



## Media Partisan Politics in Ghana: Tracing its Evolution under National Democratic Congress and New Patriotic Party Governments

Abdul Rashid Gbambu<sup>1\*</sup>  
Mohammed Gadafi Ibrahim<sup>2</sup>  
Rasaq M. Adisa<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>[argbambu@iug.edu.gh](mailto:argbambu@iug.edu.gh)

<sup>2</sup>[mgadafi@uds.edu.gh](mailto:mgadafi@uds.edu.gh)

<sup>3</sup>[adisa.rm@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:adisa.rm@unilorin.edu.ng)

<sup>1</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7877-6763>

<sup>2</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3936-0831>

<sup>3</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3790-2195>

<sup>1</sup>Islamic University College, Ghana (IUCG), <sup>2</sup>University for Development Studies, <sup>1,2</sup>Ghana, <sup>3</sup>University of Ilorin, Nigeria

**Recommended Reference:** Gbambu, A. R., Ibrahim, M. G., & Adisa, R. M. (2025). Perceived evolution of media partisan politics in Ghana: A comparative study of National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party governance. *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 2(3), 263–277. <https://doi.org/10.51867/AQSSR.2.3.23>

### ABSTRACT

This study explored the evolution of media coverage in Ghanaian politics by comparing the National Democratic Congress (NDC) under President John Dramani Mahama (2012–2016) with the New Patriotic Party (NPP) under President Nana Akufo-Addo (2017–2024). Using Agenda-Setting Theory, the study examined the changes in media coverage patterns, thematic trends, and the media's role in shaping public discourse, thereby shedding light on the complex interplay between media and politics in Ghana. Adopting a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 25 media professionals across six regions, selected via purposive and snowball sampling. In addition, 20 key news articles published between 2012 and 2024, were reviewed to identify patterns in political reporting. The target population comprised experienced journalists and media practitioners actively engaged in political communication. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that although political bias and media ownership influenced reporting, many journalists sustained a critical watchdog role. The media consistently held both administrations accountable by highlighting issues such as corruption, governance failures, and economic hardship. The study concluded that Ghana's media landscape, though politicised, continued to shape political narratives and public opinion. It recommended the promotion of press freedom, reform of media ownership structures, and the strengthening of ethical standards as necessary measures to preserve media independence and reinforce its democratic role.

**Keywords:** Ghana, Media Coverage, Partisan Politics, Press Freedom, Political Parties

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Ghanaian media ecosystem has witnessed a shift in coverage patterns, thematic trends, and its role in shaping public discourse, reflecting the complex interplay between media and politics in the country's democratic development, particularly during the Mahama and Akufo-Addo administrations. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions, political discourse, and democratic governance. The Ghanaian media has achieved these significant roles before, during, and after elections, facilitating communication between elected officials and the electorate. The media does not retire but continues its facilitating roles between elected officials and citizens until another election cycle begins, thereby strengthening the Ghanaian democratic process (Mumuni, 2020). However, a new trend has been observed about the behaviour of the media towards certain political trends in the country, especially the media coverage of the Ghanaian politics, particularly on the administrations of the former President John Dramani Mahama (2012–2016) led National Democratic Congress (NDC) (2012–2016) and the President Nana Akufo-Addo led New Patriotic Party (NPP) governments (2017–2024). The Ghanaian media landscape, like many other countries, has undergone significant transformations over the years, influenced by technological advancements, political dynamics, and societal changes. The media landscape in Ghana encompasses a diverse array of traditional and digital platforms, each playing a significant role in shaping public discourse and political narratives (Mumuni, 2020). Traditional media outlets, including newspapers, television stations, and radio stations, have long been recognised as primary sources of news and information for the Ghanaian populace. In recent years, however, the rise of social media platforms has introduced new

dynamics to the media landscape, amplifying voices and enabling citizen journalism (Isbell & Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018).

Understanding the evolution of media coverage in Ghanaian politics provides valuable insights into the interaction between media and political power, as well as its implications for democratic processes. Ghana's political landscape is characterised by a multi-party system, with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) being the dominant political entities. Since its transition to multi-party democracy in 1992 (Asante, 2020), Ghana has experienced alternating periods of NDC and NPP governance, each marked by distinct policy priorities, governance styles, and political dynamics.

Throughout these periods, the media has served as a vital conduit for information dissemination, public debate, and political accountability. During the tenure of the NDC government, led by President John Dramani Mahama, the media coverage often was perceived as bias as a result of critical scrutiny of government actions (Osei, 2016). Developmental projects carried out by the government were sometimes shielded from the public, while instances of black propaganda against the government were reported. Instances like the school E-blocks, government's efforts on solving electricity power crisis and among others, were all shielded from the public by the media. Conversely, the NPP, while in opposition and particularly under the leadership of President Nana Akufo-Addo as a president, benefited from favourable media coverage, with the media sometimes criticised for its perceived alignment with the government's agenda (Afful, 2016).

Recent years have witnessed a shift in media dynamics, with journalists and media organisations openly criticising the NPP government and President Nana Akufo-Addo. Unlike previous administrations, where political analysts often led critiques against the government, journalists are now taking a more assertive role in analysing and scrutinising government actions. This shift in media stance raises questions about the factors driving these changes and their implications for media credibility, democratic discourse, and governance. Against this backdrop, this research seeks to explore the evolution of media coverage in Ghanaian politics, focusing on the administrations of the NDC and NPP governments.

Several studies have examined the nexus between media and politics in Ghana and comparable contexts. Moehler and Conroy-Krutz (2016), for instance, investigated the effects of partisan media exposure on political engagement in newly liberalised systems, with Ghana serving as a key case study. Afful (2016), similarly offered critical insights into how the media constructs and frames political narratives during electoral processes. While these contributions are valuable, they do not address the underlying factors influencing shifts in political media coverage across different governmental administrations, particularly under Presidents Mahama and Akufo-Addo. Building on this gap, the present study explores changes in media coverage patterns, thematic orientations, and the broader role of the media in shaping public discourse. In doing so, it illuminates the complex interplay between media practices and political power in Ghana. This inquiry is significant for policymakers, media practitioners, and civil society actors, as it provides a basis for strengthening media integrity and accountability. Moreover, the study contributes to academic scholarship on media-politics dynamics in developing democracies, offering perspectives that can enrich debates on democratic consolidation and governance in Ghana.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the media's crucial role in shaping political discourse in Ghana, there is limited understanding of how media coverage has evolved under different governments. Existing studies (Conroy-Krutz and Moehler, 2016; Afful, 2016), rarely compare the approaches and influence of the media during the National Democratic Congress (2012-2016) and the New Patriotic Party (2017-2024) administrations. This study aimed to close the gap by examining the changes in media coverage patterns, thematic trends, and the media's role in shaping public discourse, thus shedding light on the complex interplay between media and politics in Ghana.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to critically analyse the evolution of media coverage in Ghanaian politics, with the specific objectives as follows:

- i. Examine how media coverage evolved under the NDC (2012-2016) and NPP (2017-2024) administrations in Ghana.
- ii. Analyse the media's role in shaping public perception and holding government accountable across both periods.
- iii. Investigate how media ownership and political affiliations influenced reporting and journalistic practices.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

The study draws on Agenda-Setting Theory to explore the media's impact on public perception and political discourse, particularly in Ghana under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) administrations. McCombs and Shaw (1972), argue that while the media doesn't dictate thoughts, it shapes public attention by selectively highlighting certain issues, thereby influencing the public agenda. Key concepts include the media agenda, which prioritises issues, the public agenda, reflecting public concern, and the policy agenda, which outlines topics for legislative action (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Despite its relevance, Agenda-Setting Theory faces criticism for oversimplification, as it doesn't fully address the complexities of public opinion formation. Critics argue that audiences actively engage with media content rather than passively absorbing it (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The theory also overlooks the influence of social media and alternative news sources (Boulianne, 2015). However, it remains a crucial framework for analysing media's role in shaping political discourse, especially in the context of Ghana's media landscape.

### 2.2 Conceptual issues

#### 2.2.1 Concept of Media Convergence

Media convergence refers to the integration of digital technologies with traditional media, blending print, broadcast, and online platforms. Traditional media organisations now increasingly use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram, to share updates and engage with audiences. At the same time, social media has democratized news production, allowing ordinary citizens and political commentators to contribute to public discourse and share their views on current events (Jenkins et al., 2016). The accessibility and immediacy of social media empower individuals to engage in political discussions, share information, and mobilise support.

Scholars in media studies have explored media convergence extensively. Green and Jenkins (2009), discuss how technological advancements and changes in media consumption drive the convergence of platforms, content, and audiences. Schejter and Tirosh (2014), focus on how media industries have transformed in the digital age, integrating previously separate sectors. Castleberry (2024), highlights the participatory nature of media convergence and the spread of content across platforms. This study examines how traditional media, citizens, and political commentators use social media in Ghanaian politics, shedding light on evolving media consumption, digital adaptation, and the impact of political commentary on public discourse.

#### 2.2.2 Media Bias

Media bias refers to the perceived inclination of media outlets to favour certain viewpoints, ideologies, or political parties over others. The concept of media bias has its roots in communication and journalism studies, with scholars such as Lippmann (1992) and Cohen (1963) being early proponents. Lippmann (1992) argued that media organisations play a crucial role in shaping public opinion by selectively emphasising certain perspectives and downplaying others. Cohen (1963) further explored the concept of media bias, suggesting that media coverage reflects the biases and assumptions of journalists and editors. From a critical perspective, however, media bias cannot be reduced merely to the predispositions of journalists or institutions, as structural, organisational, and systemic factors shape news coverage in ways that influence what issues are reported and how they are framed (Santia, Willnat & Jastrzebski, 2025). It must also be understood within broader socio-political and economic contexts that shape news production. In societies such as Ghana, where partisan divides are deeply entrenched, media ownership structures, audience expectations, and political patronage contribute significantly to framing biases. Thus, analysing media bias requires going beyond individual newsroom decisions to interrogate how structural conditions, political economy, and historical legacies influence the slant of coverage.

#### 2.2.3 Discourse on Media and Political Communication

The media plays a pivotal role in political communication, serving as a conduit through which information, ideas, and opinions are disseminated to the public. In democratic societies, the media serves several key functions in the political process, including informing, educating, and mobilising citizens (Perloff, 2021; Wolfsfeld, 2022; Davis, 2023).

The media plays a key role in political communication by informing citizens about current events, government actions, and policy debates (Jenkins et al., 2016). Through news reporting and investigative journalism, the media provides relevant information to help citizens make informed decisions (Harcup, 2021). It also educates the public on complex political issues through in-depth reporting, documentaries, and public affairs programming, allowing citizens to understand the implications of government decisions (Pickard, 2020). Furthermore, the media mobilises civic



engagement by raising awareness, advocating for change, and amplifying voices through editorials and campaigns (Jenkins et al., 2016; Couldry et al., 2014). While the media performs these crucial functions, its effectiveness in shaping political communication is often mediated by ownership structures, political affiliations, and editorial biases, which can influence both the framing of issues and the level of public engagement (Spinde et al., 2023).

#### **2.2.4 Evolution of Media Landscapes in Developing Countries in West Africa**

The media landscape in West Africa's developing nations has seen profound changes due to socio-political, economic, and technological influences. Traditional media like newspapers and radio stations, such as Ghana's Daily Graphic and Joy FM, have historically been vital in information dissemination (Andani & Antwi-Boateng, 2021; Mathenge, 2021).

The rise of digital technologies, particularly the internet and social media, has led to a notable shift. Platforms like Sahara Reporters in Nigeria have gained prominence for investigative journalism (Kperogi, 2016; Suleiman, 2017). However, challenges like limited internet access and misinformation on social media platforms persist (Allcott et al., 2019; Okoro et al., 2024). Mobile technology plays a pivotal role, especially among rural populations, allowing access to news and information through devices like mobile phones. Mobile-based platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook serve as tools for citizen mobilisation (Uwalaka & Nwala, 2023).

Despite ongoing challenges, various innovative initiatives across Africa have helped promote transparency and accountability. Civic technology platforms enable citizens to report governance issues and access public data, strengthening oversight (Meier, 2015). Mobile and digital technologies have expanded civic participation, especially where traditional media is limited (Mutsvairo, 2016). Community radio stations like Radio Taboo in Sierra Leone amplify marginalised voices (Kargobai, 2017). West Africa's media landscape is evolving rapidly with the proliferation of digital platforms and mobile technology. While presenting new opportunities for participation and democratisation, it also poses challenges that require attention to ensure an inclusive media environment.

#### **2.2.5 The Intersection of Politics and Media: A Historical Overview of Ghanaian Media Landscape.**

Ghana's media landscape has undergone significant changes from the colonial era to the present, closely tied to the nation's political evolution. During the colonial period, the media primarily served British interests, but the emergence of African-owned newspapers marked the beginning of the media's involvement in political activism and anti-colonial movements (Makananise & Madima, 2024; Okocha et al., 2023). After independence, under Kwame Nkrumah's leadership, the state-controlled media became tools for nation-building but also for suppressing dissent, particularly through laws like the Preventive Detention Act (Ansah, 1979). The return to multiparty democracy in the 1990s marked a turning point, with the media playing a critical role in shaping political discourse. Independent outlets like The Chronicle and Joy FM provided diverse perspectives on government actions (Asante, 2020; Karikari, 2018). Despite media bias, often linked to political affiliations, the media has remained a vital institution in promoting democratic principles, particularly during elections (Mumuni, 2020).

In the digital era, the rise of social media has transformed political communication, allowing greater public engagement but also introducing challenges such as misinformation and polarisation (Van Gyampo, 2017). Traditional media continues to coexist with online platforms, but concerns about media ownership concentration and government regulation, such as the Right to Information Act, reflect ongoing debates about media independence (Martin, 2020; Noam, 2016).

#### **2.2.6 Media Ownership, Political Bias and Implications for Democracy**

Media ownership significantly affects the political orientation and editorial stance of media outlets (Ranttila, 2020). Scholars (Curran & Seaton, 2018) argue that media ownership concentration can promote specific political ideologies, with conglomerates framing political narratives to align with their interests. Studies on media bias (Leeper & Slothuus, 2020; Bennett & Kneuer, 2024; Bennett & Livingston, 2018) show how media outlets often exhibit partisan biases, favouring certain political parties or ideologies. Ownership influences news selection, which may lead to underrepresentation or misrepresentation of opposing viewpoints (Bennett & Kneuer, 2024). Scholars (Hallin, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 2008) argue that media bias can undermine democracy by limiting diverse perspectives and critical scrutiny, eroding public trust and threatening democratic governance.

#### **2.2.7 Political Economy of the Media**

The Political Economy of the Media theory, developed in the late 20th century by scholars like Herman and Chomsky (2008), offers a critical framework for evaluating media coverage in Ghanaian politics. It highlights the complex relationship between media institutions, economic interests, and political power (Miroshnichenko, 2024). The Political Economy of the Media theory argues that media systems are shaped by economic and political forces rather

than being neutral. It highlights key factors like media ownership concentration, profit-driven editorial decisions, reliance on advertising revenue, and susceptibility to influence from political and corporate elites, all of which shape public discourse (Herman & Chomsky, 2008).

Despite its strengths, the Political Economy of the Media theory has faced criticism for neglecting the roles of media professionals and audiences, as well as cultural and socioeconomic influences on media content. However, it remains highly relevant to this study by providing valuable insights into Ghanaian media coverage of political events. This framework helps to understand the dynamics between media, economics, and politics, enabling the identification of biases, influences, and power dynamics that shape political discourse and democratic processes.

### 2.3 Empirical Review

Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz and Devra C. Moehler's 2015 study on Ghana's liberalised media system revealed that while partisan and nonpartisan media increased political interest, they did not boost participation. Cross-cutting media exposure reduced engagement due to ambivalence, underscoring the complexity of media influence. This aligns with Agenda-Setting Theory, highlighting media's role in shaping public perceptions during the Mahama and Akufo-Addo administrations. (Conroy-Krutz & Moehler, 2015).

Shardow and Asare (2016), explores how media ownership structures in Ghana affect the independence of the press and its capacity to perform its watchdog role. The study reveals that affiliations between media owners and political actors often constrain investigative journalism, as editorial content tends to align with the interests of proprietors. This situation fosters self-censorship and undermines the objectivity of reporting, thereby compromising the media's contribution to democratic accountability. These findings are pertinent to the present study as they highlight the influence of political ownership on journalistic professionalism and the framing of political narratives in Ghana.

Ebo Afful's 2016 study examines media bias in the 2008 and 2012 Ghanaian elections, revealing a preference for the NPP candidate over the incumbent, challenging the idea that incumbents benefit from media bias. Afful suggests that the media, as gatekeepers, selectively highlighted opposition narratives, manipulating political discourse and undermining democratic processes. The study underscores the media's influence in shaping public perception and argues that such bias violates the ethical standards of journalistic neutrality and objectivity (Afful, 2016).

While all studies provide critical insights into media's political role, they leave gaps regarding the factors influencing shifts in political media coverage during Mahama's and Akufo-Addo's administrations. This research seeks to address those gaps by exploring the evolution of media coverage across these two administrations in Ghana.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilised a qualitative approach to examine the evolution of media practices and their influence on political dynamics in Ghana. A qualitative approach was selected to gain deep insights into the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders in the media sector and to analyse media coverage of political events over an extended period.

Data collection took place across several regions of Ghana, with a particular focus on major urban centres, including Accra, Takoradi, Cape Coast, Kumasi, Tamale, and Ho. This geographic diversity allowed the study to capture a wide range of experiences related to media practices and political reporting, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the media's role in different socio-political contexts.

The study involved 25 key informants, including journalists and media professionals, selected through purposive and snowball sampling to ensure diverse expertise in media and political communication. Maximum variation sampling further enriched the analysis by capturing a wide range of perspectives on media practices and their impact on Ghana's political landscape. In addition to interviews, the study analysed 20 news articles from 2012 to 2024, focusing on key political events and evolving media practices to track changes in coverage over time. This thematic analysis provided insights into how media reporting influenced public perceptions and political communication in Ghana.

Thematic analysis was applied to the combined data from interviews and document reviews, allowing for the identification of patterns and themes. The analysis highlighted key themes such as shifts in political reporting, changes in media coverage, and the broader implications for political communication in Ghana.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained, with assurances that participants' identities would be protected and their responses used solely for research purposes. Therefore, to further protect the identity of the informants, the following code names were created and used for the analysis according to their journalistic sequence and locational Regions in Ghana (Accra - Great Accra Region, Kumasi -Asante Region, Takoradi - Western Region, Tamale- Northern Region, Bolgatanga-Upper West Region, and Ho-Volta Region), thus for few examples: Inf. AME1, Inf. AVJ8, Inf. KRP14, Inf. TTVM19, Inf. TMTVH22, Inf. BGRP24, and Inf. HOPJ25 respectively.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Document Review

This section presents the findings of the study on media coverage in Ghanaian politics, focusing on the NDC under President John Dramani Mahama (2012-2016) and the NPP under President Nana Akufo-Addo (2017-2024). It consists of two parts: the first analyses 20 selected online news articles to examine how political issues were framed and how public perception evolved. The second part synthesises insights from interviews with 25 media professionals, exploring their challenges and influence on public discourse. These findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the media's impact on political dynamics in Ghana, highlighting key topics such as economic policies, corruption scandals, and political propaganda.

#### *NDC Government (2012 to 2016)*

Between 2012 and 2017, the ten news reports reviewed indicated that the Mills-Mahama-led NDC government faced intense media scrutiny due to economic difficulties in the country. Furthermore, corruption scandals plagued John Mahama's administration, making the media increasingly critical of his regime. However, some reports highlighted the government's efforts to combat corruption, such as the retrieval of about 14.5 million Ghana Cedis from the GYEEDA scandal (MyJoyOnline, 9 Dec. 2014). The majority of news coverage in 2016 focused on controversies surrounding Mahama's government, including tax increases, the hosting of GITMO 3, and the three South African security operatives. While some corruption scandals, like the SADA and GYEEDA scandals, were deemed significant, others, such as the Ford gift saga, were considered unsubstantiated. For example, the Ford gift saga, involving Mahama and a Burkinabe contractor, was disputed by CHRAJ (Boateng & Frimpong, 2016) and was regarded as unfounded. Nonetheless, it contributed to the deterioration of Mahama's image and that of his government.

Regarding media relations, a few articles reported complaints from John Mahama and his ministers about biased media coverage. For example, Modern Ghana (8 December 2013) reported Mahama urging the media to be fair. Similarly, GhanaWeb (19 October, 2017) covered Deputy Communications Minister Felix Kwakye Ofose's lament over media bias against Mahama's government. Modern Ghana (24 October, 2016) also published an opinion by Nana Yaw Osei, who cited public dismay over some appointed ministers and the blacklisting of Joy Multimedia as factors contributing to perceived media bias against the regime (Osei, 2016).

The reports also highlighted fragile media relations within the NDC government and pro-NDC media. For instance, the then Attorney General Martin Amidu felt unfairly treated by pro-NDC media (PeaceFmOnline, 2012). Additionally, Daily Guide (2011) reported that NPP leadership exposed a list of journalists allegedly on the payroll of the National Youth Employment. From 2015 to 2016, the media appeared critical of the government, focusing on economic hardships and corruption scandals, which impacted their coverage of government development projects and social interventions.

Furthermore, some reports also highlighted media bias during the Mahama administration, particularly against the NPP in opposition. For example, Peace-Fm-Online (26 March 2012) featured an opinion by Frankie Asare-Donko, who criticised the media for being unfair, especially in its failure to support Mahama's fight against galamsey. He also cited Ghana Television (GTV) and other state media outlets, such as Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times, for being biased against the NPP and its flagbearer during the 2012 and 2016 election campaigns (Asare-Donkoh, 2017).

#### *NPP Government (2017 to First Quarter of 2024)*

Case studies from 2017 to early 2024 revealed similar political trends. Between 2017 and 2018, three articles suggested the media maintained a critical stance toward John Mahama's administration, often citing mismanagement. For example, Citi News (22 February 2018) reported Akufo-Addo's government attributing poor performance in the 2017 corruption perception index to Mahama's regime. Similarly, in June 2018, Citi News highlighted a Bantama MP blaming the woes of Akufo-Addo's government on Mahama and the NDC (Allotey, 2018). From 2018 to 2020, over eight articles linked high corruption levels and poor economic management to governance failures.

From 2020 to 2021, several reports highlighted fragile media relations under the Nana-Addo government due to perceived suppression of press freedom. Over five news reports and editorials criticised the government for this trend (Asante, 2020; DW Akademie, 2024; Media Foundation for West Africa [MFWA], 2023; MyJoy Online, 2021; Smart-Abbey, 2024).

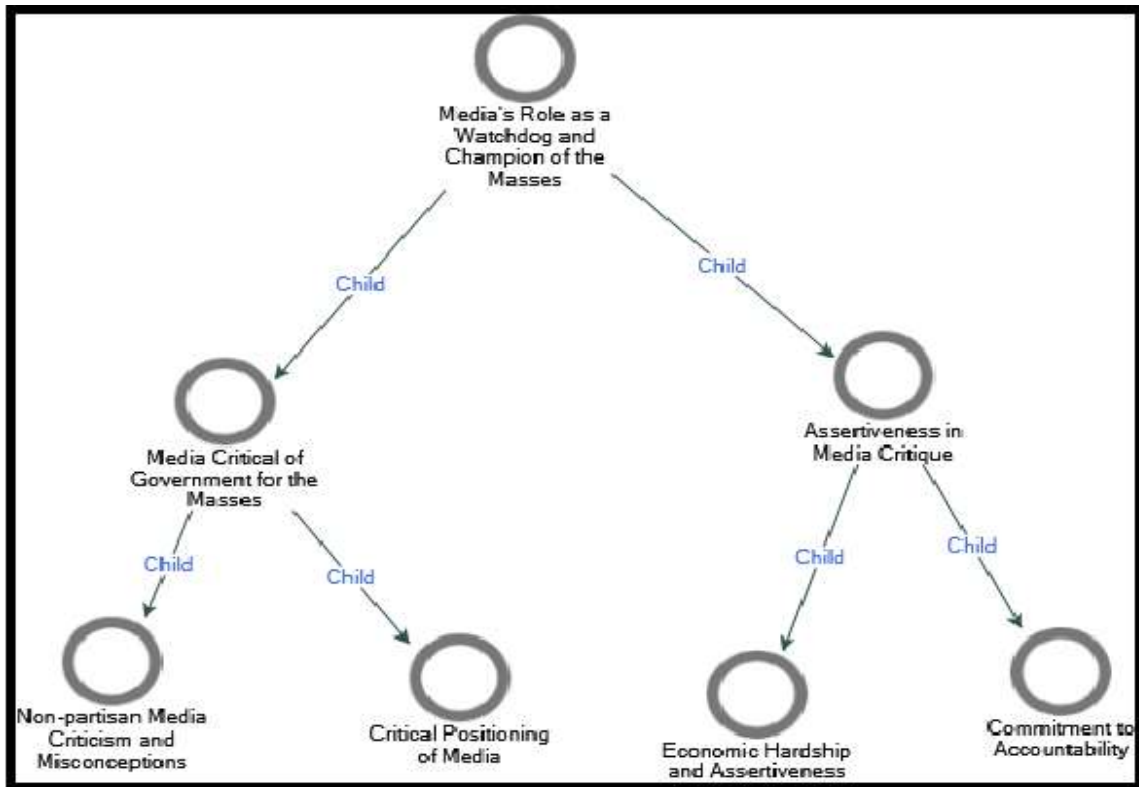
Several reports revealed government failures on national development projects despite multiple sod-cutting ceremonies. On political propaganda, news outlets highlighted accusations by the NPP that the NDC was peddling corruption propaganda against the government, even as the NDC provided evidence. Other reports directly exposed acts of corruption within the NPP government. The reviewed articles indicated that corruption reports during the Nana Addo administration were about ten times higher than those reported under the John Mahama-led NDC government.

## 4.2 Key Informants Interviews

### 4.2.1 Media’s Role as a Watchdog and Champion of the Masses

In Ghana, the media plays a crucial role as a watchdog and voice for the masses, particularly in the country’s democratic evolution. As the “fourth estate,” it holds public officials accountable, exposing corruption, mismanagement, and abuse of power (Gbormittah, 2020). This role is vital in a nation with a history of military rule and political instability, where the media fosters transparency and safeguards democracy.

The media in Ghana serves as a platform for public discourse, amplifying marginalised voices and addressing concerns such as economic hardship, governance failures, and social inequality (Asomah, 2024b). This fosters civic engagement and empowerment. However, challenges such as concentrated media ownership, political interference, and threats to press freedom hinder its effectiveness.



**Figure 1**  
Emerg ed Theme, Sub-Themes and Sub-Themes Explaining Media’s Role as a Watchdog and Champion of the Masses

### 4.2.2 Media’s Critical Positioning and Role in Advocating for the Masses

The data suggest that media outlets often position themselves as defenders of the public, holding those in power accountable through non-partisan critique of government actions. This role transcends political affiliations, as emphasised by key informants, such as Inf. AME1, who noted that the media’s duty is to represent the public, not political parties. The role of the media is to ensure that the government delivers on its promises to the people. This is echoed by Inf. ANE7, who stressed that: “Media professionals should rise above political affiliations to hold the government accountable, regardless of whether it is the NDC or NPP in power.” (Interview with Inf. ANE7, Accra, November 10, 2024). Further the data reveals that the media’s critical stance is often grounded in a commitment to transparency and truth, as highlighted by Inf. BGRP24, who noted that: “the media has always remained critical of the incumbent government, regardless of political party, in order to inform the public and advocate for their rights.” (Interview with Inf. BGRP24, Bolgatanga, October 15, 2024). This consistent approach reflects a long-standing tradition of scrutinising government performance to ensure that it serves the best interests of the people, as Inf. AJ4 reinforced by stating that media practitioners aim to represent the masses, not favour political parties.

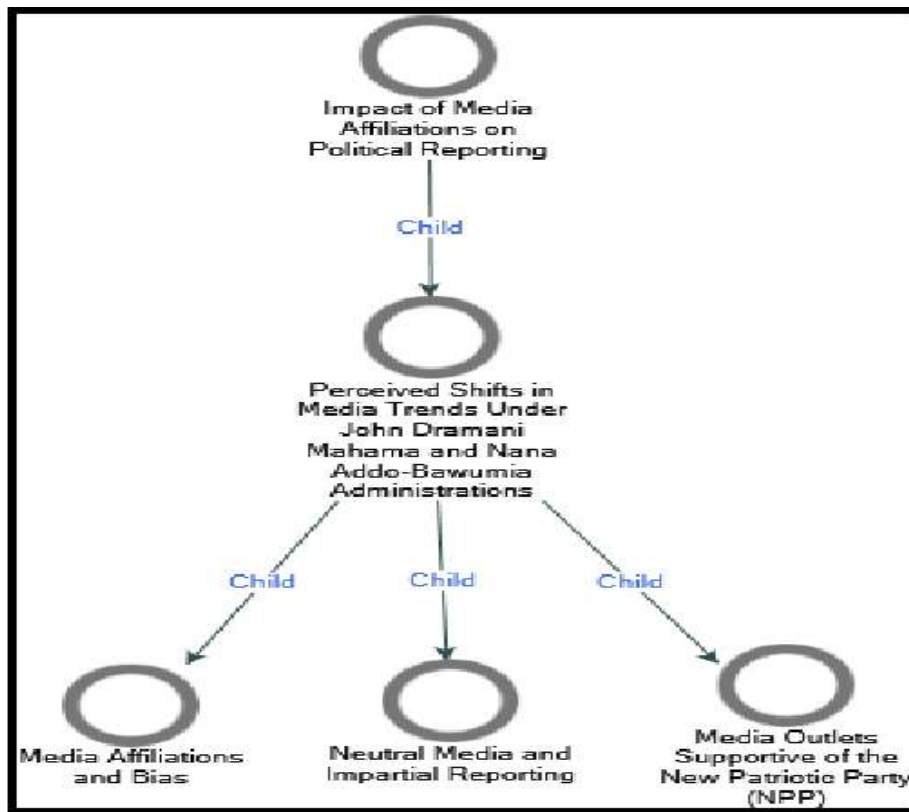
#### Non-Partisan Criticism and Misconceptions

Despite the clear commitment to government accountability, some informants highlighted a misconception that media criticism equates to opposition. According to Inf. TRSP17: “Criticism is not opposition but a tool to challenge governments to fulfill their promises.” (Interview with Inf. TRSP17, Takoradi, November 20, 2024). This underscores the vital role of non-partisan media in reinforcing democratic principles and ensuring government transparency.

*Assertiveness in Media Critique*

Economic conditions, particularly worsening hardship, have intensified media’s assertiveness in holding the government accountable. Inf. AVJ8 linked the growing assertiveness in media criticism to frustration over poor governance and corruption, which remain unaddressed: *“The assertiveness you see reflects the economic hardships we’re facing; poor governance and corruption are evident, yet no corrective action has been taken.”* (Interview with Inf. AVJ8, Ho, November 25, 2024). This frustration drives media practitioners to speak out, as they share a stake in Ghana’s future.

The commitment to transparency is central to media’s assertive stance. Journalists, such as Inf. KRP14 and Inf. KRNE16, emphasised that their critical reporting is driven not by bias but by a commitment to ensuring good governance and transparency. In regions like Takoradi, broadcasters such as Inf. TRSP18 stressed that media’s primary responsibility is to scrutinize government actions and provide the public with information, even if some view it as biased: *“Our role is to serve the public by scrutinizing government actions, even if some view our critical stance as biased.”* (Interview with Inf. TRSP18, Takoradi, November 20, 2024). This is further reinforced by Inf. HOPJ25, who highlighted the importance of investigative journalism in uncovering issues that may be concealed by those in power, ultimately advocating for reforms that benefit the public, not political: *“Our goal is to highlight problems and advocate for reforms that benefit the public, not to favour any political side.”* (Interview with Inf. HOPJ25, Ho, November 25, 2024).



**Figure 2**  
*Emerged Theme, Sub-Themes and Sub-Themes Explaining The impact of Media Affiliations on Political Reporting*

*Perceived Shifts in Media Trends Under John Dramani Mahama and Nana Addo Administrations. Media Affiliations and Bias*

The media landscape under both John Dramani Mahama’s and Nana Akufo-Addo’s administrations has been shaped by distinct political affiliations. Media outlets aligned with the NDC and NPP have adjusted their focus depending on the ruling party. Under Mahama’s presidency, pro-NDC media focused on issues like infrastructure and social development, while pro-NPP media, in opposition, highlighted issues such as corruption and economic mismanagement. However, as Inf. ANE6 noted, this role has shifted with the new administration, as pro-NDC outlets now critique governance under Nana Akufo-Addo, especially concerning unmet promises: *This role has shifted with the new administration, as pro-NDC outlets now critique governance under Nana Akufo-Addo, especially concerning unmet promises.* (Interview with Inf. ANE6, Accra, November 10, 2024). This shift reflects the ongoing influence of political affiliations on media reporting.



*Neutral Media and Impartial Reporting*

Despite the polarisation in media affiliations, neutral media have maintained their critical stance throughout both administrations. These outlets, committed to journalistic integrity, have continued to scrutinise government actions impartially, regardless of which party is in power. Inf. AME3 explained that their role remains consistent, offering balanced analysis and ensuring that their reporting is free from partisan influence: *I observe that the neutral media maintain their critical, unbiased stance, providing balanced analysis regardless of the ruling party, while pro-NDC media now adopt a similarly partisan approach as pro-NPP media, focusing on government shortcomings.* (Interview with Inf. AME3, Accra, November 10, 2024). This commitment to impartiality ensures that the media can still fulfil its watchdog function, holding the government accountable regardless of political affiliation.

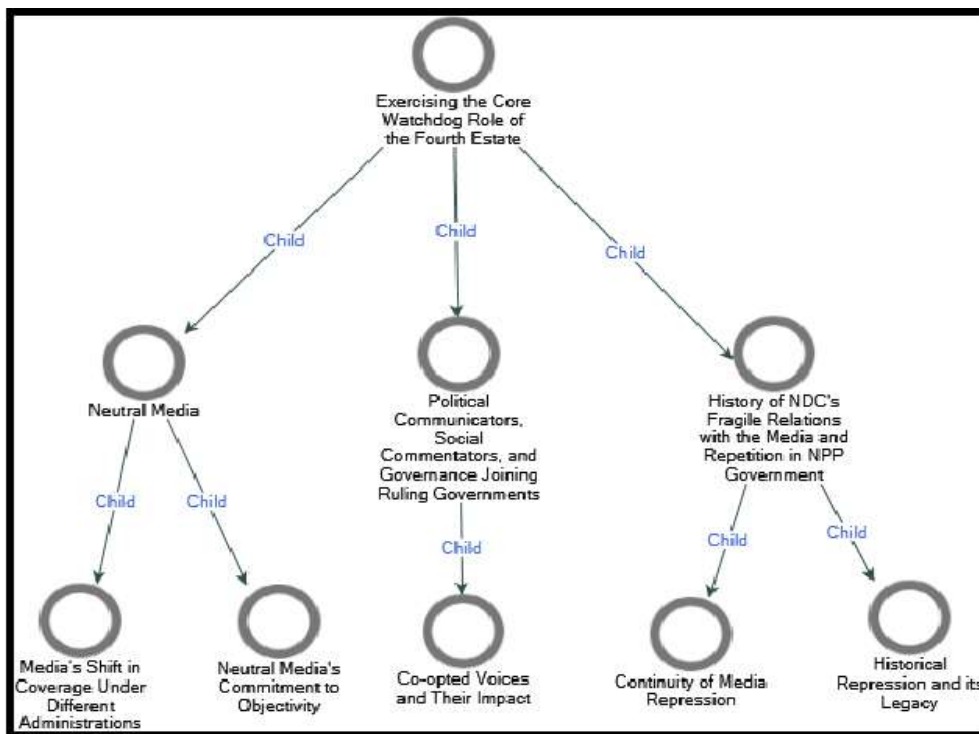
*Media Outlets Supporting the New Patriotic Party (NPP)*

Media outlets supportive of the NPP, such as Peace FM, Net2 TV, and UTV, have consistently highlighted the achievements of Nana Akufo-Addo’s administration. Inf. ARPH11 emphasised their commitment to promoting policies they believe drive national development. Interestingly, the same outlets were highly critical of the NDC government during Mahama’s tenure, focusing on issues like corruption and mismanagement, as noted by Inf. ANPE12: *Despite claiming to be committed to good governance, these outlets’ editorial stance often reflects a deeper political bias, advocating for the NPP’s agenda while holding opposition parties to account.* (Interview with ANPE12, Accra, November 10, 2024).

*Exercising the Core Watchdog Role of the Fourth Estate*

The media’s role as the “Fourth Estate” is crucial in maintaining democratic accountability. As Dewenter et al., (2020) assert, the media is tasked with exposing corruption and ensuring transparency, which is central to informing citizens and enabling active participation in governance. However, this function is often compromised by challenges such as political influence, media ownership concentration, and self-censorship. The data suggest that despite these challenges, many outlets in Ghana, regardless of political alignment, assert their watchdog role and continue to call for transparency and accountability, even as the media environment becomes increasingly politicised.

The data further suggest that the media in Ghana, while diverse in its affiliations, continues to play a central role in political discourse, scrutinising government actions and holding leaders accountable. Although political bias remains present, particularly in pro-NPP and pro-NDC outlets, neutral media have managed to maintain their focus on journalistic integrity. Despite challenges, the media’s watchdog function remains vital in ensuring transparency and promoting good governance, a role that remains especially important in politically charged times.



**Figure 3**  
*Emerged Theme, Sub-Themes and Sub-Themes Explaining how Media Play the Core Watchdog Role of the Fourth Estate*

### 4.2.3 Neutral Media

The data shows that neutral media outlets like Joy FM, Citi FM/Citi TV, Metro TV, TV3, and GHOne TV maintain a balanced reporting stance. These platforms focus on national issues critically without favouring any political party. As journalist Inf. AJ4 stated: *Our responsibility is to hold power accountable, regardless of who is in office.* Informant Inf. AME3 added: *We aim to highlight the truth and ensure leaders act in the nation's best interest.* (Interview with Inf. AME3, Accra, November 10, 2024). Senior editor Inf. ARPH11 emphasised: *"It's about maintaining journalism integrity by focusing on real issues."* (Interview with Inf. ARPH11, Kumasi, October 26, 2024). Despite their neutrality, these outlets face accusations of bias from both political camps, as noted by Inf. AVJ8: *Even with neutrality, media outlets face criticism from both NDC and NPP supporters.* (Interview with Ho, November 25, 2024). Inf. ANPE12 similarly mentioned: *Joy FM has faced accusations of bias from both political sides, reflecting the challenge of staying neutral in a politically charged environment.* (Interview with Inf. ANPE12, Accra, November 10, 2024). The neutral media's adherence to journalistic integrity plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability, despite facing criticism from various political supporters.

### 4.2.4 Media's Shift in Coverage under Different Administrations

The data suggest that the shift in media coverage from Mahama's to Nana Addo's administration reflects the media's role as a watchdog in response to governance failures. On this Inf. AME1 hinted that, *"The media's critical stance against the Nana Addo's government mirrors the approach we took during Mahama's tenure"*. (Interview with Inf. AME1, Accra, November 10, 2024). Attesting to this, Inf. KRP14 stated:

This perceived shift in the media's approach to the current NPP government, reflecting frustration with its failures. The NPP administration promised change but has continued many of the issues from the Mahama era. As media professionals, our role is to challenge these failures and keep the public informed, regardless of the ruling party. (Interview with Inf. KRP14, Kumasi, October 26, 2024)

Expressing his perception, another different Inf. TMTVH22 disclosed that: *The media's criticism of Nana Addo's government reflects genuine concerns about governance. Initially swayed by the new administration's rhetoric, the media now highlight its unfulfilled promises, underscoring their commitment to holding all administrations accountable.* (Interview with Inf. TMTVH22, Tamale, October 10, 2024). This suggest that the media's evolving stance towards different administrations demonstrates its ongoing commitment to holding governments accountable, irrespective of political changes.

*The Integration of political communicators and social commentators into governance Co-opted voices and their impact*

Political communicators and social commentators often become less critical once they join the ruling government. This was confirmed by Inf. AME1:

*These experts were very active and critical when their party was in opposition, but once they join the government, their voices almost disappear.* (Interview with Inf. AME1, Accra, November 10, 2024).

Similarly, Inf. TRSP17 noted that

*It's frustrating because the same people who were vocal critics become silent or even defensive of government policies once they are in power."*

Corroborating this, Inf. TTVM19 highlighted thus:

*In Takoradi, this trend weakens public discourse, leaving the media without key voices for balanced commentary, forcing us to address the issues ourselves.* (Interview with Inf. TTVM19, Tamale, October 10, 2024).

### 4.2.5 History of NDC's Fragile Relations with the Media and Repetition in NPP Government

The perception of media bias against the ruling NDC during John Mahama's administration stems from the historical media-NDC relationship, dating back to the PNDC era. The PNDC regime, known for stringent control over press freedom, used measures like the Criminal Libel Law to suppress media criticism and prosecute journalists for content deemed offensive to the government.

*Historical Repression and its Legacy:* The PNDC era's repression of the media, particularly through the Criminal Libel Law (1960), shaped current perceptions of the NDC. This law, used to suppress dissent, led to severe penalties for journalists, creating a chilling effect on press freedom and prompting self-censorship among media practitioners.

According to Inf. TMTVH22: The Criminal Libel Law (1960), part of the Criminal Code (Act 29), was frequently used by the PNDC to silence dissent. Journalists faced severe fines and imprisonment for challenging the government, leading to self-censorship and a chilling effect on press freedom (Interview with Inf. TMTVH22, Tamale, October, 10, 2024).

According to a media expert and journalist who resisted these pressures and continued to expose the wrongdoings of the PNDC government, Inf. TMME23:

*The era was marked by fear among journalists, targeted for doing their jobs, leading to deep resentment towards the PNDC, which continued with the formation of the NDC.* (Interview with Inf. TMME23, Tamale, October 10, 2024).

Another media expert argues that the June 4th revolution, which brought the PNDC to power, was a period of significant upheaval, during which many elites and intellectuals were persecuted. As Inf. AME2 stated:

*(...) The revolution instilled a culture of fear among journalists, and the strained media-PNDC relations continue to affect the NDC's approach to the press, often perceived as cautious or adversarial due to the legacy of authoritarian practices (...).* (Interview with Inf. AME2, Accra, November 10, 2024).

*Continuity of Media Repression:* According to another senior journalist, Inf. AME3 who expressed that despite democratic reforms, media repression continues under the Nana Addo's administration:

*(...) The media's critical stance during Mahama's administration can be understood through the NDC's historical legacy, with unresolved tensions influencing a heightened inclination to hold the party accountable (...)* (Interview with Inf. AME3, Accra, November 10, 2024).

This historical perspective underscores the complexities of the relationship between the media and the NDC, where past grievances continue to shape present interactions. One journalist Inf. TRSP18 remarked:

*(...) The scars of the PNDC era are still fresh; it's hard to forget what we went through, and that colours how we view the NDC today (...).* (Interview with Inf. TRSP18, Takoradi, November 20, 2024).

The data suggest that media oppression patterns from the PNDC era persist under Nana Addo's administration, despite the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law in 2001 under Kufuor's presidency to enhance press freedom [Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2001, Act 602] (Government of Ghana, 2001). Despite this legal progress, media challenges continue under subsequent governments, including Nana Addo's. One journalist Inf. BGRP24 stated:

The historical precedents, including the Criminal Libel Law of 1960, used by the PNDC to stifle dissent, have cast a long shadow over media freedom in Ghana, particularly under Nana Akufo Addo's government. It is considered one of the worst periods in Ghana's media history. We see a lot happening, which we regret as people (Interview with Inf. BGRP24, Bolgatanga, October 15, 2024).

The data reveal that during the PNDC regime, marked by authoritarian rule, media practitioners faced repression, including imprisonment, fines, and censorship, notably through the Criminal Libel Law, which allowed the government to prosecute journalists for defamatory content. Despite the law's repeal in 2001 under President John Agyekum Kufuor to promote democracy, trends suggest that media repression persists.

The data further suggests that under the present democratic dispensation led by President Nana Akufo Addo's, the press still encounters significant challenges, reflecting a troubling continuity of past practices. As one media expert Inf. AVJ9 noted:

The PNDC regime's strict control over press freedom, exemplified by the Criminal Libel Law, allowed the government to prosecute journalists for defamatory content. This raises concerns about the current administration, especially under a lawyer like Nana Addo, who is expected to uphold democratic values and protect press freedom. This shift in media dynamics may explain the perceived change. (Interview with Inf. AVJ9, Ho, November 25, 2024).

A journalist noted that press freedom under the current administration has been increasingly restricted, continuing past practices despite democratic reforms. Inf. AJ5 mentioned incidents such as the 2019 murder of Ahmed Suale for his investigative work on corruption, the May 2021 beating of Caleb Kudah by National Security operatives for filming abandoned vehicles, and the closure of media outlets like Radio Gold and Radio XYZ for allegedly defying government directives. The journalist emphasised the continuing media restrictions, stating:

*(...) Despite democratic reforms, the press still faces significant challenges, mirroring past practices (...).* (Interview with Inf. AJ5, Accra, November 10, 2024).

The data suggest that these events highlight ongoing challenges to media freedom, fueling discontent within the media fraternity.

The insights reveal that, despite democratic reforms, fear and self-censorship persist among journalists, reflecting ongoing threats to media freedom. The repression under Nana Akufo-Addo's administration mirrors challenges faced during the Mahama era. The analysis highlights the media's watchdog role in holding power accountable, despite political pressures. It emphasises the need for continued advocacy for media independence and responsible journalism, while noting that the legacy of media repression under the PNDC still shapes the media's relationship with both the NDC and the current government. This illustrates the ongoing struggle for press freedom.

### 4.3 Discussion

The content analysis of twenty news reports and editorials reveals a predominance of critical commentary directed towards the Akufo-Addo administration, particularly on matters relating to corruption and developmental inefficiencies. The coverage frequently highlights scandals, misappropriation of public resources, and delays in infrastructure projects, concerns which collectively point to perceived governance deficits and a weakening of public trust. This evidences the media's sustained watchdog function, even in a context historically perceived to be biased against the former Mahama-led NDC government. These findings affirm Afful's (2016), critique of the assumption that media always favour ruling governments. Instead, he argues that partisan affiliations and ownership dynamics largely influence framing decisions. The comparative lens often adopted in the analysed reports, juxtaposing Mahama's administration against Akufo-Addo's, underscores this notion, suggesting that media positioning is more reflective of political loyalties than incumbency per se.

Interpreted through the theoretical framework of the Political Economy of the Media (Herman & Chomsky, 2008), the study reinforces the idea that structural economic and political interests strongly influence media output. Interviews revealed that ownership of key media outlets in Ghana remains concentrated among a few politically aligned business elites, resulting in an oligopolistic environment that restricts diversity and public interest reporting. This is in accordance with Curran and Seaton's (2018), argument that such concentration leads to homogenised content and reinforces elite perspectives. Moreover, the pursuit of profit, especially through advertising, appears to shape editorial choices, prioritising sensational political content that attracts audience attention over nuanced reportage, consistent with Bennett and Livingston's (2018), assertion regarding the commodification of news.

Nevertheless, the study also identifies important contextual specificities that the classical Political Economy approach underestimates. While political and corporate actors exert considerable influence, a number of Ghanaian journalists actively resist editorial interference and uphold professional standards. This challenges the overly deterministic tendencies of the theory and echoes Miroshnichenko's (2024), call for a more localised and historically grounded interpretation of media behaviour in the Global South. Furthermore, cultural expectations, historical legacies, and socio-economic conditions significantly mediate how media institutions operate in Ghana, factors which remain peripheral in the original framework but are essential for a comprehensive understanding of media evolution in such contexts. The findings corroborate the broad strokes of the Political Economy theory whilst also extending it by highlighting the interplay between structural constraints and agency within Ghana's media environment. The media, though undeniably shaped by ownership and market pressures, continues to play a vital albeit inconsistent role in promoting accountability and fostering democratic discourse.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that media coverage of Ghanaian politics evolved considerably under the NDC (2012-2016) and NPP (2017-2024) administrations, reflecting both continuity and change in journalistic practice. The analysis confirms that the political affiliations and ownership structures of the media strongly influenced the tone, framing, and emphasis of coverage, frequently aligning reporting with partisan agendas. At the same time, the media played a pivotal role in shaping public perception and exerting pressure on governments to deliver on their commitments, thereby upholding their watchdog function. Despite the challenges posed by ownership concentration and political bias, the findings reveal that the Ghanaian media, irrespective of political allegiance, often rallied to defend the interests of the populace when governments fell short of their responsibilities. This underscores the enduring tension between partisanship and professionalism, while reaffirming the central role of the media in advancing accountability, transparency, and democratic consolidation in Ghana.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study highlights that addressing governance and media challenges in Ghana requires more than political changes. A standard approach to addressing the challenges of partisan influence and hostile media coverage in Ghana requires coordinated action by policymakers, media institutions, governments, and civil society. To reduce the undue influence of partisan ownership, regulators, particularly the National Media Commission, should introduce stricter transparency requirements for media ownership and enforce measures that limit excessive concentration of control in the hands of political elites. At the institutional level, media organisations must adopt editorial safeguards that separate ownership interests from journalistic practice, while also investing in professional training that emphasises ethics, fairness, and accountability.

Equally, successive governments must confront the damaging consequences of unfulfilled promises that have heightened public disillusionment and provoked confrontational media coverage. Greater consistency in policy delivery,

transparency, and genuine citizen engagement is essential. Administrations should regard the media not as adversaries but as vital partners in communicating policies and assessing their impact, thereby reducing cycles of hostility that emerge when expectations remain unmet.

In addition, civil society organisations and academic institutions should expand media monitoring, accountability campaigns, and media literacy programmes to empower citizens to engage critically with political communication. If pursued collectively, these measures would help move Ghana's media landscape beyond excessive partisanship and reactive hostility, strengthening democratic accountability, enhancing public trust, and reinforcing the media's role as both watchdog and educator.

## REFERENCES

- Afful, E. (2016). Coverage of presidential candidates and press bias in Ghana. *Journal of Communications, Media & Society*, 3(1), 30.
- Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M., & Yu, C. (2019). Trends in the diffusion of misinformation on social media. *Research & Politics*, 6(2), 1-13.
- Allotey, G. A. (2018, June 19). Blame NDC for Ghana's woes, not Nana Addo's gov't - Bantama MP. *Citi News*. <https://citinewsroom.com/2018/06/blame-ndc-for-ghanas-woes-not-nana-addos-govt-bantama-mp/>
- Andani, M. A. I., & Antwi-Boateng, O. (2021). FM stations' role in rural development: The case of Northern Ghana. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 20(4), 336-357.
- Ansah, P. A. (1979). Problems of localising radio in Ghana. *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)*, 25(1), 1-16.
- Asante, N. A. A. (2020, October 5). How free is Ghana's media? *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/how-free-ghanas-media>.
- Asare-Donkoh, F. (2017, April 11). Rejoinder: The media is hypocritical; never helped Mahama fight galamsey. *GhanaWeb*. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Rejoinder-The-media-is-hypocritical-never-helped-Mahama-fight-galamsey-527733>.
- Asomah, J. Y. (2024a). Is social media a helpful communicative tool in combatting corruption in developing countries? Evidence from Ghana. *Communication and the Public*, 10(3), 177-196. (Original work published 2025)
- Asomah, Y. J. (2024b). How can the private media be strengthened to investigate and expose corruption in Ghana? Understanding Ghanaian perspectives. *Journalism Practice*, 18(5), 1193-1216.
- Bennett, W. L., & Kneuer, M. (2024). Communication and democratic erosion: The rise of illiberal public spheres. *European Journal of Communication*, 39(2), 177-196.
- Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. (2018). The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions. *European Journal of Communication*, 33(2), 122-139.
- Boateng, C., & Frimpong, E. D. (2016, September 29). Ford gift saga: Mahama violated gift policy; but not culpable for bribery - CHRAJ. *Graphic Online*. <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/mahama-violated-gift-policy-but-not-culpable-for-bribery-chraj.html>.
- Boulianne, S. (2015). Social media use and participation: A meta-analysis of current research. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(5), 524-538.
- Castleberry, G. L. (2024). The spreadable media model of mass communication: Tracing the corporate continuity of Disney-Marvel. In D. Brode (Ed.), *Analyzing the Marvel Universe: Critical Essays on the Comics and Film Adaptations* (pp. 219-232). McFarland.
- CitiFMonline. (2018, February 22). Gov't blames Mahama for poor performance in the 2017 Corruption Perception Index. *Modern Ghana*. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/836706/govt-blames-mahama-for-poor-performance-in-the-2017-corrup.html>.
- Cohen, S. B. (1963). *Geography and politics in a world divided*. Oxford University Press.
- Conroy-Krutz, J., & Moehler, D. C. (2015). Moderation from bias: A field experiment on partisan media in a new democracy. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(2), 575-587.
- Couldry, N., Stephansen, H., Fotopoulou, A., MacDonald, R., Clark, W., & Dickens, L. (2014). Digital citizenship? Narrative exchange and the changing terms of civic culture. *Citizenship Studies*, 18(6-7), 615-629.
- Curran, J., & Seaton, J. (2018). *Power without responsibility: Press, broadcasting and the internet in Britain*. Routledge.
- Daily Guide. (2011, August 4). NPP names NDC 'bribe' journalists. *Modern Ghana*. [https://www.modernghana.com/news/343572/npp-names-ndc-8216bribe8217-journalists.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.modernghana.com/news/343572/npp-names-ndc-8216bribe8217-journalists.html#google_vignette)
- Darkwa, E., Inguva, H., Osafo-Adjei, C., & Acquah, B. (2024). The public sphere on a digital plane: The influence of the new digital media on Ghana's democracy and the public sphere. *Inverge Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 46-62.



- Davis, A. (2023). *Political communication: An introduction for crisis times*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Dearing, J. W., & Rogers, E. (1996). *Agenda-setting*. Sage Publications.
- Dewenter, R., Dulleck, U., & Thomas, T. (2020). Does the 4th estate deliver? The Political Coverage Index and its application to media capture. *Constitutional Political Economy*, 31(3), 292-328.
- DW Akademie. (2024, August 20). Assessing press freedom and freedom of expression in Ghana. <https://akademie.dw.com/en/press-freedom-and-freedom-of-expression-2024-ghanas-gains-and-gaps/a-69994839>.
- Gbormittah, F. R. A. N. C. I. S. (2020). *A critique of the roles of indigenous communicative acts and the modern mass media in contemporary Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).
- Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). (2023, March 7). The NDC-NPP duopoly in Ghana's multiparty democracy [Blog post]. <https://cddgh.org/2023/03/the-ndc-npp-duopoly-in-ghanas-multiparty-democracy/>
- Gilardi, F., Gessler, T., Kubli, M., & Müller, S. (2022). Social media and political agenda setting. *Political Communication*, 39(1), 39-60.
- Government of Ghana. (2001). *Criminal Code (Repeal of Criminal Libel and Seditious Laws) (Amendment) Act, 2001 (Act 602)*. Ghana Publishing Company. <https://ghalii.org/akn/gh/act/2001/602/eng%402001-08-17>
- Green, J., & Jenkins, H. (2009). Audience research and convergence culture. In *Media industries: History, theory, and method* (pp. 213-230).
- Gyekye-Jandoh, M. A., & Ahmed, A. H. (2023). Digital discourse and democracy: A critical assessment of the new media in Ghana's Fourth Republic. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 10(1 & 2), 139-168.
- Hallin, D. C. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Harcup, T. (2021). *Journalism: Principles and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (2008). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media* (With a new afterword by E. S. Herman). The Bodley Head.
- Isbell, T., & Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny, J. (2018, November 6). Ghanaians rely on radio and TV, but support for media freedom drops sharply (Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 250). *Afrobarometer*. <https://www.afrobarometer.org/publication/ad250-ghanaians-rely-radio-and-tv-support-media-freedom-drops-sharply/>
- Jenkins, H., Shresthova, S., Gamber-Thompson, L., Kligler-Vilenchik, N., & Zimmerman, A. (2016). *By any media necessary: The new youth activism*. New York University Press.
- Kargobai, G. (2017). *Community radio and women's empowerment in Sierra Leone* (Master's thesis). University of Guelph.
- Karikari, K. (2018). Media as watchdog: The Ghana experience. In A. Olukotun (Ed.), *Watchdogs or captured media? A study of the role of the media in Nigeria's emergent democracy, 1999-2016* (p. 351). Diamond Publications Ltd.
- Kperogi, F. A. (2016). Networked social journalism: Media, citizen participation and democracy in Nigeria. In *Participatory politics and citizen journalism in a networked Africa: A connected continent* (pp. 19-33). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Leeper, T. J., & Slothuus, R. (2020). How the news media persuades: Framing effects and beyond. In E. Suhay, B. Grofman, & A. H. Trechsel (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of electoral persuasion* (Oxford Handbooks). Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190860806.013.4>
- Lippmann, W. (1992). *Public opinion*. Routledge.
- Makanise, F. O., & Madima, S. E. (Eds.). (2024). *Decolonising digital media and indigenisation of participatory epistemologies: Languages of the Global South*. Taylor & Francis.
- Martin, J. A. (2020). Press freedom in Ghana: A survey of journalists' attitudes toward libel law, right to information, and reporting practices. *University of Baltimore Journal of Media Law & Ethics*, 8, 55.
- Mathenge, M. W. (2021). *Role of mainstream media in democratic governance in the 21st century: A case study of Kenya and Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.
- Meier, P. (2015). *Digital humanitarians: How big data is changing the face of humanitarian response*. CRC Press.
- MFWA. (2023, February). The media and press freedom in Ghana: From repression, redemption to depression. *Media Foundation for West Africa*. Media Foundation for West Africa. <https://www.mfwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Press-Freedom-in-Ghana-Online-Version.pdf>



- Miroshnichenko, A. (2024). *Examining the impact of new media on the news media from the integrated viewpoint of media ecology and the political economy of communication* (Doctoral thesis, York University, Toronto, Ontario).
- Moehler, D. C., & Conroy-Krutz, J. (2016). Partisan media and engagement: A field experiment in a newly liberalized system. *Political Communication*, 33(3), 414-432.
- Mumuni, E. (2020, November 3). GBC @ 85 panel discussion on media and democracy [Live streaming]. *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation*. [https://web.facebook.com/gbcghana/videos/gbc-panel-discussion/3126477607458256/?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/gbcghana/videos/gbc-panel-discussion/3126477607458256/?_rdc=1&_rdr)
- Mutsvairo, B. (2016). *Digital activism in the social media era: Critical reflections on emerging trends in sub-Saharan Africa*. Springer.
- Myjoyonline. (2021, March 1). Threats by Judicial Service against media scandalous, defy logic-Affail Monney. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/threats-by-judicial-service-against-media-scandalous-defy-logic-affail-monney/>
- Noam, E. M. (Ed.). (2016). *Who owns the world's media?: Media concentration and ownership around the world*. Oxford University Press.
- Okocha, D. O., Yousaf, M., & Onobe, M. J. (Eds.). (2023). *Handbook of research on deconstructing culture and communication in the Global South*. IGI Global.
- Okoro, Y. O., Ayo-Farai, O., Maduka, C. P., Okongwu, C. C., & Sodamade, O. T. (2024). A review of health misinformation on digital platforms: Challenges and countermeasures. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, 6(1), 23-36.
- Osei, N. Y. (2016, October 24). President Mahama and the media cabal. *Modern Ghana*. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/729801/president-mahama-and-the-media-cabal.html>
- PeaceFmOnline. (2012, January 6). Pro-NDC media launch blistering attack on Attorney-General. *GhanaWeb*. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Pro-NDC-Media-Launch-Blistering-Attack-On-Attorney-General-227101>
- Perloff, R. M. (2021). *The dynamics of political communication: Media and politics in a digital age*. Routledge.
- Pickard, V. (2020). Restructuring democratic infrastructures: A policy approach to the journalism crisis. *Digital Journalism*, 8(6), 704-719.
- Ranttila, K. (2020). Social media and monopoly. *Ohio Northern University Law Review*, 46, 161.
- Santia, M., Willnat, L., & Jastrzebski, S. (2025). Who covers what? Analyzing audience perceptions of gender differences in news beat coverage. *Journalism*, 26(1), 24-44.
- Schejter, A., & Tirosh, N. (2014). New media policy: The redistribution of voice. In *Policy and marketing strategies for digital media* (pp. 73-86). Routledge.
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20.
- Shardow, M. S., & Asare, B. E. (2016). Media ownership and independence: Implications for democratic governance in the fourth republic of Ghana. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9(9), 179-198.
- Smart-Abbey, M. R. (2024, July 29). The NPP government have used democracy to suppress the will of Ghanaians, stifled media freedom and institutionalised corruption - Fitch and Afrobarometer reports [Feature article]. *Modern Ghana*. [https://www.modernghana.com/news/1330473/the-npp-government-have-used-democracy-to-suppress.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.modernghana.com/news/1330473/the-npp-government-have-used-democracy-to-suppress.html#google_vignette)
- Smith-Asante, E. (2024, September 2). Road to Election 2024: Ghana's elusive third force - Has duopoly come to stay? *Graphic Online*. <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/politics/ghana-news-road-to-election-2024-ghanas-elusive-third-force-has-duopoly-come-to-stay.html>
- Spinde, T., Hinterreiter, S., Haak, F., Ruas, T., Giese, H., Meuschke, N., & Gipp, B. (2023). The media bias taxonomy: A systematic literature review on the forms and automated detection of media bias. *arXiv preprint*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2312.16148>.
- Suleiman, S. A. (2017). *Investigative reporting and press coverage of corruption in Nigeria (1999-2012)* (Doctoral dissertation, University of East Anglia).
- Uwalaka, T., & Nwala, B. (2023). Examining the role of social media and mobile social networking applications in socio-political contestations in Nigeria. *Communication and the Public*, 8(3), 175-190.
- Van Gyampo, R. E. (2017). Social media, traditional media and party politics in Ghana. *Africa Review*, 9(2), 125-139.
- Wolfsfeld, G. (2022). *Making sense of media and politics: Five principles in political communication*. Routledge.