REPORT ON STATE-OWNED PRINT MEDIA ELECTION NEWS REPORTING: “CONTENT-INQUIRY” VS “CONTENT-REPORTING” (ABRIDGED REPORT)
CAEMMI WHO WE ARE

The Centre for African Elections Media Monitoring Index (CAEMMI) is a Non-Profit and Independent International organization, committed to promoting Democracy and Governance processes in Africa by engaging Elections Media Monitoring Intelligence Tools (EMMIT) in Media Research.

CAEMMI believes continuous Scientific Media Monitoring of Democratic Related Media Content is one of the keys in ensuring and sustaining Democratic Governance and growth in Africa.

WHAT IS AN INDEX?

An index is a list of words or phrases ('headings') and associated pointers ('locators') to where useful material relating to that heading can be found in a document.

WHY INDEX?

An Index is designed to help the reader find information quickly and easily. A complete and truly useful index is not simply a list of the words and phrases used in a publication but an organized map of its contents, including grouping of like concepts, and other useful intellectual analysis.
CAEMMI’s Media Monitoring Index therefore seeks to provide a well comprehensive and informative Index on Electoral related issues in Ghana and across Africa.

OUR OPERATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:

CAEMMI’s philosophy is to ensure peaceful elections across Africa and to create a platform for dialogue between Media and Governance Institutions.

CAEMMI also seeks to create an advocacy platform for initiatives, programmes and taskforces within the policy framework of democracy and governance.

WHAT WE DO

CAEMMI analyses electronic and print media content such as News, Talk-Shows, Features, Magazine, Phone-Ins, Online content and Social sites, TV content, Bill Boards and Cartoons related to democratic governance and policies.

- We develop customised Media Intelligence Monitoring Tools for tailored Elections Monitoring Projects.
- We analyse Media Content in order to measure the extent of News Content’s influence on Democracy and Governance processes.
- We Monitor and Analyse Media framing of Democracy and Governance Institutions.
- We promote peaceful electioneering (Democratic and Governance) processes before, during and after elections in Ghana and across Africa.
We are *Not a Decision Making Body but help direct discourse towards peaceful elections and democratic freedom.*

CAEMMI serves as an advocacy platform for initiatives, programmes and taskforces within the policy frame of democracy and governance.

**VISIONS & MISSION**

- To establish a globally accessible research data based on Africa Elections
- To monitor and analyze news stories and coverage on Elections in Ghana and across Africa.
- To give a comprehensive media monitoring index reports on Elections in Ghana and across Africa.
- To provide an easy and assessable information on Democratic Governance in Africa.
- To contribute to Democratic Policy formulation in Ghana and Africa through research.
- CAEMMI seeks to provide a data based Index on Electoral Commissions in Africa as well as a coalition of consistence statistical data on democratic governance and elections.
INTRODUCTION:

Attempt to remove obstacles to democratic freedom comes in varied forms. Some of which include the role of the media and the political activism of civil society participation in ensuring peaceful elections.

“A strong correlation therefore exists between a free media environment and the degree that we can call an election democratic” (Bower, 2011. p. 24-25) which emphasize that a free and fair election depends largely on the media’s role in reporting on all aspects of the election cycle without interference in any form either in content or in form.

However, during elections campaign periods, most of the private media moves the election discourse to the direction of their political, philosophical ideologies rather than the public interest so as to win electoral stakes. It behooves on the state–owned media to critically provide parties and candidates not only to express themselves; Cover the various aspects of the campaign; Follow and report the organization of the election; and Allow citizens and civil society to express themselves on matters of public interest but more importantly to present, criticize and compare programmes.
It is because of these roles, that Ghana’s 1992 constitution clearly states that “All state-owned media shall afford opportunities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions”. (Article 163)

The 2003 – NMC: Print Media Guidelines also stipulates that “Journalist must give voice to the voiceless” 2003 – NMC: Print Media Guidelines: 17/Pg 14/2003; and that “All media services shall be regarded as a Public Trust...The public interest should therefore be paramount in the operation of all media “ (NMC: National media policy 6.1.2/Pg 26.)

The GJA: Guideline on Election Coverage: also instructs journalists in the ff:

- **Guideline 6:** issue-based coverage –“ journalist should promote issue-based coverage and discussions” (GJA: Election Coverage Guidelines No. 6 Pg 81)
• **Guideline 7:** “Journalist must endeavour to subject manifestoes and programmes to thorough analysis and discussions for the benefit of the electorate.

Therefore in ensuring the success of the 2012 democratic process in accordance with the constitutional requirement, the Centre for African Elections Media Monitoring Index (CAEMMI) based on these various constitutional and regulatory expectations the state – owned media is enjoined to ensure *public trust* through its reportage.

**STUDY OBJECTIVES:**

The overall objective of the study is to ascertain how the state owned media informs the electorates on political issues during the 2012 elections campaign period and to draw the attention of the media to any gaps in ensuring its public trust role.

**Specific Objective:**

a. To ascertain how the state-owned media informs the electorates on political issues during the 2012 elections.
b. To ascertain whether journalist in acting as public-trust are acting as the public’s “Political Interrogators, Political Inquirers, or just political News reporters.

c. To find whether political issues are being ‘mediatized’ or ‘democratized’. Mediatization is about media logic that is the presentational styles and format while Democratization of Political News is about the Political logic – that is, the media serving the needs of Political – electorates through is content-inquiry processes.
METHODOLOGY:

Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis tool was used to analyse news stories, features, and news articles. Qualitative analysis approach was used to capture for instance verbatim content of critical statements, paragraph by paragraph and allowed stories to be grouped using the coding scheme. For instance, monitors and coders categorized stories where journalists only reported the events and not inquiring further consequences from the protagonist/news sources as *News Reporting Style*; and categorized political news stories in which journalists did not only reported the events but also inquired further from the protagonist/news sources on the consequences of their positions and issues as *News Inquiry Reporting Style*.

This qualitative evaluation also allowed the language used and the messages conveyed to be analysed as well as help “qualify” the quantitative measure. This applied primarily to news coverage published on the political pages of the newspapers.

The Quantitative measures also involve the quantification of number of stories in terms of frequencies and percentages.
PROCESSES AND STEPS:

To ensure effective news content analysis the ‘raw news’ is processed through the ff:

- **1\(^{st}\) Level:** Identifying and filtrating the political news

- **2\(^{nd}\) Level:** The news is categorized and frequency grouped under Macro and Micro Analysis using statement by statement analysis

- **3\(^{rd}\) Level:** News is analysed within the various context of journalistic reporting styles and issues analysis using a coding scheme.

- **4\(^{th}\) Level:** Analysts and 2\(^{nd}\) coders replicate the process of coding the stories by each newspaper editions using the same coding scheme adopted by the first coders.

- **5\(^{th}\) Level:** Coders and analysts process all coded materials and test reliability scores level

- **6\(^{th}\) Level:** The validity of data is ascertained and data translated into descriptive charts.

- **7\(^{th}\) Level:** Drawing Conclusions from the Coded Data
STUDY UNITS:

The study focused on the State owned print media Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times newspapers. The selected mediums were selected because of their neutrality mandate and their constitutional mandate to project divergent opinions. As part of this analysis only political stories on the political pages of the state-owned print media were analysed.

STUDY FINDINGS:

The findings revealed both the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times did a 96% political news reporting with no critical analysis.

Daily Graphic newspaper did only 9% critical political content –enquiry reporting while the Ghanaian Times newspaper did a 3% critical political content – inquire reporting during the period of analysis.

The findings also revealed, out of a total of 297 political news published by the state – owned print media, Daily Graphic published 153 stories (94%) political party stories that were event based
issue reporting while 147 stories (98%) of the Ghanaian Times also had no critical inquiry responses of issues reported. See table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>NEWS REPORTING STYLE</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>POLITICAL NEWS INQUIRY STYLE</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TOTAL STORY FREQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GHANAIAN TIMES</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAILY GRAPHIC</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHANAIAN TIMES &amp; DAILY GRAPHIC</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

1. **News Reporting Style**: refers to political news stories in which journalists only reported the events and not inquiring further consequences from the protagonist/news sources.

2. **News Inquiry Reporting Style**: refers to political news stories in which journalists did not only reported the events but also inquired further from the protagonist/news sources on the consequences of their positions and issues.
Chart 1: GHANAIAN TIMES POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE: OCTOBER, 2012

POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE IN THE GHANAIAN TIMES: OCTOBER 1-31, 2012

- POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE, 144, 98%
- POLITICAL NEWS INQUIRY, 3, 2%

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Chart 2: DAILY GRAPHIC POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE: OCTOBER, 2012

POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE IN THE DAILY GRAPHIC:
OCTOBER 1st - 31st, 2012

- POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE, 153, 94%
- POLITICAL NEWS INQUIRY, 9, 6%
96% of Political Publication Only on Event Reporting!

STYLE OF ANALYTICAL REPORTING BY THE DAILY GRAPHIC AND GHANAIAN TIMES: OCTOBER, 2012

POLITICAL NEWS
INQUIRY, 12, 4%

POLITICAL NEWS REPORTING STYLE, 297, 96%
OBSERVATIONS:

There is something more fundamental at stake in our Ghanaian media landscape. If we are serious about the media’s role in the political process, surely then the research data should be one of the indicators for reforms on the table since Journalists in the State owned media are becoming more comfortable as observers than accepting the responsibility that comes with playing an inquiry role.

They have become more of ‘political content transmission channels’ than acting as ‘critical political inquirers’ representing the mandate of the electorates.

It is strongly recommended that the media/journalists should adapt their news making theories and evolve new tools of content inquiry orientation models for critical public discourse.

This is because; there has been so much talk in recent years about Ghanaian journalists’ political orientations and its effect on electoral logic.

The effect is that, gradually Journalists are drifting from what they are best trained to do thus assisting electorates to make sense of public events, opinions and spaces,
reporting and interpreting complex fabrics of political ideologies and the issues that make the news, as well as getting the mood of the political times.

Unfortunately the journalists have become much better actors of non-critical political events transmitters but have not maintained the same levels of critical political innovation, when it comes to covering issues on behalf of the electorates.

The findings which revealed only a 4% critical inquiry efforts attained by the state owned print media Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times in covering the election campaign has demonstrated the above observations with striking clarity.

In summary, the findings reveal that the Ghanaian print Journalists and reporters are gradually becoming ‘Political Stenographers’ and ‘Political Quotes Harvesters’.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Based on the findings, it is highly recommended that the Ghanaian media moves from their ‘political content transmission channels’ roles to acting as ‘critical political inquirers’ on behalf of the electorates.

- The media should articulate “interrogative-consequences” in news reporting as a mechanism to seek information and embark on content – inquiry on behalf of the electorates.

- During election period, information flow to the electorates is very paramount to enable appreciable choices. The media should therefore move away from ‘news-reporting’ to what CAEMMI refers to as ‘Content-Inquiry Reporting’ (CIR MODEL).

- Ghanaian Journalist should allow the national aspirations, communal challenges and needs to shape the style of reporting, or what CAEMMI also refers to as ‘National ‘Instrumentalization’ of Political News’ to shape the style of political reporting.
During political elections political parties present to the electorate 'Clichéd' and over-rehearsed campaigns, it is therefore the responsibility of the Journalist to 'cut through the parties hype and spin' with their political - inquiry reporting models.

Reference:


Ghana Journalist Association (GJA) Guidelines on Elections Coverage

National Media Commission (NMC) Media Policy Document

1992 Constitution of Ghana