woman, who had not received any formal education, I'm gender sensitive, but when it comes to fighting for women, I have a feeling that the women should be ready to upgrade themselves to a certain level before the men will also accord us what we are fighting for, Prof said he is going to give 40% to women, I was asking the IEA, why is it that he couldn't get the 40%, is it that the women were not there or he was looking for something in the women and he couldn't get it? And it's like, I touched on a very sensitive aspect and then the IEA director was like what, I shouldn't say that, there are women of substance. No, I am not saying we don't have women of substance, but how are we packaging ourselves, you are a woman, what have you done for the nation or what face have you portrayed to them to have

a feeling that Louise Carol is a courageous woman, she is this and she is that and she can fit into that position.

Men don't have to prove anything, so why women?

But it is not the case because we are being sabotaged; we are being suppressed in a way. We have more work to do than the men.

*beat me*

*twice as much*

## Appendix D:

### Example of an Invitation Letter to a Candidate



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

08/10/12

[REDACTED]  
Parliament House, Accra  
Ghana

Dear Madam,

#### Interview

My name is Louise Donkor and I am studying for my PhD in Politics and Communication Studies at University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. My work is concerned with the ways in which news media frame politicians and the political process. I am also interested to know about how women and men politicians are treated by the news media and how their relationships with journalists may or may not be different. I would be very pleased if you would agree to give me a short interview. As part of this study, I will also be monitoring campaign coverage in newspapers, so it would be very helpful to have your views to set against an analysis of news stories. I am in Ghana from late September 2012 until November 2012.

During the interview, the two main topics I would like to discuss are:

- your general views on the impact of news media coverage on politics and politicians, as well as on members of the public
- how you would characterise your own relationship with journalists, both those in the lobby and with local media.

I would like to record (audio) the interview so that I do not have to take notes but will provide a copy of the recording for your own records and will only use parts of the recording in my thesis with your consent.

I would be grateful if you would let me know if you would be able to participate in this study by responding either by post or via email or phone – [lcsdonkor@gmail.com](mailto:lcsdonkor@gmail.com) 050 8148202 or 0270 168598

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Donkor  
c/o Professor Karen Ross  
School of the Arts  
19 Abercromby Square  
Liverpool L69 7ZG, UK

## Appendix E:

### Letter to The Ghana News Agency

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Department of Communication & Media

19 Abercromby Square  
Liverpool  
L69 7ZR  
UK

W <http://www.liv.ac.uk/communication-and-media/>

29/10/12

The Editor-in-Chief,  
The Ghana News Agency,  
Accra, Ghana.

Dear Sir,

**Request to access past newspapers**

My name is Louise Carol S. Donkor and I am studying for my PhD in Politics and Communication Studies at University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. As part of my study, I will be monitoring campaign coverage in newspapers for the upcoming elections and simultaneously analyse a set of linked historical stories that I would like to access from your library.

I am currently in Ghana until December 2012 to enable me carry out this study. I would be very grateful if I am allowed access to your library for about a period of two weeks to look for the relevant news stories.

I would be very grateful if you let me know your response to my request by responding either by post or via email or phone – [lcsdonkor@gmail.com](mailto:lcsdonkor@gmail.com)/[lcdonkor@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lcdonkor@liverpool.ac.uk) 0207982847, 0508148202 or 0270 168598.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Louise Donkor", enclosed in a rectangular box.

Louise Donkor

## Appendix F:

### Political and Media Experiences of Respondents

Name of Candidate (Pseudonym)	Political Activities	Media Use	Election Results (2012)
Mary Agyapong, NPP	Mayor	Official capacity, Publicity for Candidacy	MP
Mabel Donkor, NPP	Local Assembly Member	Journalist, Panellist on programs, Publicity for Candidacy	MP
Cassandra Baffour, NPP	2 <sup>nd</sup> Time Contesting	Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Ziona Nhyira, NPP	Member of Party Communication Team	Media Icon, Panellist on several political talk shows	MP
Fafa Adamafo, NPP	Former MP Former District Chief Executive	Official Use, Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Ofeibea Kwarshie, NPP	MP	Official Use, Publicity for Candidacy and Projects	MP
Safarawu Lamptey, NPP	MP	Official Use, Publicity for Candidacy and Projects	MP
Agartha Sey, NPP	Former MP Former Regional	Official Use, Publicity for Candidacy and	Lost

	Minister	Projects	
Barikisu Tamakloe, NPP	Local Party Member	Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Persis Arthur, NPP	MP	Publicity for Candidacy and Projects	MP
Oberemponmaa Baanieh, NDC	Minister of State	Official Use, Publicity for Candidacy and Projects	MP
Nokwafo Ampratwum, NDC	Activist, Development Worker	Official Use, Publicity for Candidacy	MP
Animuonyam Addai, NDC	Party Constituency Member	Publicity for Candidacy	MP
Fulera Yakubu, NDC	Activist	Media Worker, Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Serwaa Agyapong, NDC	Activist	Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Abrafi Appiah, NDC	Party Constituency Executive	Panellist, Publicity for Candidacy	MP
Adueley Eshun-Sarbah, NDC	Party Constituency Member	Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Naa Nyardu Collingwood, NDC	Queen mother	Publicity for Candidacy	Lost
Nana Akosua Adama, NDC	Party Constituency Member	Publicity for Candidacy	Lost

## Appendix G:

### University of Liverpool Ethical Approval

3/2/2016

RETH000541

#### RETH000541

Wright, Sarah on behalf of Ethics

Sent: 02 May 2012 13:49

To: Ross, Karen; Ethics

Cc: Donkor, Louise

Dear Professor Ross

I am pleased to inform you that the Sub-Committee has approved your application for ethical approval. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.

**In order that this approval is valid, please ensure that you send a signed copy of the final version, with all supporting documentation, to the Research Governance Officer, Legal, Risk and Compliance, 2nd Floor Block C, Waterhouse Buildings, Liverpool, L69 3GL within 5 days of receipt of this email.**

Ref:	RETH000541
Sub-Committee:	Non-Invasive Procedures
PI:	Professor Karen Ross How do News Media in Ghana Frame Women Politicians?
Title:	
First Reviewer:	Dr. Bethan Evans
Second Reviewer:	Dr Carl Hopkins
Third Reviewer (if applicable):	n/a
Date of initial review:	2/5/12
Date of Approval:	2/5/12

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

#### Conditions

- |   |           |  |
|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | Mandatory | M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the Sub-Committee within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the Research Governance Officer (ethics@liv.ac.uk). |
|---|-----------|--|

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/researchethics/amendment%20procedure%209-08.doc>. If the named PI / Supervisor leaves the employment of the University during the course of this approval, the approval will lapse. Therefore please contact the RGO at [ethics@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@liverpool.ac.uk) in order to notify them of a change in PI / Supervisor.

Sarah

-----  
Mrs Sarah Wright  
Research Governance Officer  
Legal, Risk and Compliance  
University of Liverpool  
The Waterhouse Buildings, Block C  
Liverpool

http://www.liv.ac.uk/owa/?ae=Item&f=IPM.Note&d=RgAAAAW4ftnUJZBQ6GKC YagIFVHBwCdMojHG0u2Rp3xaP2QukPIAAAAWwHIAACdMojHG0... 1/3

3/2/2016

RETH000541

L69 3GL

tel. +44 (0)151 794 8290

Email: [sflet@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:sflet@liverpool.ac.uk)

Ethics Email: [ethics@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@liverpool.ac.uk)

Web: [www.liv.ac.uk/research-governance](http://www.liv.ac.uk/research-governance)

\*\*\*Planning a research project? Visit the [RESEARCH GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT](#)\*\*\*

---

**From:** Ross, Karen  
**Sent:** 27 April 2012 19:24  
**To:** Ethics  
**Cc:** Donkor, Louise  
**Subject:** RE: application for expedited review

Hello Lesley – our responses to the queries below.  
Best  
Karen

---

Karen Ross  
Professor of Media and Public Communication  
School of the Arts  
University of Liverpool  
19 Abercromby Square  
Liverpool L69 7ZG, UK  
mob +44 (0)7798 884110  
email: [rossk@liv.ac.uk](mailto:rossk@liv.ac.uk)

---

**From:** Jackson, Lesley **On Behalf Of** Ethics  
**Sent:** 27 April 2012 13:29  
**To:** Ross, Karen  
**Subject:** RE: application for expedited review

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your application for ethical review.

Please find below comments on your review:

Reviewer 1

1) Section E4 says "In the thesis, no direct reference would be made to any of the participants and if ever it became necessary, their permission will be sought or that information will be excluded from the thesis. Their data will also be secured and confidential. "

It seems unreasonable to seek to change the confidentiality agreement later in the process, presumably it should remain anonymous.

RESPONSE: we have changed this on the attached.

<https://owa.liv.ac.uk/owa/?ae=Item&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAAW4fTnUvZBQ6GKCYagtPVHbWcdMoJHG0u2Rp3xaP2QukPIAAAAWwHiAACdMoJHG0...>

2/3

<https://ow>

2) Section F1 needs to clarify the use of the researchers laptop as it is not clear whether this will have sensitive information stored on it whilst in Ghana.

RESPONSE: we have clarified.

3) The English needs improving on the questions - unless they are to be translated for the purpose of the interview.

RESPONSE: these were simply indicative and in draft, to be finalised between the student and the supervisory team. All interviews will be in English.

4) Q10 on the information sheet - is it standard ethics procedure at Liverpool for any complaints to go directly to the RGO rather than the PhD supervisor?

RESPONSE: This section directs the participant firstly to address any issues she might have with the student to resolve, and then to the supervisor. If the participant is still not satisfied with the responses provided by the student and the supervisor, then they can contact the RGO, but this is the last resort.

You have 30 days within which to respond to the above comments. Please ensure that when you respond, you annotate your comments under each response and also re-submit your fully revised application.

Many thanks

Mrs Lesley Jackson  
on behalf of Sarah Fletcher

---

**From:** Ross, Karen  
**Sent:** 23 April 2012 22:52  
**To:** Ethics  
**Cc:** Donkor, Louise  
**Subject:** application for expedited review

Hello – please find attached a set of documents which together, comprise an application for expedited ethical approval. I am sending behalf of my PhD student, Louise Carol Donkor.

Best wishes

Karen

---

Karen Ross  
Professor of Media and Public Communication  
School of the Arts  
University of Liverpool  
19 Abercromby Square  
Liverpool L69 7ZG, UK  
mob +44 (0)7798 884110  
email: [rossk@liv.ac.uk](mailto:rossk@liv.ac.uk)

## Appendix H:

### Statement of Ethical Practice

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#### Statement of Ethical Practice

**1. Title of Study**

The representation of women politicians in Ghana's news media

**2. What is the purpose of the study?**

To unearth various attributes in the news media's representation of women politicians in Ghana.

**3. Do I have to take part?**

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without incurring a disadvantage.

I expect the interview to take around 45 minutes but I will be guided by the time you have available.

**4. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Yes, it will be. Your personal information shall be replaced with codes and no identification of your views or opinions will feature as you may want it. Notes from the interviews will be transcribed onto a secure database with the University of Liverpool and will be held there without identifying information throughout the course of data analysis.

**5. What will happen to the results of the study?**

The final draft of the study will be submitted to the department of Communication and Media at University of Liverpool as part of my consideration for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

**6. Principal Investigator**

Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor  
Department of Communication and Media  
University of Liverpool  
Email: [lcdonkor@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lcdonkor@liverpool.ac.uk)  
[lcsdonkor@gmail.com](mailto:lcsdonkor@gmail.com)  
Tel: 0207982847

**Supervisor**

Prof. Karen Ross  
Dep't of Communication and Media  
University of Liverpool, UK  
Email: [rossk@liv.ac.uk](mailto:rossk@liv.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44(0)7798 88 41 10

# Appendix I:

## Consent Form



### CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:** *How do News Media in Ghana frame Women Politicians?*

**Researcher:** *Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor*

**Please  
initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [DATE] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected.
3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person taking consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**The contact details of lead Researcher (Principal Investigator) are:**

**Louise Carol Serwaa Donkor**  
**Department of Communication and Media**  
**University of Liverpool**  
**19 Abercromby Square**  
**L69 7ZG, UK**  
**Email: [lcdonkor@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:lcdonkor@liverpool.ac.uk)**  
**[lcdonkor@gmail.com](mailto:lcdonkor@gmail.com)**  
**Tel: 0044 (0)793 421 3293**

[Version Number: 1]

[Date: 23/03/12]

[Principal Investigator Initials: LCSD]

1 for subject, 1 for researcher

## Appendix J:

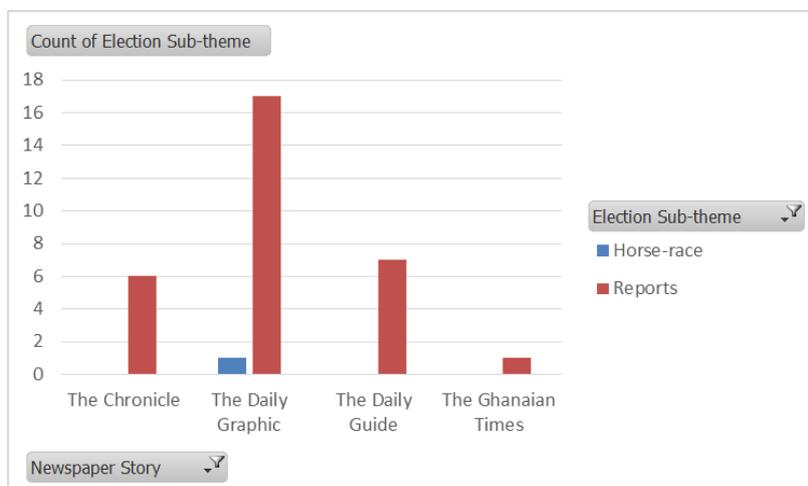
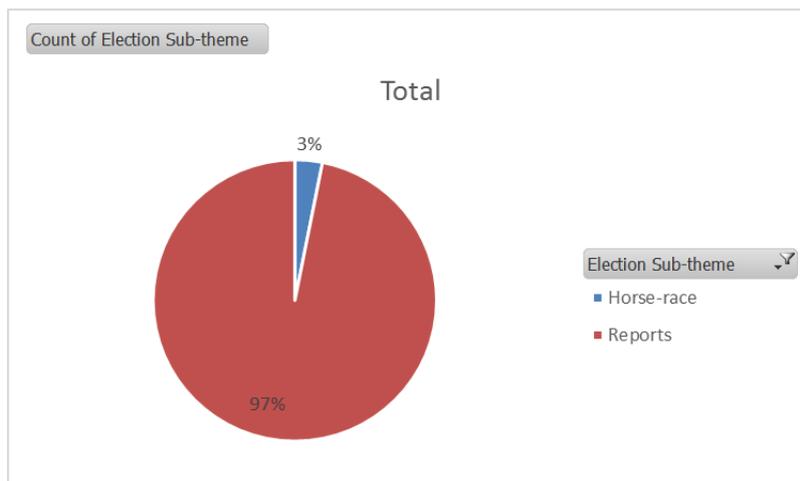
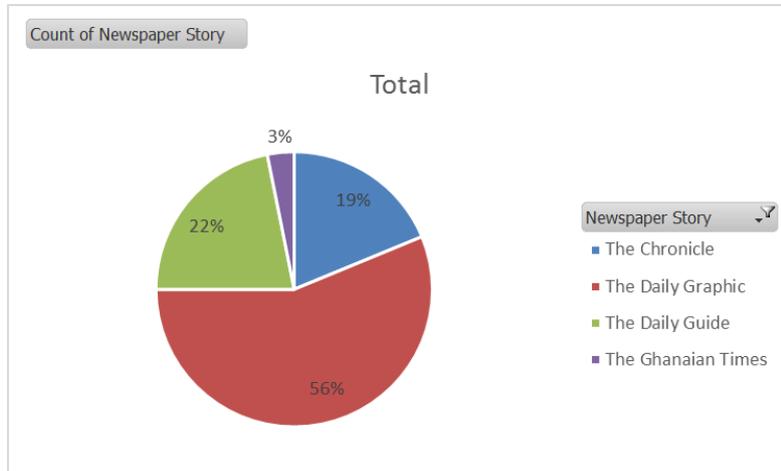
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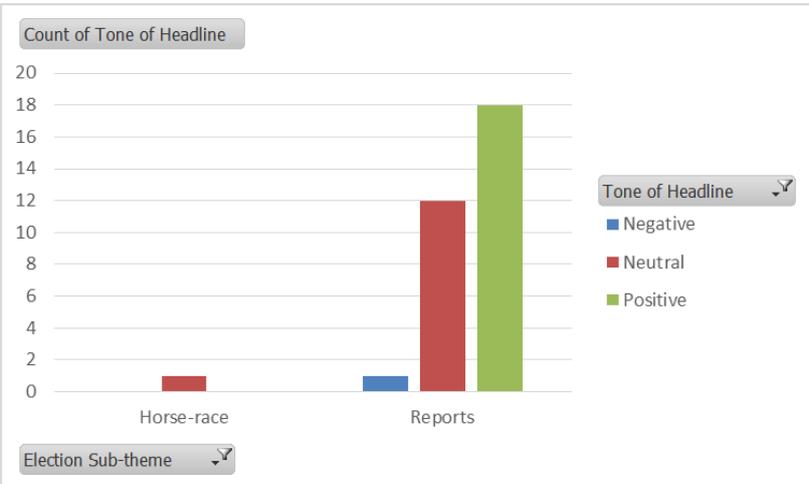
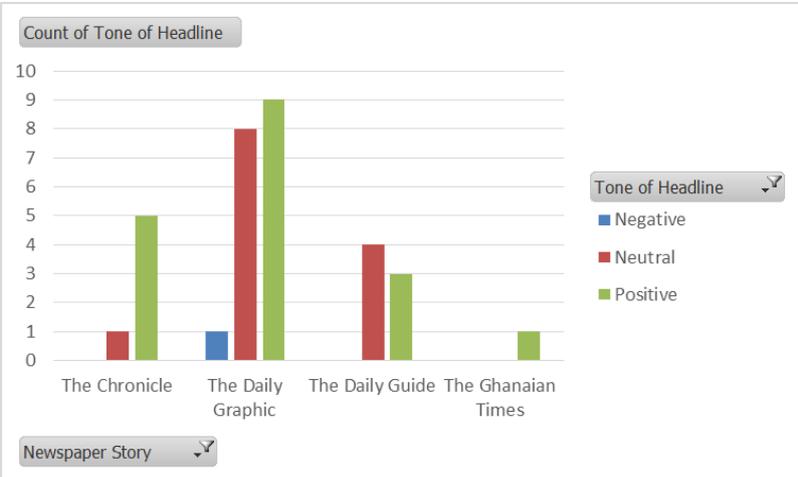
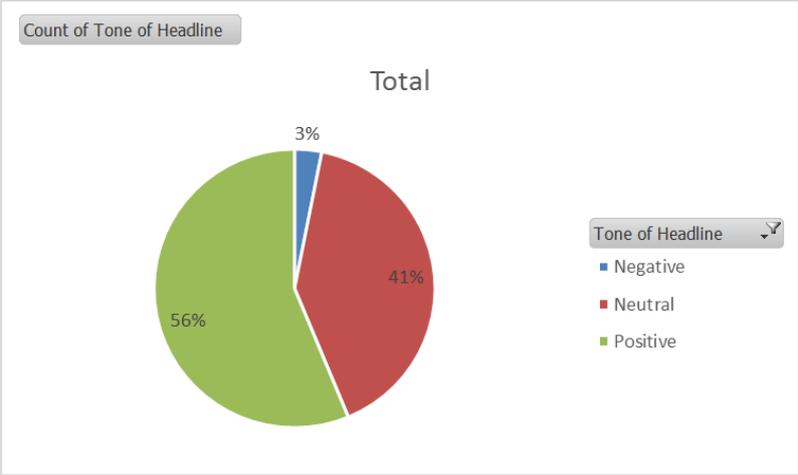
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MEDIA	PUBLICATION TYPE	READERSHIP	CIRCULATION
Daily Graphic	Daily	270,000.00	90,000.00
Ghanaian Times	Daily	255,000.00	85,000.00
Daily Guide	Daily	225,000.00	75,000.00
Business & Financial Times	Tri-Weekly	165,000.00	55,000
The Chronicle	Daily	150,000.00	50,000
Ghanaian Observer	Tri-Weekly	120,000.00	40,000.00
The Finder	Daily	135,000.00	45,000.00
Business Week	weekly	75,000.00	25,000.00
The Heritage	Tri-Weekly	60,000.00	20,000.00
Today	Daily	75,000.00	25,000.00
Daily Dispatch	Daily	105,000.00	35,000.00
Daily Searchlight	Daily	75,000.00	25,000.00
Business Guide	weekly	75,000.00	25,000.00
Economy Times	weekly	45,000.00	15,000.00
The New Crusading Guide	Daily	75,000.00	25,000.00
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Graphic Business	weekly	135,000.00	45,000.00

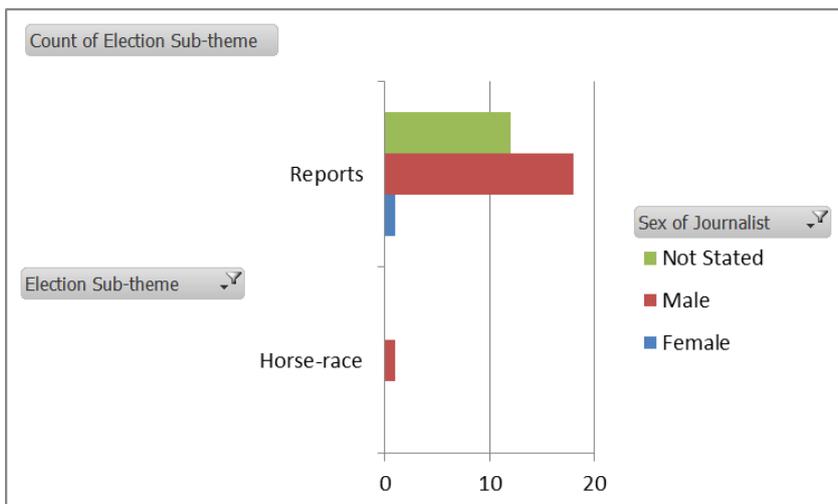
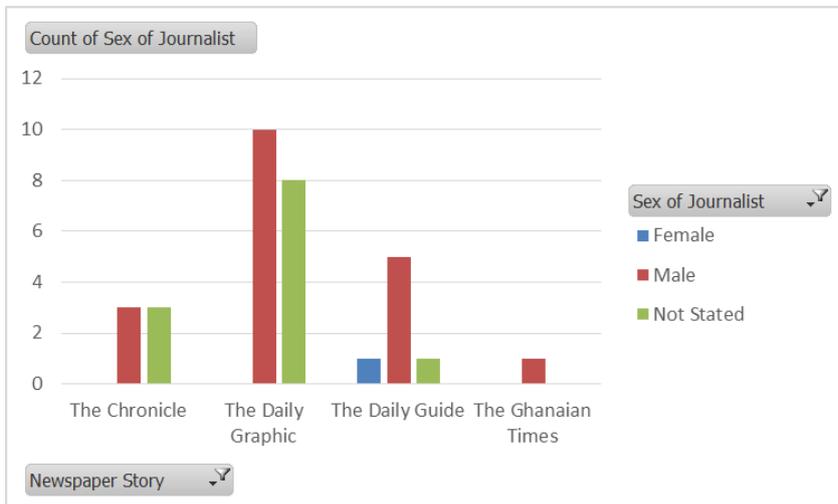
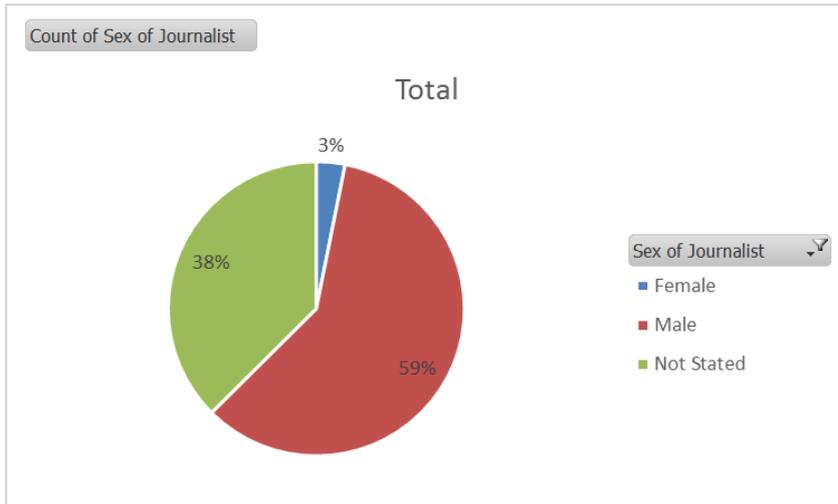
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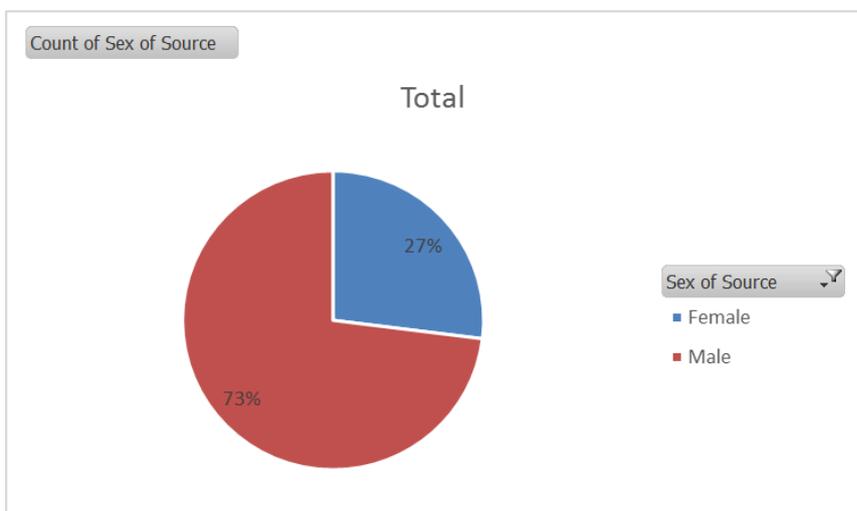
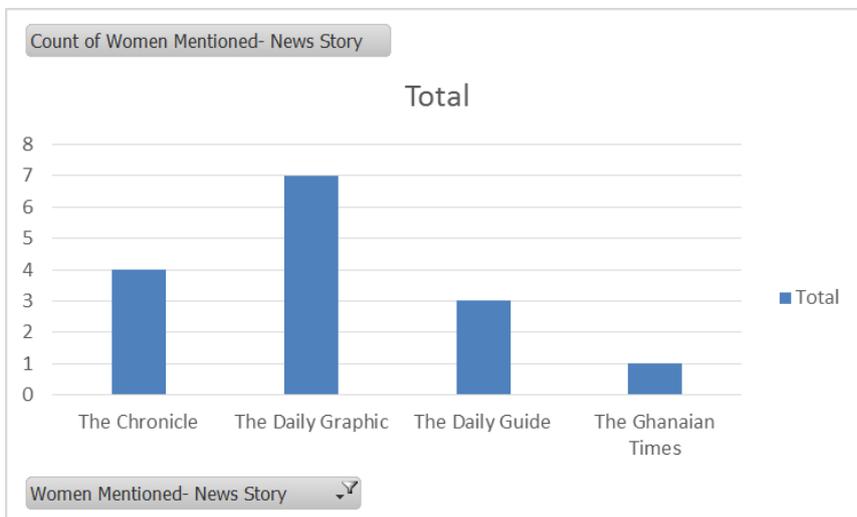
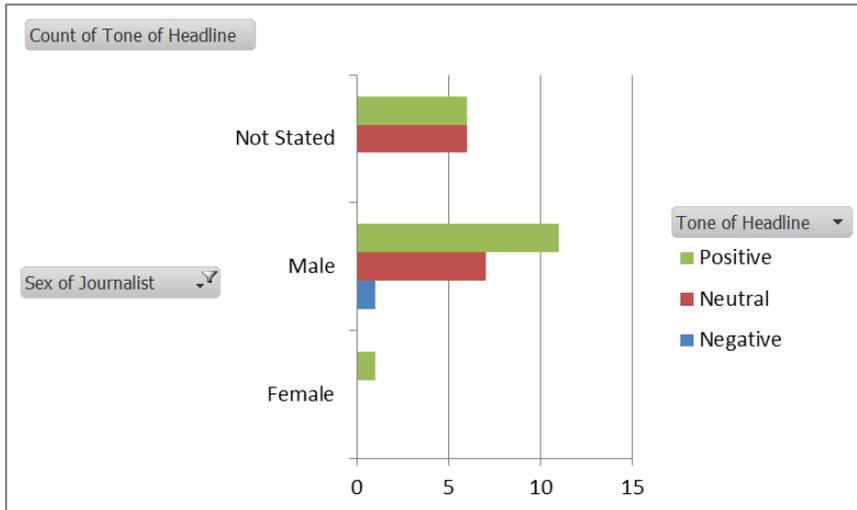
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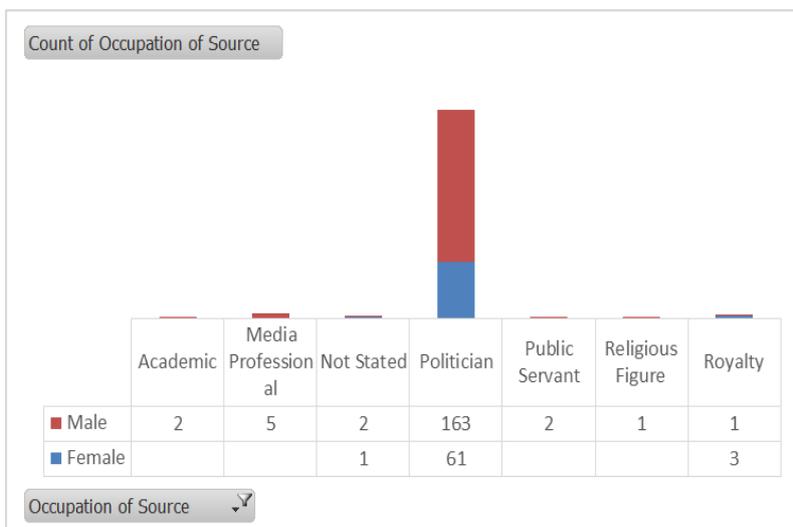
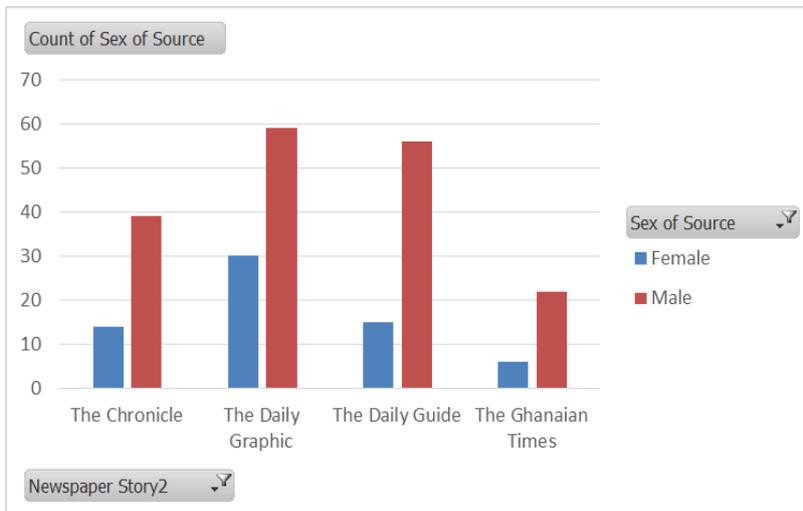
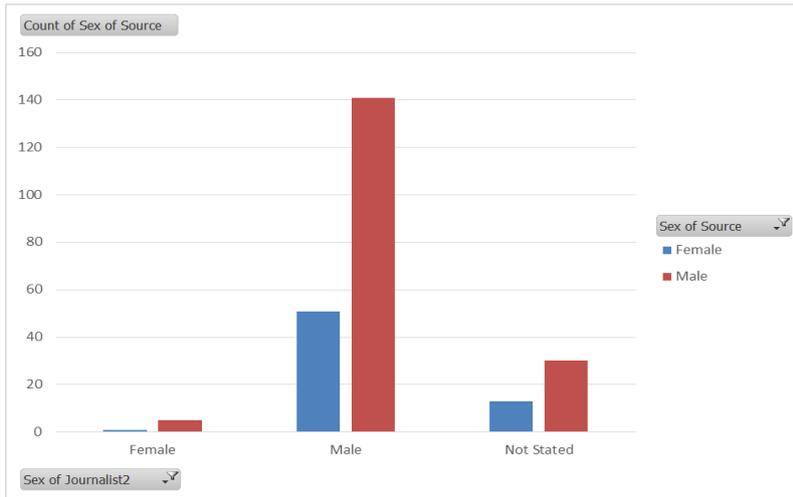
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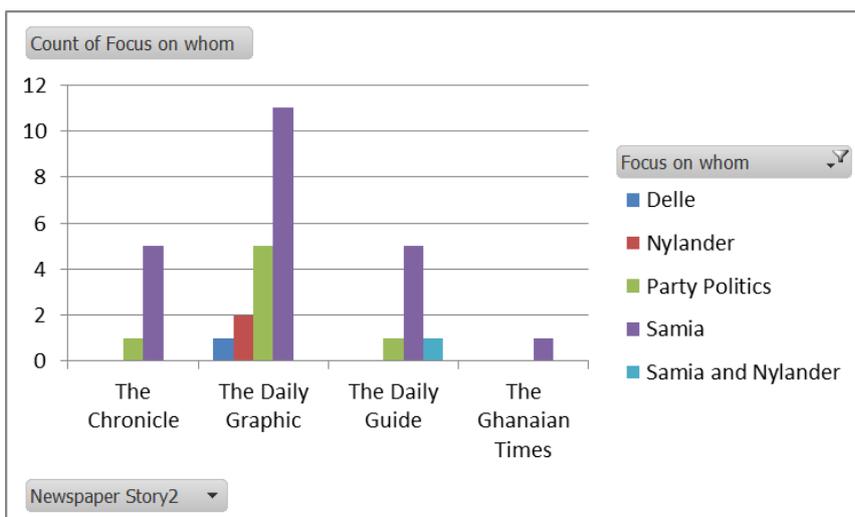
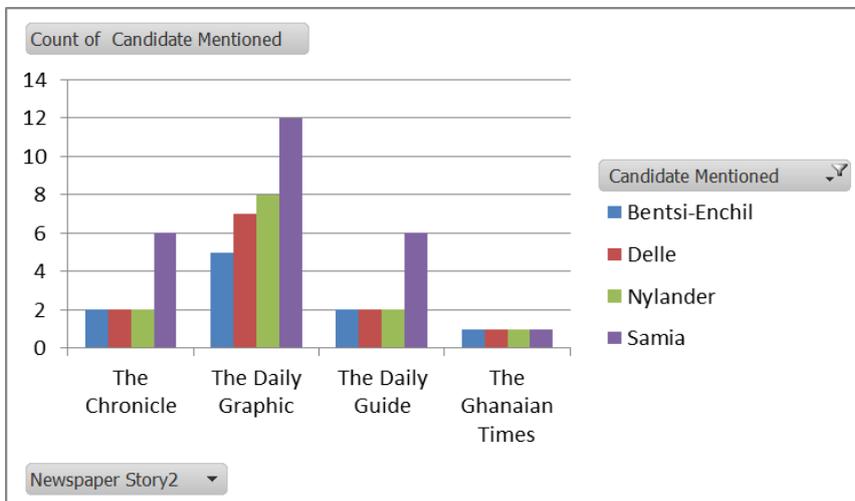
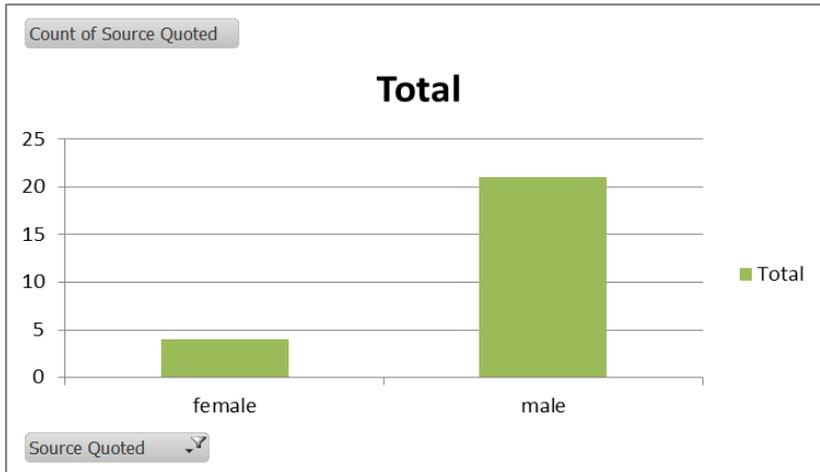


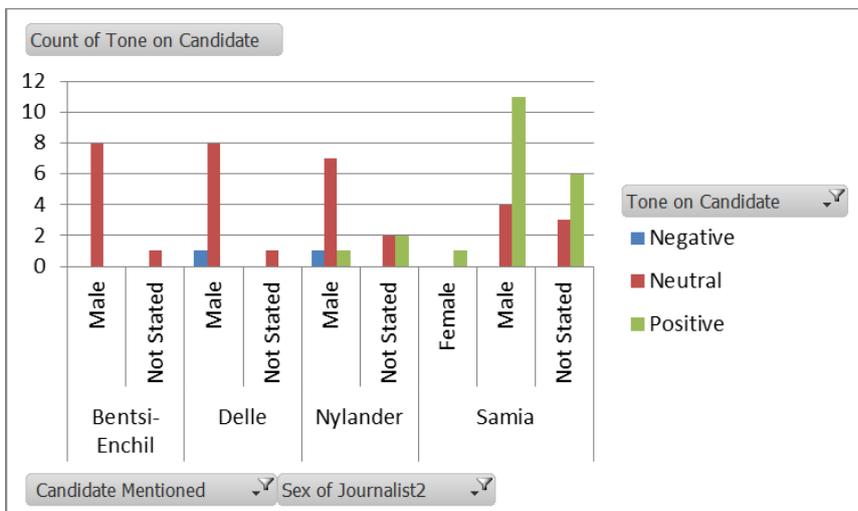
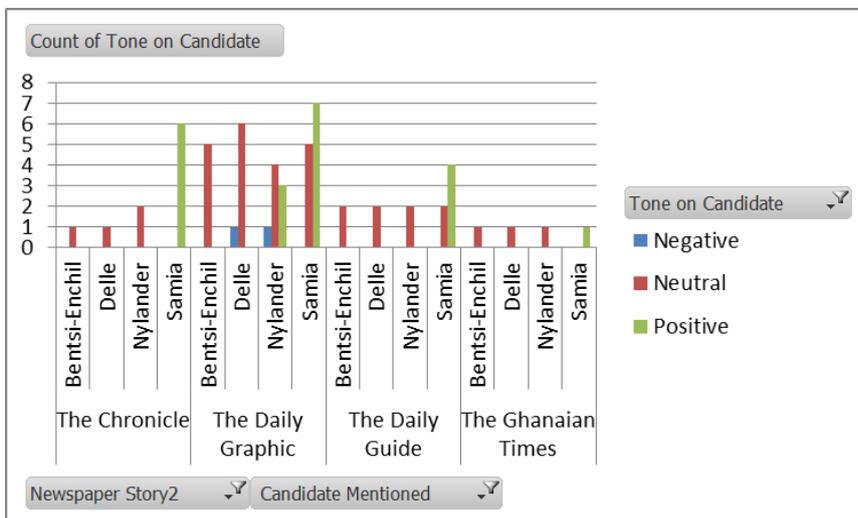
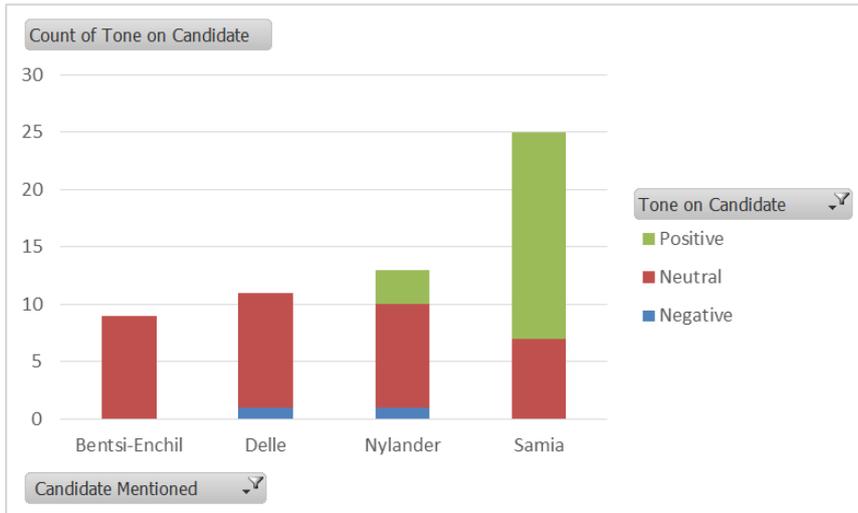


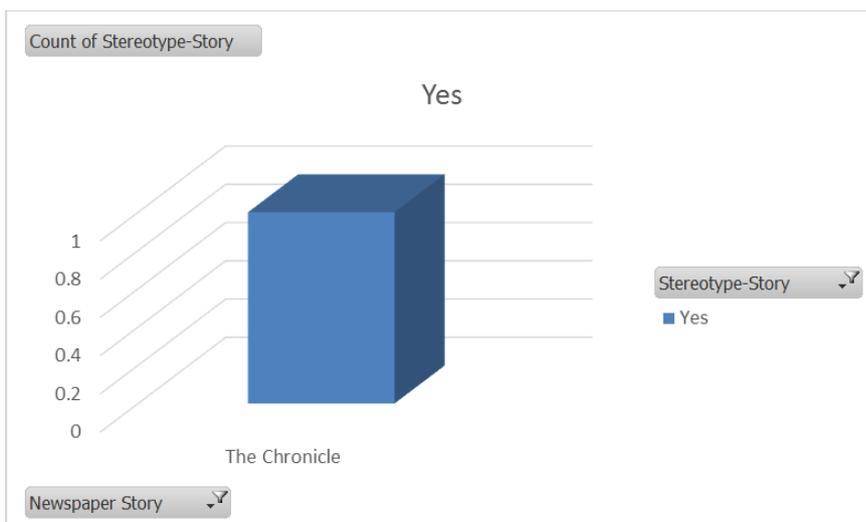
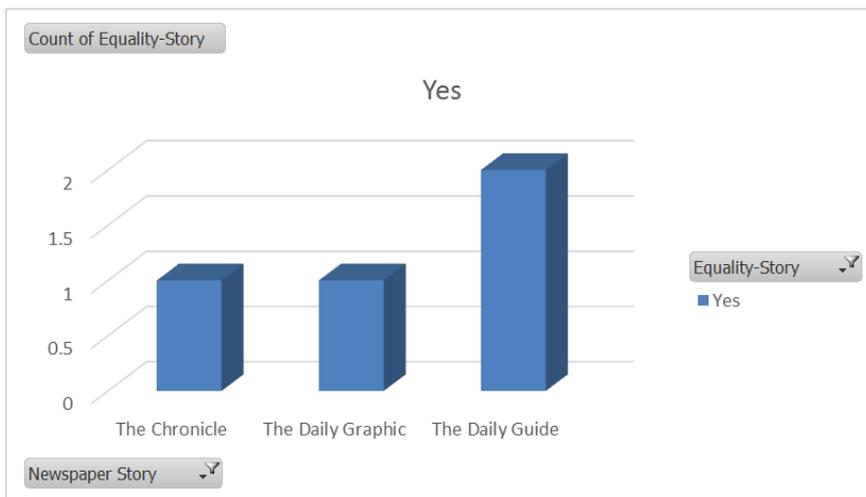
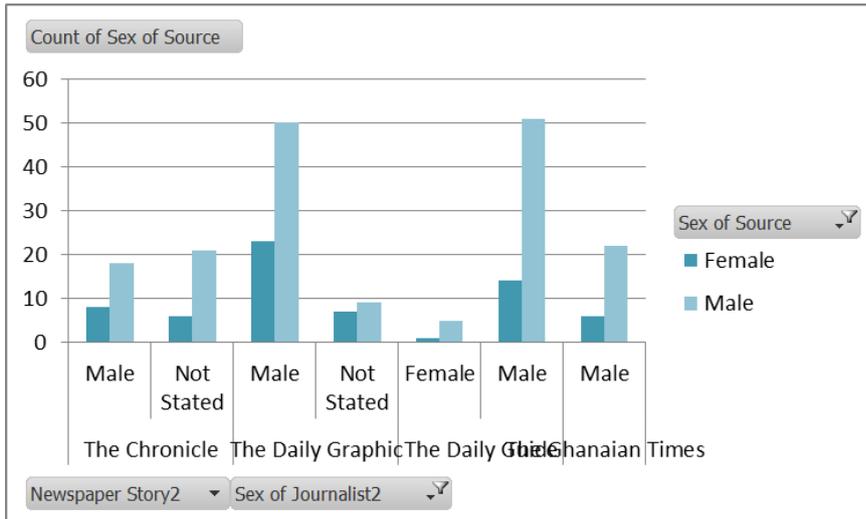






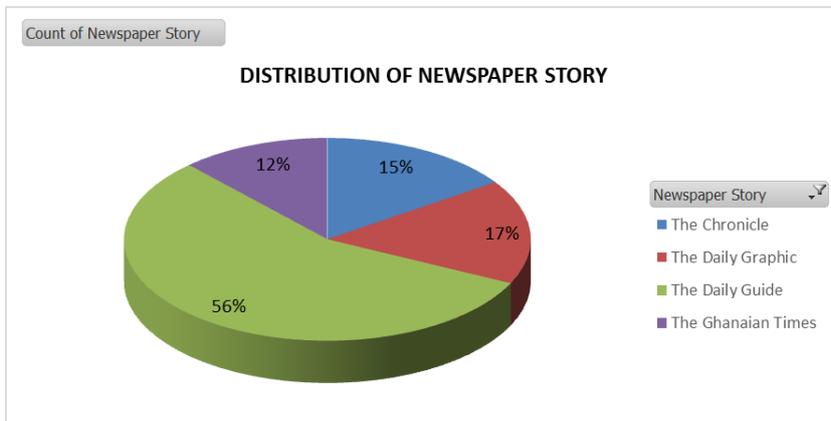




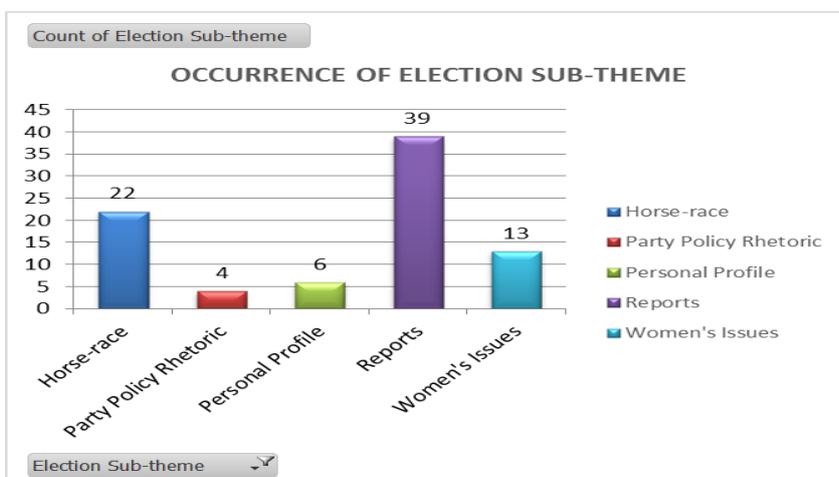
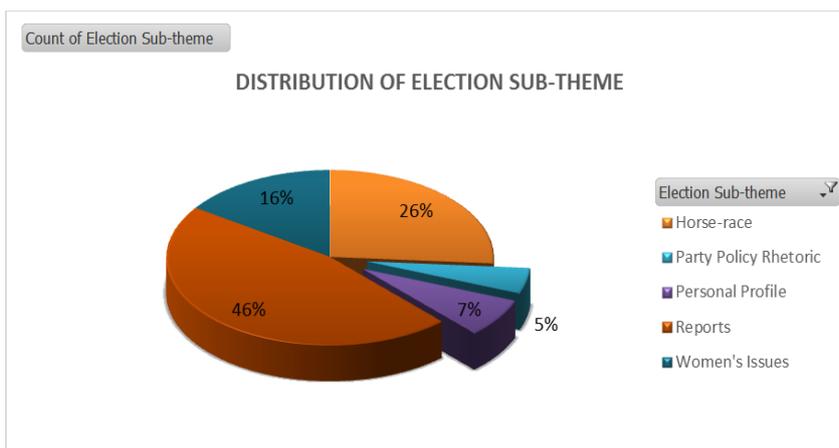


## Appendix L:

### Charts for Running Mate Race Showing Other Indicators and Across Newspapers

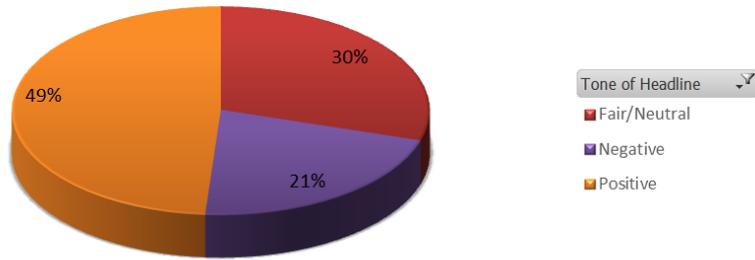


N- 84



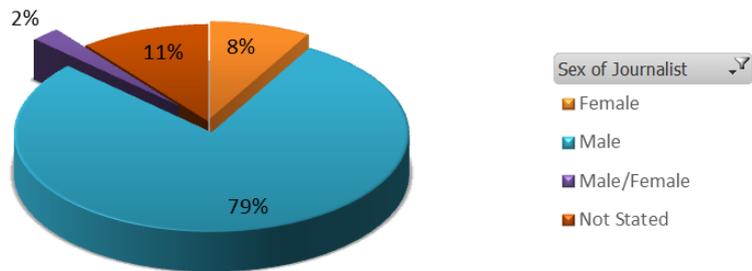
Count of Tone of Headline

### DISTRIBUTION OF TONE OF HEADLINE



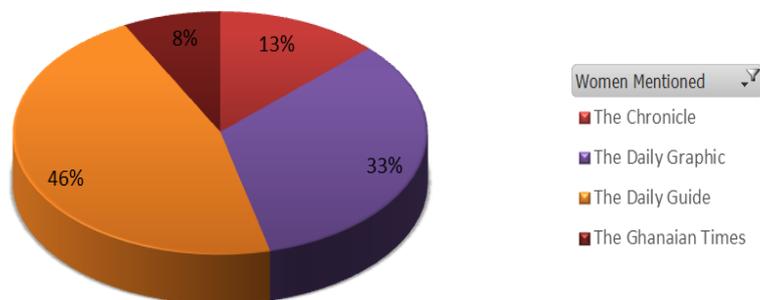
Count of Sex of Journalist

### DISTRIBUTION OF SEX OF JOURNALIST



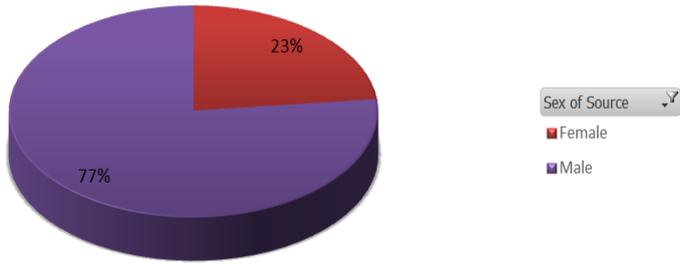
Count of Women Mentioned

### NUMBER OF NEWS ARTICLES THAT MENTIONED WOMEN



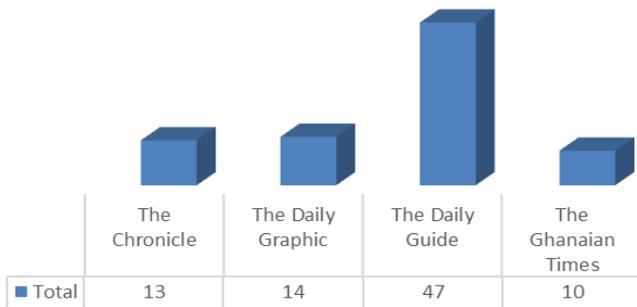
Count of Sex of Source

PERCENTAGE OF SEX OF SOURCE



Count of Newspaper Story

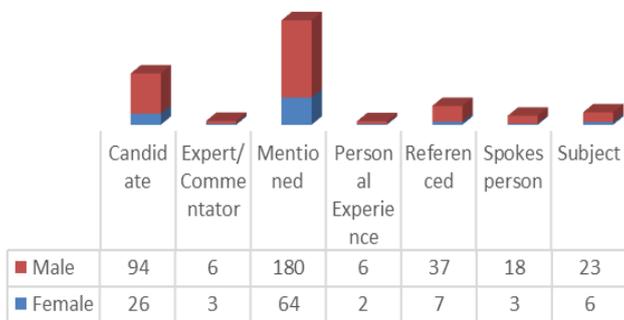
OCCUPATION OF SOURCE ACROSS SEX



Newspaper Story

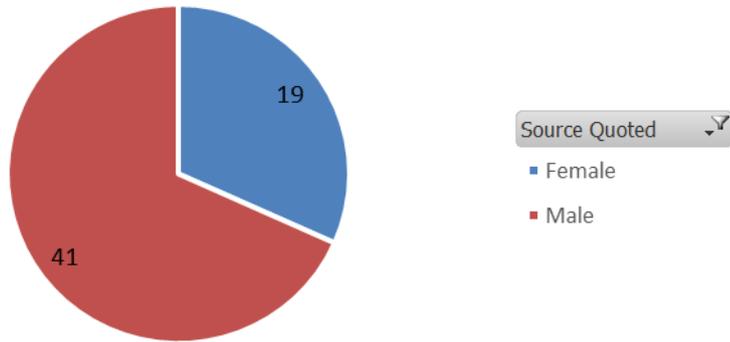
Count of Role of Source

ROLE OF SOURCE ACROSS SEX



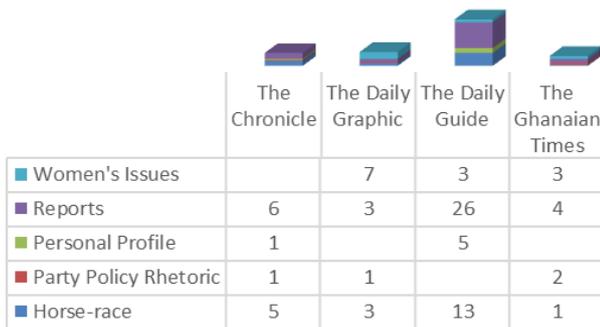
Role of Source

Count of Source Quoted



Count of Election Sub-theme

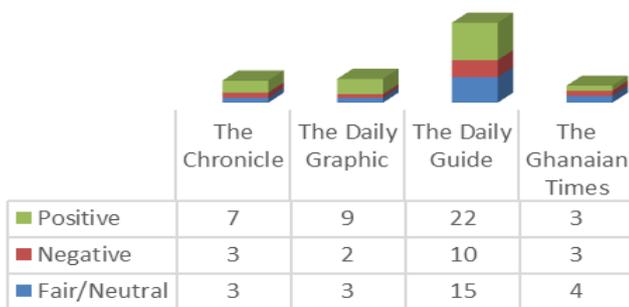
**ELECTION SUB-THEME ACROSS NEWSPAPERS**



Newspaper Story

Count of Tone of Headline

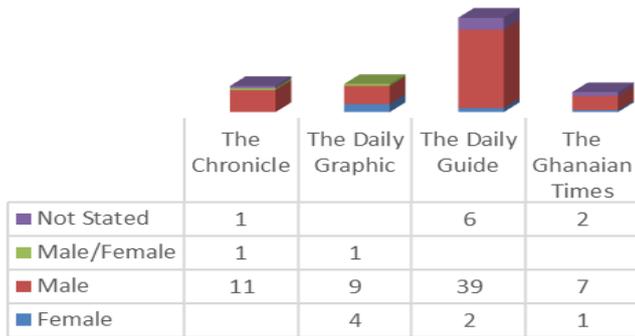
**TOPE OF HEADLINE ACROSS NEWSPAPERS**



Newspaper Story

Count of Sex of Journalist

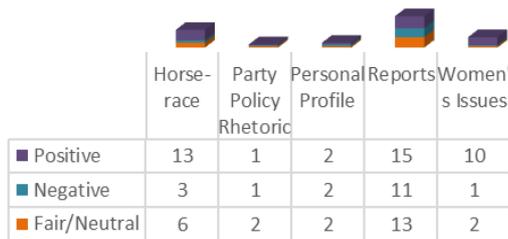
### SEX OF JOURNALIST ACROSS NEWSPAPERS



Newspaper Story

Count of Tone of Headline

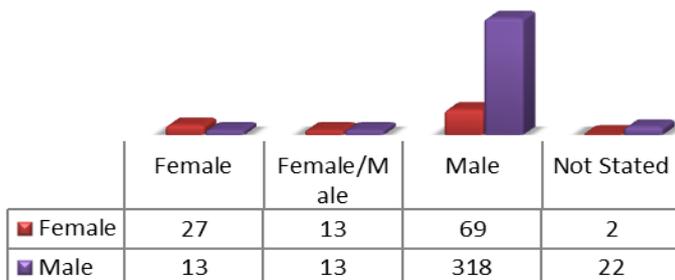
### COMPARING ELECTION SUB-THEME TO TONE OF HEADLINE



Election Sub-theme

Count of Sex of Source

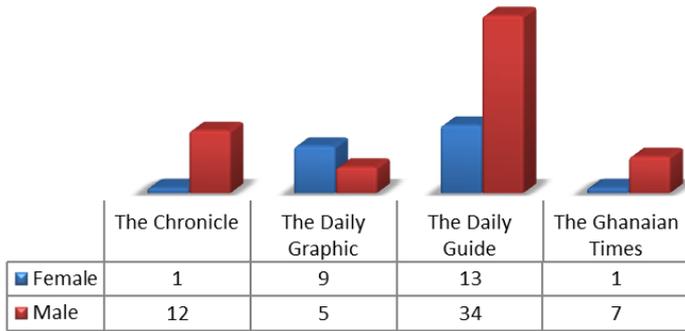
### COMPARING SEX OF JOURNALIST AND SEX OF SOURCE



Sex of Journalist2

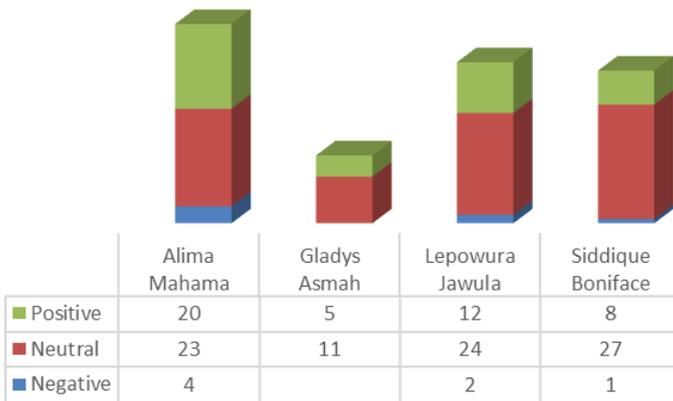
Count of Sex of Source

### DISTRIBUTION OF SEX OF SOURCE ACROSS NEWSPAPERS

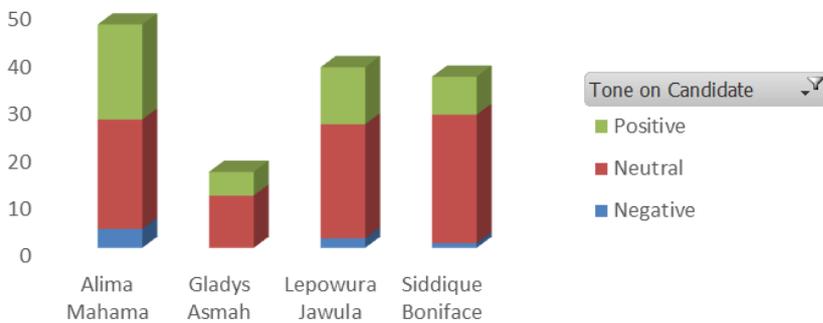


Newspaper Story

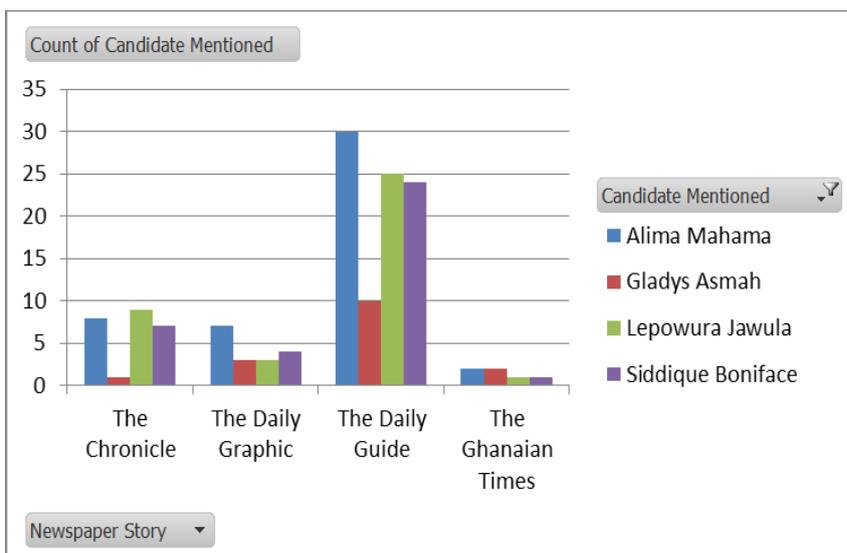
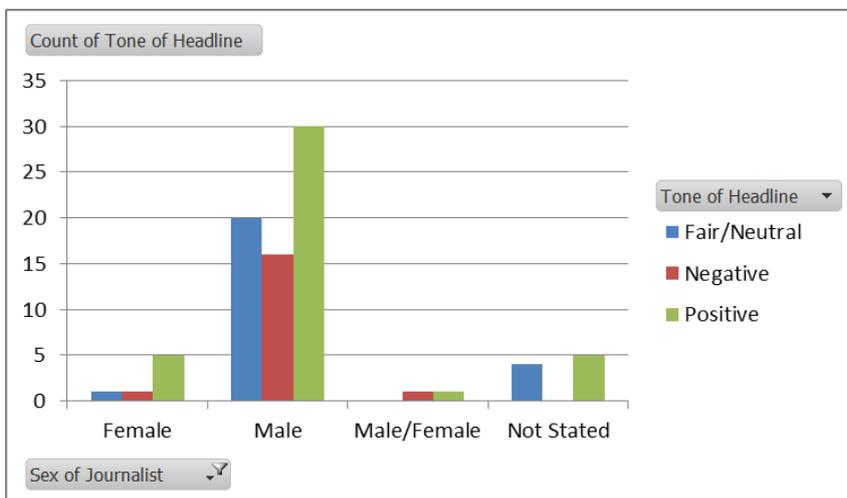
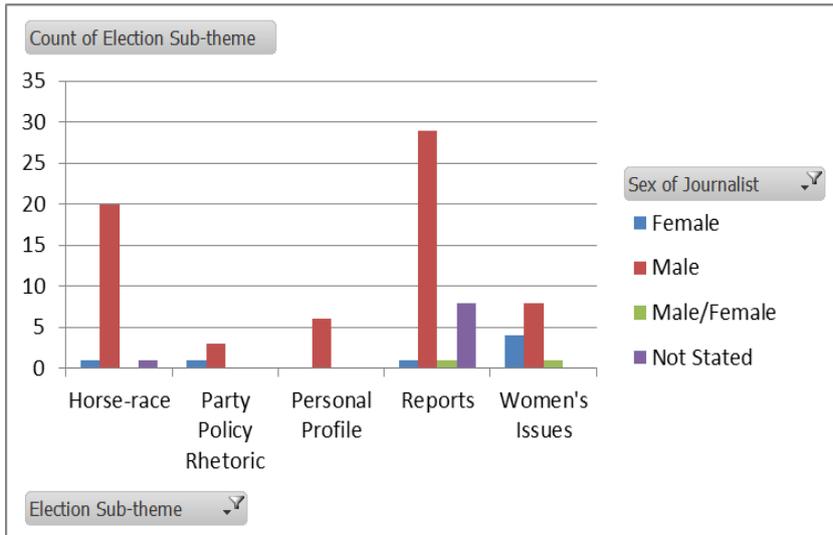
### DISTRIBUTION OF TONE ON CANDIDATE

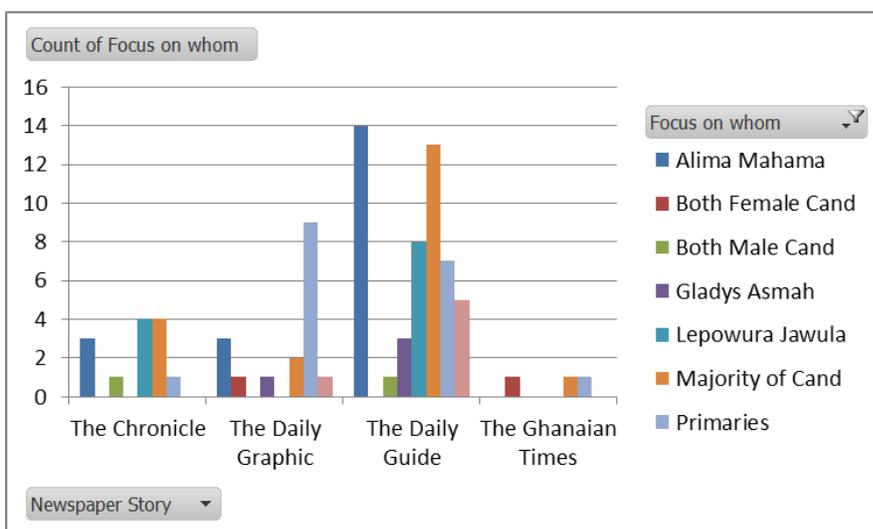
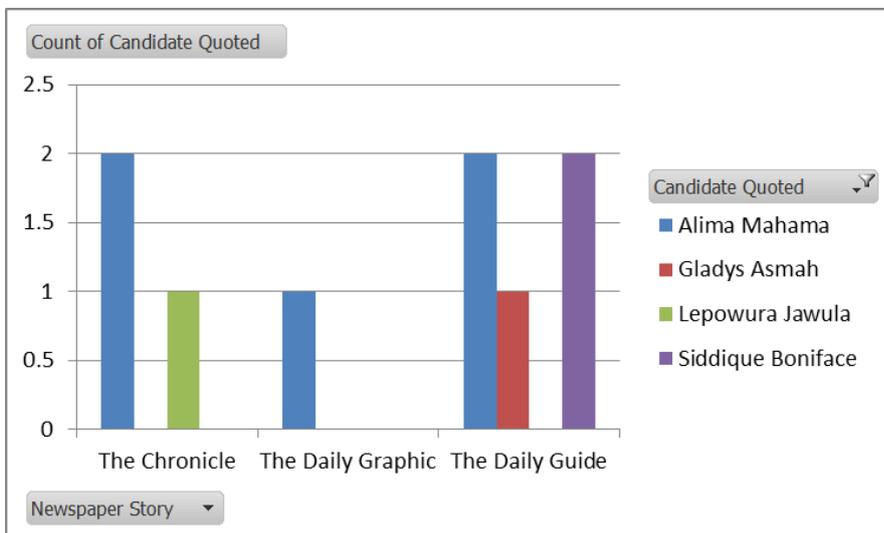
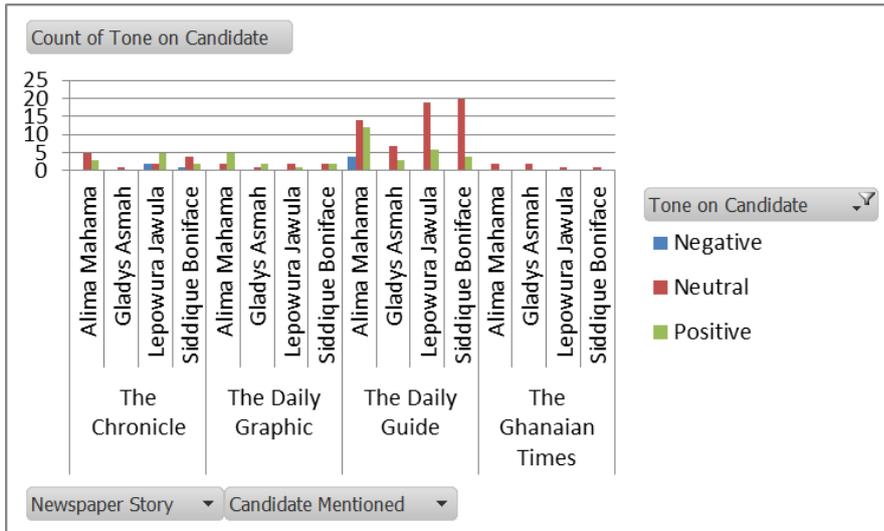


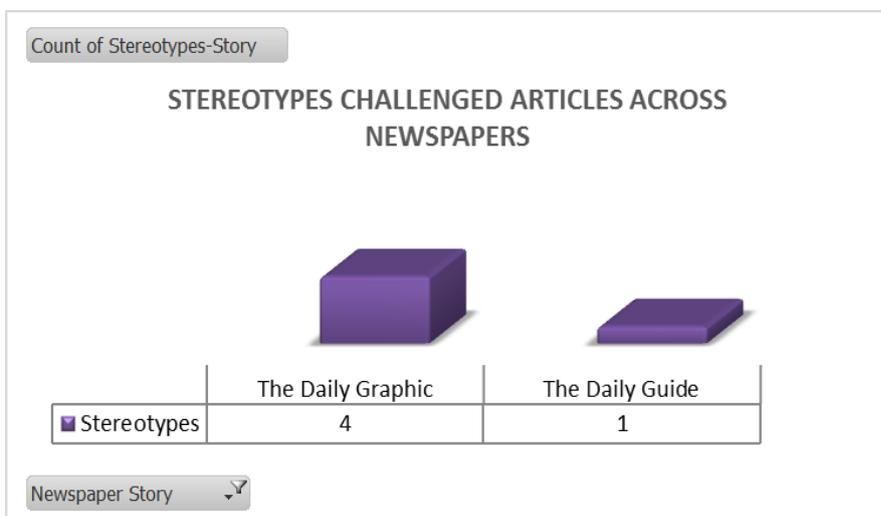
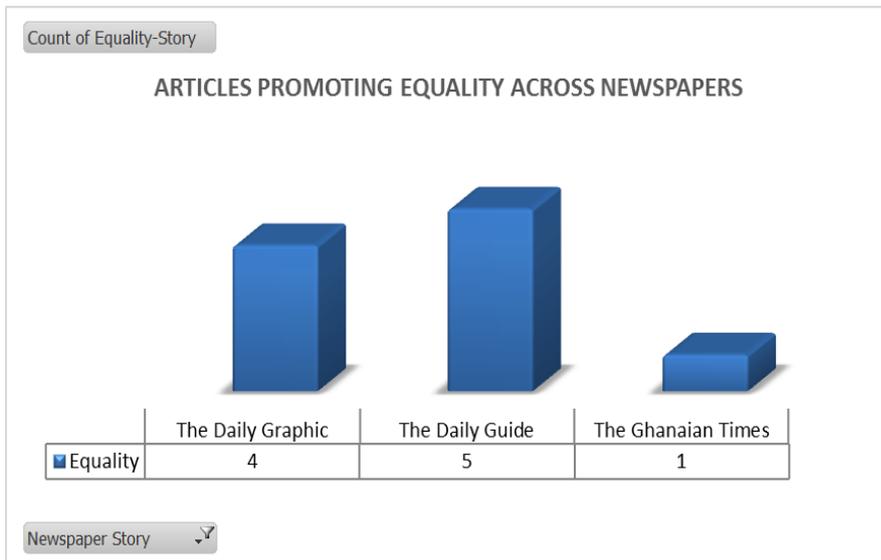
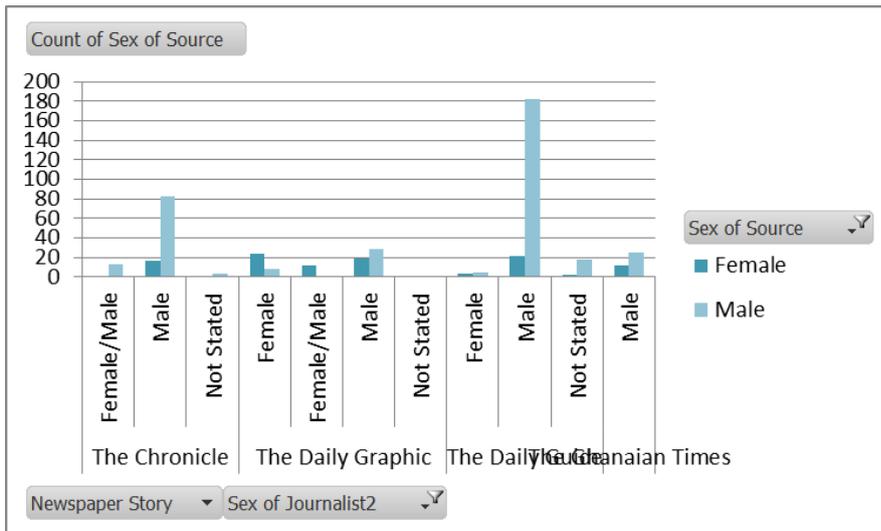
Count of Tone on Candidate



Candidate Mentioned







## Appendix M:

### Charts for Presidential Primary Race Showing Other Indicators and Across Newspapers

