WATCHING *The* WATCHDOG

Spotlighting Indecent Election Campaign Language On Radio

Edited by **Gilbert Tietaah**

STAR-Ghana
Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana

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Media Foundation for West Africa

WATCHING THE WATCHDOG: SPOTLIGHTING INDECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE ON RADIO

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Published in Ghana
by

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ISBN 978–9988–1–6306–8

This publication was funded by STAR-Ghana

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Typesetting by GertMash Desktop Services, Accra. Tel.: +233(0)302–251386
Cover Design & Printing by QualiType Limited, Accra. Tel.: +233(0)302–325266/7

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FOREWORD

The promotion of media freedom presupposes that the media, operating in an environment unencumbered by legal or political strictures or threats of reprisals against independent editorial and professional work, would function to meet relevant and reliable information needs of society. It also assumes that the media would create an open and accessible platform for enlightening discourse on public affairs; assist, through sound education on critical public issues, the formation of enlightened and healthy public opinion. It again presumes that the media would promote a culture of tolerance through credible and democratic debate while strengthening public demands for accountability from public office-holders.

Elections are one of the central pillars of democratic governance. The media's functions involve, above all else, providing reliable information and credible education to citizens to enhance, presumably, *wise* decision-making in choosing preferences among the contestants and their policy propositions.

Press (media) freedom and media pluralism imply, however, that the media represent diverse—and often competing and even conflicting—viewpoints, persuasions and even interests. This diversity is underpinned, influenced and determined by several factors including ownership, political, ideological and socio-cultural orientations, and plain old economic and financial considerations.

On a day-to-day basis, the media manifest this diversity by their various outputs or products: the contents, the different messages, information, news, entertainments, etc that they publish or broadcast. That is, the diversity is seen, primarily, in the varying interpretations and representations they make of the realities they try to present to society. This is a key distinguishing mark of plurality in media. Thus, the freedom of the media consists not only in its unencumbered right to go about its functions, but also by the right to differ: to present reality as it sees fit.

The media's relevance, therefore, can best be measured by standards that transcend the characteristics of their diversity; by factors that are universally applicable to all the media elements regardless of their particular diverse orientations. The test, then, is how the individual media establishments observe and manifest fundamental norms necessary in their representation of reality: that is, basic professional standards and ethics.

Elections are about competition for state power, and the contestants are presumably *selling* different ideas and programmes for the public to choose from and decide whom to vote for. The media is the most important vehicle for reaching the mass public in modern times.

Ghanaians pride themselves—sometimes to hyperbolic limits—on how they have successfully conducted democratic elections without destabilizing violence in a continent where elections have produced many bloody conflicts. The media has made major contributions to this state of affairs. But during most of these quadrennial elections, to reach the populace with their messages to *convince* them for their votes, the political parties and their activists and representatives in Ghana used the media—particularly radio—in ways that suggested that any and every expression could be made without any appreciation of basic cultural and social values regarding public communication in the society. And 2012 was, so to say, the worst.

The order was a cacophonous preference for intemperate, indecent, unethical language and expressions. The norm was resort to character assassination, insult of persons, lying and unsubstantiated allegations, unwarranted outbursts of fury, provocation and inciting violence. It was as if the elections were a matter of life and death.

The situation, as the media presented the election campaigns by the contestants and their supporters, was unnerving enough to excite serious concerns from different sections of society, especially from among religious leaders, chiefs, and civil society groups. It provoked among many the fear and belief that this deafening din of *indecent* language could trigger violence in the elections, with references to Cote d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Kenya and other examples of political bloodletting elsewhere in Africa.

Essentially, the biggest and most critical casualty in this communication mayhem was the real social, economic and other issues voters expected politicians to address for them to base their decisions on, and which would have meaning and relevance in their lives. Seen this way, it is tempting to be cynical and suggest that the political parties and candidates seemed to have had a pact to divert the minds and concerns of the Ghanaian voter from the issues that mattered most in their lives.

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)'s project to monitor the use of radio by the political parties and representatives in the election campaigns, and to name and shame those guilty of perpetuating the unethical use of language and expressions on air, was a pioneering initiative welcomed by many and, not unexpectedly, damned by some. What impact it may have made in encouraging more civilized political communication in the media is not possible to make without a scientific assessment. What is important is that the exercise was conducted on strictly verifiable scientific methods.

It is also noteworthy that, observing from random expressions by radio programme hosts and presenters, listeners participating by phone call and other social media, many in the public have come to acknowledge that there is and should be a better way of communication by politicians in the public arena. That alone should be a vindication of the validity and value of the MWFA's initiative.

Kwame Karikari
MFWA, Accra

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

All countries in West Africa, with the sole exception of Senegal suffered at least one coup d'etat between 1966 and the present. However, from the early 1990s, democratic forms of government have replaced the military regimes and one-party dictatorships. As a result of these changes, freedom of expression and media freedom have made significant improvements in the sub region.

There is little doubt that there is correlation between the type of governance a country practices and the health of its media. Indeed, with specific reference to Ghana, there is an implicit constitutional obligation on political parties and the media to contribute to enlightened public opinion and stimulate political participation and democratic governance through the informed consideration of divergent views and policy alternatives.
The return to constitutional democratic governance has, consequently, been good for media pluralism and freedom of expression in Ghana. This is partially evident in the vibrant private media output and investment in media infrastructure such as newsprint and printing facilities, broadcast transmitters and internet access portals.

It is also partially evident in the legal and constitutional provisions that seek to protect and promote the rights of citizens to freely hold and express diverse and even dissenting views on issues of public interest. It is not surprising, therefore, that over the years various measures of media rights/free expression have repeatedly returned a vote of confidence in—and showcased—the Ghanaian media system as an example of democratic best practice.

Against this positive verdict, however, is a concern that an insidious culture of insults and innuendoes are taking root within the Ghanaian political and communication landscape, to the extent that during the 2012 elections, people were genuinely worried that this trend could undermine public faith in electoral politics and democratic governance generally.

Unfortunately, the media have become platforms for hate speech, insult and the use of inciting language and generally negative expressions. This frequent use of unethical and unprofessional language in the media can promote harmful developments in periods of national excitement such as during elections.

These concerns are often reflected in the number of seminars, workshops and public engagements with political party commentators and the media during election years; these are often intended to avert or mitigate the adverse effects of campaign polemics on the peace and efficacy of the elections. While these continuing efforts at promoting violent-free-elections have been positive, there has been little concerted effort at empirically measuring and documenting the evidence about the media, political parties and individuals most implicated in the use of abusive language.

Such an endeavour would be useful in two ways. First, it will be a way to name and shame the most culpable perpetrators; and, hopefully, serve as a deterrent to impunity. Secondly, it will provide informed feedback and enable more evidence-based future interventions in training and advocacy to encourage decent, issues-driven election campaigns. This publication seeks to achieve these twin goals.

The 2008 elections in Ghana were particularly remarkable for the great number of personality attacks in political discussion programmes on radio stations in the country. A monitoring study conducted by the MFWA found an average of 12 indecent expressions from political party representatives per programme. Similarly, politically-related indecent expressions averaged three per each major news bulletin of the radio stations. These indecent expressions were mostly in the form of unsubstantiated allegations, ethnic slurs and expressions that connote divisiveness.

Two radio stations with publicly-acknowledged ownership affiliations to members of ruling NDC and the main opposition NPP (*Radio Gold* and *Oman FM*, respectively) were particularly culpable in their incitement to violence. This created a tensed atmosphere and nearly threatened public order, particularly in the capital, Accra. The situation is often partly attributed to the libertarian orientation of the 1992 Constitutional (notably the stipulations of Article 162 (3)); which legally abrogated the restrictive Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law on media ownership and control (PNDCL 211), repealed the Telecommunications (Frequency Regulation and Control) Decree of 1971 (SMCD 71) and engendered a new regime of broadcast pluralism in the country (524: 2 (a)). It is also partly attributed to the lack of a corresponding growth of journalism professional training and skills; resulting often in a disregard for basic ethical norms and codes of practice.

Following the increasing use of indecent expressions by political activists in elections-related and general political discussions, and its implications for peaceful elections, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), in January 2012, initiated a project to monitor campaign language on radio. The project was conceived and carried out under the theme: "Promoting Issues-based and Decent Language-Campaigning for a Peaceful, Free and Fair Elections in Ghana in 2012." It was a pre-emptive intervention inspired by anecdotal accounts and lessons about the use of abusive language in previous (and in particular, the 2008) election campaign activities.

Objective of the Project

The objective of the language monitoring project was to promote peaceful electoral campaigning in the 2012 Elections in Ghana through the following strategies:

1. Ensuring issues-based and decent language campaigning before, during and after the 2012 elections;
2. *Naming and shaming* of politicians/activists who engaged in insults rather than issues-based discussions through the daily monitoring of electoral language of politicians and party activists;
3. *Naming and shaming* of moderators/hosts and radio stations that allowed indecent expressions on their airwaves.

Several activities were carried out to enlist the cooperation and collaboration of key/identified stakeholders. They included, for instance, consultative meetings with political party representatives and radio station managers across the country. These activities culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing the stakeholders to the use of decent campaign language in political discussion programmes. The process provided opportunity for broad consensus-building and endorsement of the project by the major stakeholders.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In line with Ghana's Constitution and the electoral calendar, voters went to the polls on December 7, 2012 to cast their votes for President and Members of Parliament. The media, in their role as originators, interpreters and transmitters of political communication, were central to the electoral process. The media's role was also a critical factor in whether or not the public would accept the result as free and fair. Did the Ghanaian media, as social institutions, help or hurt the search for an issues-driven electoral process? Were the media willing and able to mediate the public perception of the process and outcome in a fair and objective manner? Were they exercising their editorial and gatekeeping duties according to the professional and ethical principles of value detachment and responsibility? How can the culpability or complicity of the media (if any) be exposed and reproached in order to serve as deterrent against impunity and in order to inform the nature and content of subsequent capacity building support?

In order to find empirical answers to these questions the language monitoring project selected 31 radio stations across the 10 Regions of Ghana for the monitoring of specific programmes on their networks. The pervasiveness of radio listening habits of the Ghanaian public, and more importantly, its widely-cited role in fuelling election-related conflicts in countries such as Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire, informed the particular interest in radio; and the proactive design and implementation of the monitoring exercise. This chapter explains the step-by-step procedures undertaken in designing and gathering the relevant data for the study.

Sampling Procedure

According to the official statistics of the National Communications Authority (NCA), a total of 247 radio stations had been licensed to operate in the country by the last quarter of 2011. A total of 217 were operational.

The project monitored a total of 31 of these 217 stations. The stations were purposively sampled in consideration of the following factors:

- Radio stations with wider listenership
- Regional distribution (to ensure radio stations were selected from each of the 10 Regions of Ghana)
- Ownership of radio stations

Ten (10) out of the 31 selected stations were located in the Greater Accra Region. Three each were selected from the Ashanti, Northern and Brong Ahafo Regions; and two each were selected from the Western, Eastern, Volta, Central, Upper West and Upper East Regions. Details of the specific radio stations selected for the monitoring exercise are presented in Table 2.1.

Period of Monitoring

The planning and preparation activities for the design and execution of the project (such as consultation and validation meetings and development of data collection instruments) started in January 2012. The actual monitoring exercise began on April 1, 2012 and ended on December 29, 2012. This timeframe enabled the monitoring exercise to index and map the trend in the use of language on radio in the pre-election, election and post-election periods of the presidential and parliamentary campaign processes.

Data Collection Instrument

A comprehensive coding instrument (See Appendix A) was developed with the support of language experts and consultants from the School of Communication Studies and the Linguistics Department of University of Ghana, and from the Ghana Bureau of Languages. The use of experts in the development of the data collection instrument ensured that the instrument was valid, reliable and credible.

The monitoring instrument was presented at a public forum for validation by key stakeholders, including the National Media Commission

Table 2.1: Radio Stations Monitored Under the Project

No.	*Radio Station*	*Frequency (MHz)*	*Location*
GREATER ACCRA REGION			
1	*Radio Gold*	90.5	Accra
2	*Oman FM*	107.1	Accra
3	*Asempa FM*	94.7	Accra
4	*Hot FM*	93.9	Accra
5	*Peace FM*	104.3	Accra
6	*Joy FM*	99.7	Accra
7	*Uniiq FM*	95.7	Accra
8	*Citi FM*	97.3	Accra
9	*Adom FM*	106.3	Accra
10	*Meridian FM*	100.5	Tema
ASHANTI REGION			
11	*Fox FM*	97.9	Kumasi
12	*Kessben FM*	93.3	Kumasi
13	*Angel FM*	96.1	Kumasi
NORTHERN REGION			
14	*Radio Justice*	98.5	Tamale
15	*North Star FM*	96.9	Tamale
16	*Diamond FM*	93.7	Tamale
BRONG AHAFO REGION			
17	*Space FM*	87.7	Sunyani
18	*Classic FM*	91.1	Techiman
19	*Wenchi Royal*	101.5	Wenchi
WESTERN REGION			
20	*Skyy FM*	93.5	Takoradi
21	*Ankobra FM*	101.9	Axim
EASTERN REGION			
22	*Obuoba FM*	91.7	Mpraeso
23	*Rite FM*	90.1	Somanya
VOLTA REGION			
24	*Lorlornyo FM*	93.3	Hohoe
25	*Jubilee Radio*	106.9	Keta
CENTRAL REGION			
26	*Yes FM*	102.9	Cape Coast
27	*Ahomka FM*	99.5	Elmina
UPPER WEST REGION			
28	*Radio Progress*	98.1	Wa
29	*Radio Upper West*	90.1	Wa
UPPER EAST REGION			
30	*Word Radio*	88.3	Zuarungu
31	*URA Radio*	89.7	Bolgatanga

(NMC), the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN), the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), religious bodies, political parties and civil society organisations.

Category Definitions

The monitoring exercise was aimed at identifying those using indecent language on radio, the kind of expressions and how they were using them. A key goal was that by thus *naming and shaming* the radio station, journalists, political parties and activists guilty of using such indecent expressions, they would stop the practice and promote, instead, an issues-based agenda.

An indecent expression was defined or considered to be any statement or insinuation that sought to attack or damage the reputation of an individual, political party, or ethnic group; or that could provoke the target of the expression to react in an unpleasant or offensive manner; or that could offend the sensibilities of members of the public. Specifically, the following categories were identified and operationalized with the support of the language experts:

- **Insult:** These are words, expressions or language meant to degrade or offend others. Insults are usually attacks on a person using words such as thieves, fools, stupid, greedy bastards, unintelligent people etc.

- **Prejudice and bigotry:** Remarks that express instinctive views or biases against someone based on pre-conceived ideas and/or unreasonable dislike for a group of people. Specific examples include the following: “Ewes are backward and inward-looking; Ashantis are arrogant proud people; Akyems are quarrelsome people; what else do you expect from a Northerner?” Bigotry also encompasses intolerance of the views of others.

- **Inflammatory expressions:** Statements likely to provoke anger in others and/or promote violence in society. Specific examples of inflammatory expressions include "Ghana will burn if we don't win; Ghana will be like Kenya if we are not declared winners of the election."

- **Incitement:** Remarks which provoke immediate action by others and can lead to violence. Statements such as "Go and besiege the Electoral Commission's office with weapons to prevent our opponents from cheating; slap any opposition member who annoys you; confiscate suspicious ballot boxes," constitute incitement to violence.

- **Expletives:** These are swear words or rude and unsavoury expressions unfit for publication/broadcast but used in reference to others, nonetheless.

- **Hate speech:** Insults which are said against a group of people based on their ethnicity, religion or party affiliation to degrade and/or offend them and hold them out to public scorn and hatred.

- **Tribal slurs and stereotyping:** Similar to issues which result in hate speech.

- **Provocative remarks:** Comments that are deemed confrontational. A statement such as "The General Secretary of the party started shouting like a castrated hyena," is provocative.

- **Unsubstantiated allegations:** Statements meant to offend and impugn the integrity of a person calculated to bring them to public ridicule.

- **Gender Specific Insults:** Offensive words or speech directed at someone based on the person's gender and are usually very painful. Examples of such remarks include the following: "You are a prostitute or a witch; only prostitutes enter into male domains; no decent woman will speak the way you did; any man worth his sort will be bold enough to enter the presidential race or debate; when we are talking about men, we do not include the likes of you or him."

- **Divisive expressions:** Any expression that seeks to create division among groups of people or communities on the basis of party affiliation, religion or ethnicity. It is also based on other such groupings as making allusions to previous conflicts which exist or have the potential to ignite old wars among identified groups of people or create ill-feeling. Relevant examples include statements such as "A Muslim cannot be President of Ghana; and a Fanti cannot lead this nation."

- **Innuendo:** Indirect references to something rude and unpleasant.

(See Appendix A for the entire category definitions used in the monitoring).

Monitors and Analysts

Thirty-one (31) individuals were carefully recruited, trained and contracted to monitor the selected radio stations after the coding instrument had been validated. The process of identifying monitors was guided by two key considerations: (1) the individual must not have any official political party membership or affiliation; (2) the person must possess a minimum qualification of a university first degree.

Two analysts with post-graduate training from the School of Communication Studies of the University of Ghana were also contracted to collate and analyse the weekly reports from the monitors as shown in Picture 2.1. The monitors were trained at the beginning of the exercise and retrained in the course of the monitoring (see Picture 2.2). The initial training session was to enable them understand and accurately apply the coding schedule in monitoring and assessing programmes on their assigned radio networks.

Midway in the course of the monitoring, all the 31 monitors were reconvened in Accra and retrained based on their field experiences. This

Picture 2.1: Analysts Assessing Monitoring Reports from Monitors.

Picture 2.2: Monitors being Trained.

helped to integrate some of the feedback received about the exercise into the subsequent monitoring. It also enabled the project team to address the emergent logistical and other routine challenges that the researchers had reported about their daily monitoring experiences. The retraining resulted in an appreciable increase in the level of diligence in the daily monitoring; and a consequent improvement in both the quality and quantity of future reports. It also helped to sustain the interest of the monitors in the project.

Data Collection Procedure

Each monitor was assigned to a radio station and was equipped with recording device which was used to record all the political discussion programmes and the news segments aired on the station.

The recorded programmes enabled the monitors to play back the audio recording of the relevant programme or item. They then performed a focused coding and elaboration of the items of interest. In Picture 2.3 for instance, the monitor is playing back a recorded programme and using it to fill out this research instrument while Picture 2.4 shows a

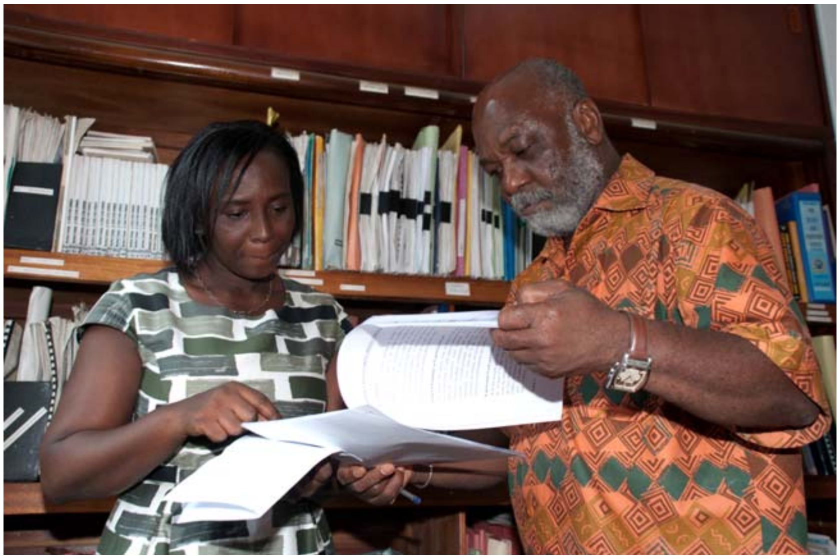
Picture 2.3: A Monitor Playing back Recorded Programme to Fill Coding Instrument.

Picture 2.4: A Monitor Filling out a Coding Instrument.

monitor who is doing an elaboration of items of interest. The recordings were later transferred unto Compact Discs (CDs) and delivered to the MFWA by courier for archiving. The recordings became important exhibits in the event that stations, parties and individuals implicated in the monitoring reports denied or demanded evidence of their culpability. In one example, an individual who was adamant that she had been cited and indicted out of context was, at her own request, confronted and confounded with the exact sound recording that was used to code the reported incident.

Publication of Reports

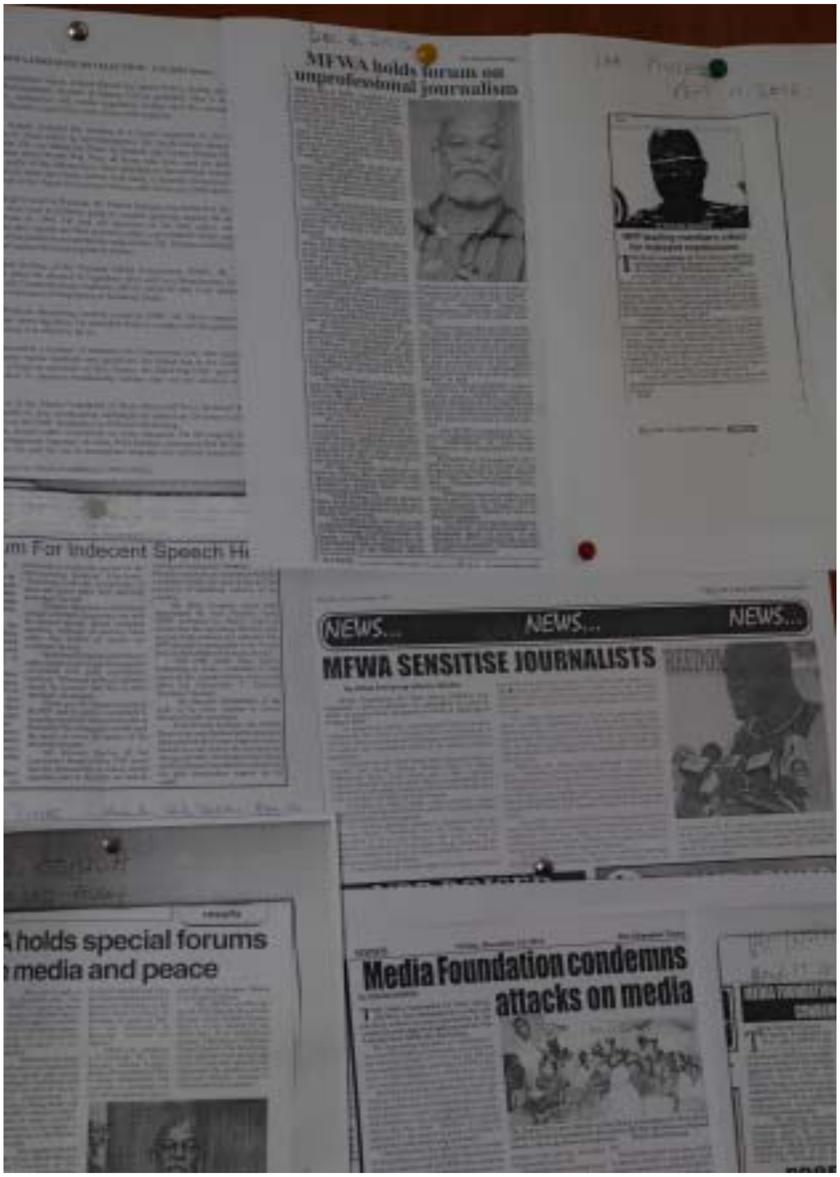
The weekly reports (which was always certified by Management as shown in Picture 2.5 before issuing) were widely circulated and publicised. The reports were usually sent via emails to print, broadcast and online media. The reports were also distributed to the radio stations monitored, the



Picture 2.5: Management Reviewing Monitoring Report before Issuing to the Media and Other Stakeholders

political parties, and identified stakeholder institutions and individuals including: the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN), the National Media Commission (NMC), media and communication scholars/teachers, religious bodies, civil society organisations, and members of the international community. In some instances, individuals who were cited in the reports were called by some radio stations to react to the reports; often thereby provoking and sustaining public interest and debate about use of indecent language in and by the media. Picture 2.6 shows a section of newspaper clippings of some publications.

In addition to the routine weekly reports issued as press releases, a number of press conferences and public forums were organised to engage expert opinion; and to enlist public support for the campaign. For instance, a month to the December 7, 2012 polls, two public forums were organised during which a number of prominent governance, media and



MFWA holds forum on unprofessional journalism

m For Indecent Speech H

NEWS... NEWS... NEWS...

MFWA SENSITISE JOURNALISTS

holds special forums
media and peace

Media Foundation condemns attacks on media

Picture 2.6: Newspaper Publications on the Language Monitoring Project.

communication scholars and practitioners were invited to share experiences on the role of the media in conflict situations and election-related crises in particular African countries. They included: the Executive Director of Twaweza Communications in Nairobi, Professor Simon Kimani Njogu; former Executive Secretary of the Media High Council of Rwanda and scholar in language, media and governance, Patrice Mulama; media expert and consultant of the UN on media for peace and former African Bureau Chief of Radio Netherlands, Soule Issiaka; and Assistant Manager in-charge of Press Development at the National Press Council in Côte d'Ivoire, Konate Doh.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of the nine-month monitoring exercise (April 1 to December 29, 2012). The findings are presented below under the following broad sections: general findings; expressions used; political affiliations of culprits, the gender factor, radio station performances and a comparison of the quarterly findings.

Also presented in this chapter are some of the general reactions received about the project. The section acknowledges feedback received from the media, political parties, groups and individuals. It also addresses the question of how the feedback was managed and integrated into the project.

General Findings

For the nine-month period, 2,850 programmes were monitored on the 31 radio stations selected for the project. A total of 509 indecent expressions were coded on the 2,850 programmes monitored. The programmes on which indecent expressions were recorded were predominantly political discussion programmes which were mostly aired in the morning and evening/night.

The political discussion programmes on which the 509 indecent expressions were recorded were programmes produced by and originating from the radio stations themselves. However, because a few of the radio stations, notably those outside the two major cities of Accra and Kumasi were affiliated to radio stations in those cities, whenever an indecent expression was made on a syndicated programme, it was automatically relayed to listeners of the Accra and Kumasi radio stations as well as listeners within the reach of those affiliate stations.

The programme durations ranged from 30 minutes to three hours. As would be expected, there were more indecent expressions used on longer programmes. Also, indecent expressions were more likely to be recorded within discussion programmes that were aired in the Akan language. Programmes aired in the English language posted fewer indecent expressions.

The specific subject matter of discussion or debate was also an important factor in whether or not people used indecent language; controversial subjects or discussions appeared to incite greater number of indecent expressions.

The activities (rallies, internal wrangling, launching of manifestoes, etc.) of the various political parties were the main subject matter of most of the discussions monitored. It was during the discussion of the issues raised at such events that the majority of indecent expressions were recorded. Other subjects of discussion around which a significant number of indecent expressions were used included the biometric registration exercise, the ill-health of the late President, John Atta Mills, the payment of judgement debts and other corruption-related issues.

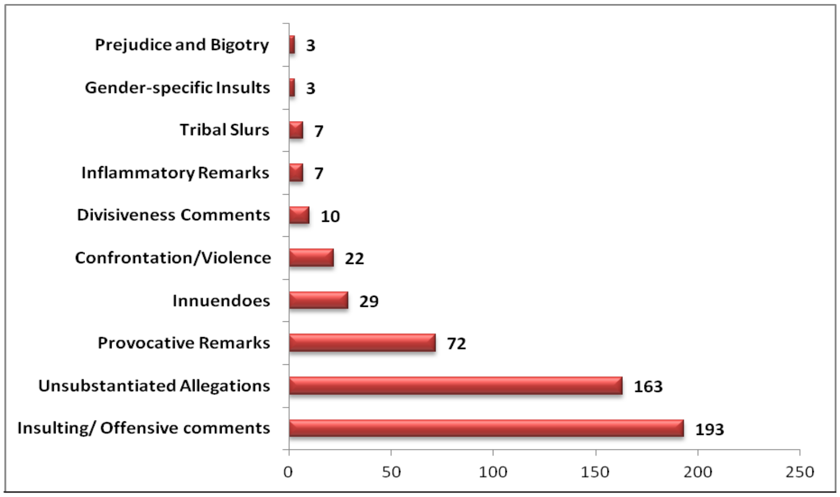
The political party or group affiliations of individuals implicated in the use of indecorous expressions were positively established in 447 out of the 509 incidents recorded. The remaining 62 could be categorised into two broad camps as follows: (1) indecent remarks by individuals whose political/group affiliations were not obviously or categorically attributed (comprising, for instance, callers, discussants or presenters who read and/or made indecent expressions), 28; (2) indecent expressions being rebroadcasts of items originally aired on earlier platforms, 34.

Expressions Used

A total of 10 different kind of indecent expressions were categorised as belonging in mutually exclusive sets. These were: (1) insulting and offensive comments; (2) unsubstantiated allegations; (3) provocative remarks; (4) innuendoes; (5) remarks calling for confrontation and violence; (6) comments promoting divisiveness; (7) inflammatory remarks; (8) expressions containing ethnic slurs; (9) gender-specific insults; and (10) expressions containing prejudice and bigotry.

Insulting and offensive comments, unsubstantiated allegations and provocative remarks, in that order, were the three most frequently used types of indecent expressions against political opponents. Figure 3.1 shows the specific tallies of the different categories of indecent expressions coded.

Figure 3.1: Categories of Expressions Used



The use of specific categories of indecent expressions became dominant during the discussion of specific subject matters. For instance, during the biometric registration exercise, the tallies of remarks calling for confrontation/violence on the radio stations monitored increased substantially. Also, during discussions around what had been alleged to be *genocidal* remarks by opposition NPP MP, Kennedy Agyapong, and the reported *ethnocentric* remarks of President John Mahama, a high number of divisive comments and ethnic slurs were recorded. It must, however, be noted that these types of indecent expressions were also recorded in the discussion of other subjects.

Another phenomenon that was observed with regard to the specific categories of expressions used was the replay of specific remarks inciting confrontation/violence by *Radio Gold* and *Asempa FM*, respectively. These rebroadcasts were done even when discussions on the said stations were not directly related to the subjects mentioned in those sound bites.

Even though the monitoring was basically to record indecent expressions on radio so that the perpetrators could be *named and shamed*, the exercise also took note of, and commended specific remarks that were peaceful and conciliatory in nature. In the two examples cited below, two individuals were recorded urging Ghanaians to preach peace and exercise restraint:

- On 16th April, 2012 during a programme named *Common Course* on *Radio Upper West,* Ishaq Suleman of the CPP made the following appeal: "Let us all preach and pray for peace to prevail."

- Ofosu Ampofo, Interior Minister and member of the NDC said on *Kessben FM's* Maakye programme aired on 17th April, 2012, "… all well-meaning Ghanaians should condemn anybody who makes unguarded statements … [we should] unite as a common people with one destiny from one family."

Expressions Used and Political Party Affiliation

The indecent expressions recorded in the course of the monitoring were either made by individuals (475) or replayed by some radio stations (34). The indecent expressions made directly by individuals were often occasioned by or uttered in the context of their roles as in-studio panellists, out-of-studio (phone) interviewees, listener phone-ins or text messages, or show hosts/presenters. The majority of those individuals were political party officials and known activists and affiliates/supporters of specific political parties in Ghana.

Out of the 475 indecent expressions made by individuals, only 28 of them came from persons whose political/group affiliation could not be directly or objectively ascertained. The remaining 447 indecent expressions were made by individuals who were affiliated to one of the following nine (9) political parties: Convention People's Party (CPP), Independent Peoples' Party (IPP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), National Democratic Party (NDP), New Patriotic Party (NPP), Peoples' National Convention (PNC), Progressive Peoples' Party (PPP), United Front Party

(UFP) and United Renaissance Party (URP). Of course, affiliates of some political parties used more indecent expressions than others.

As much as 404 of the 447 indecent expressions were made by affiliates and supporters of the main opposition NPP and by affiliates and supporters of the ruling NDC party. The remaining 43 indecent expressions were made by affiliates of the other seven (7) political parties. Affiliates of the NPP made 218 (54%) of the 404 indecent expressions while affiliates of the NDC made 186 (46%). Figure 3.2 presents the frequency of indecent expressions used by affiliates of the nine political parties.

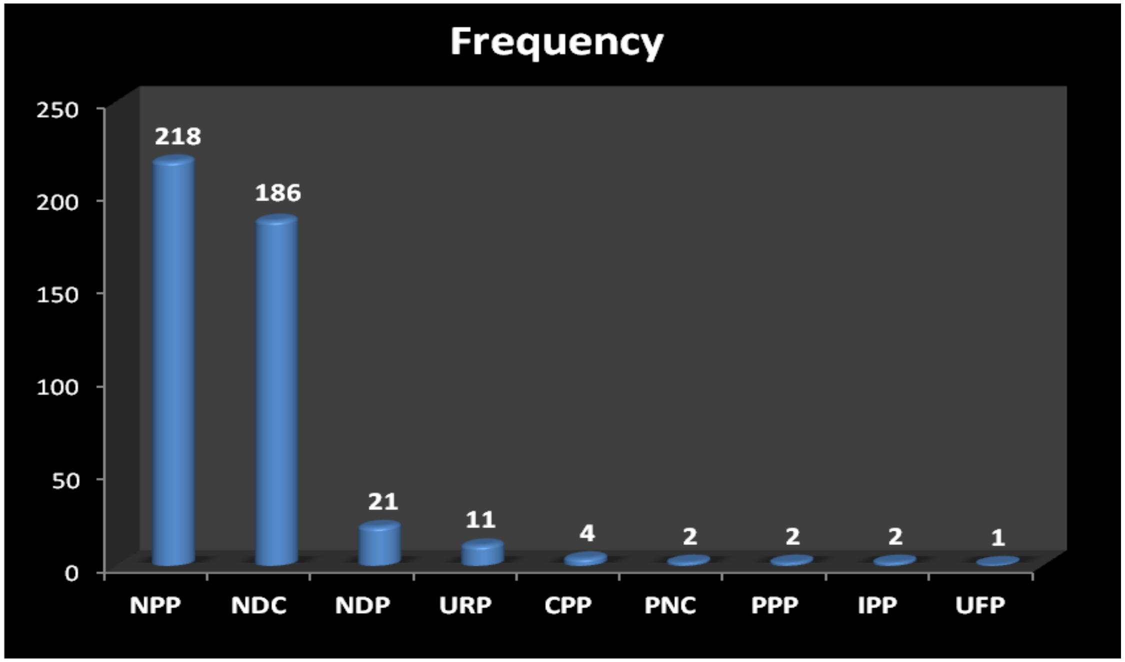
A further analyses of the data found that affiliates of the two major political parties (NPP and NDC) were most noted for using particular categories of indecent expressions. For instance, in Table 2 below, affiliates of the NPP used more insulting/offensive comments (85) and unsubstantiated allegations (81) than affiliates of the NDC and the other political parties. Conversely, affiliates of the NDC used provocative remarks more (44) often than affiliates of the NPP and the other political parties. The breakdown of the specific indecent expressions used by affiliates of the nine political parties is disaggregated in Table 3.1.

A number of identified individuals were noted for their persistent use of indecent remarks. Two of such individuals worth mentioning (because of their leadership positions and level of influence in their respective political parties) were Ernest Owusu Bempah and Kennedy Agyapong.

Ernest Owusu Bempah, the Deputy National Communications Director of the NDP, was recorded as making 33 of the 509 indecent expressions recorded. From the first to the third quarters of the monitoring period, Owusu Bempah was found to have consistently led in the use of indecent expressions.

Kennedy Agyapong, the NPP MP for Assin North (now Assin Central) Constituency came second to Owusu Bempah in the use of indecent expression. Over the second and third quarters of the monitoring, Kennedy Agyapong was recorded as making 25 of the total indecent expressions recorded over the project period.

Figure 3.2: Political Party Affiliation and Indecent Expressions Used



Note: The 62 indecent remarks not captured in Fig.3.2 were expressions made by individuals whose political affiliation could not be established (28) as well as the rebroadcast of indecent expressions by radio stations (34).

Table 3.1: Categories of Expressions Used *by* Political Party Affiliation

Expression Used	*NPP*	*NDC*	*NDP*	*URP*	*CPP*	*PNC*	*PPP*	*IPP*	*UFP*	*Total*
Insulting/Offensive comments	85	56	10	4	1	1	2	0	1	**160**
Unsubstantiated Allegations	81	60	5	3	2	1	0	1	0	**153**
Provocative Remarks	19	44	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	**72**
Innuendoes	14	9	1		0	0	0	0	0	**24**
Remarks calling for Confrontation/ Violence	11	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	**17**
Divisiveness Comments	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**10**
Inflammatory Remarks	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Tribal Slurs	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Gender-specific Insults	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
Prejudice and Bigotry	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Total	**218**	**186**	**21**	**11**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**447**

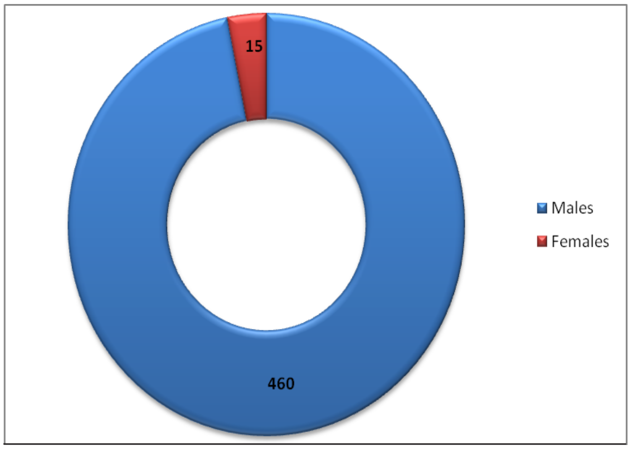
Note: The 62 indecent remarks not captured in Table 3.2 were expressions made by individuals whose political affiliation could not be established (28) as well as the rebroadcast of indecent expressions by radio stations (34).

Expressions Used and Gender

The monitoring showed that both genders actively participated in political discussions on radio stations as in-studio discussants, interviewees, callers and contributors via text messages and Facebook/Twitter messages. Analysis on the basis of gender and the use of indecent expressions, therefore, became necessary to establish which gender was more abusive.

The findings showed that the overwhelming number of incidences of the use of indecent expressions was made by males. Specifically, of the 475 indecent remarks made by individuals, 460, representing 97 percent, were made by males. Only 15 of the 475 indecent expressions were made by females as depicted in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Gender and Frequency of Indecent Expressions Used



Note: The 34 indecent remarks not captured in Fig.3.3 were rebroadcasts of indecent expressions by some radio stations. Also, in terms of the categories of indecent remarks recorded, only three (3) were gender-specific indecent expressions.

Expressions Used and Radio Stations

Interestingly, while the project received reports from all 31 monitored station, three were found not to have recorded any incidence of abuse or indecent expressions. These stations were: Tema-based *Meridian FM*, *Radio Justice* in Tamale and *Word Radio* in Zuarungu. Thus the 509 negative statements were captured on 28 radio stations.

The Accra-based *Oman FM*, owned by businessman and politician, Kennedy Agyapong, NPP MP for Assin North (now Assin Central), which is openly pro-NPP, recorded the highest number of indecent expressions. Close to a quarter (115, representing 23%) of all the indecent expressions recorded were made on that station. The indecent expressions on *Oman FM* were recorded on two of their major programmes, *Boiling Point* which was aired at night (8pm to 10pm) and *National Agenda* which was aired in the morning (8am to 10am). *Boiling Point* registered more indecent expressions than the *National Agenda* programme.

Radio Gold, which is an openly pro-NDC radio station, recorded the second highest number (50, representing 10%) of indecent expressions. The indecent expressions on *Radio Gold* were usually captured during the *Gold Power Drive* programme which was aired in the morning (6am to 10am).

Table 3.2 presents a breakdown of the indecent expressions recorded on all the radio stations involved in the monitoring exercise.

Rebroadcast of Indecent Expressions

The rebroadcast of events, issues and statements give listeners who could not listen-in to the live programme the opportunity to listen to them for the first time. It also helps those who might have heard it earlier to listen to it again and further reflect on the event/issues/statements more closely to inform their decisions and actions. The mere exposure and repetition of signs and symbols has the consequence of imprinting images, statements or events on the minds of listeners. Therefore, the relay or replay of indecent expressions give people the opportunity to hear it for the first time and those who might be hearing it for the second time or more, the chance to reflect more on it or register it in their minds or take action where necessary. The ramifications of such actions could be unpleasant for the stability of any country.

Unfortunately, however, some radio stations persistently replayed indecent remarks even when the weekly reports urged them to put an end to the practice. The main culprits in this practice were *Radio Gold* and *Asempa FM*. On *Radio Gold*, inflammatory expressions and remarks calling for confrontation were often replayed during the *Teacup* segment of the *Gold Power Drive* and other programmes of the station such as *Alhaji and Alhaji, Asem Yi Di Ka* and *Election Room*. On *Asempa FM*, indecent expressions, along with other controversial sound bites were

Table 3.2: Frequency of Indecent Expressions on the 31 Project Radio Stations

Radio Station	*Frequency*
Oman FM	115
Radio Gold	50
Angel FM	43
Classic FM	42
Adom FM	36
Asempa FM	26
Skyy Power FM	20
Kessben FM	20
Space FM	18
Citi FM	17
Peace FM	17
Hot FM	16
Royals FM	14
Ankobra FM	13
North Star FM	13
Fox FM	8
Rites FM	7
Diamond FM	5
Radio Upper West	5
Uniiq FM	5
Radio Progress	4
Jubilee Radio	3
Obuoba FM	3
Yes FM	3
Ahomka FM	2
URA Radio	2
Joy FM	1
Lorlornyo FM	1
Meridian FM	0
Radio Justice	0
Word Radio	0
Total	**509**

replayed during a segment of the *Ekosii Sen* programme named, *A Week in Sound bite*. The data also shows that, a number of other radio stations replayed abusive remarks occasionally.

Moderators' Handling of Programmes

The manner in which moderators (show hosts/presenters) manage their programmes, to a large extent, contributes to how the in-studio guests and call-in participants comport themselves on their radio stations. If the host of a programme is able to handle his/her in-studio discussions, interview, text messaging and phone-in segments professionally and sets the guidelines and ground rules for discussions, the participants are more likely to be decorous in their speech and base their contributions on issues. Under such circumstances, even when an indecent expression is used, the moderator is able to ask the person to retract, apologise or in some extreme cases, walk the person out of the studio or drop the phone line (in the case of a caller).

An assessment of how moderators conducted themselves shows that, generally, show hosts/presenters managed their programmes well. All the programmes monitored were dominantly courteous—except for those indecent expressions that were recorded. This explains why out of the 2,850 programmes monitored, only 509 indecent expressions were recorded. In general, most of the programmes and discussions were issues-based. On the other hand, an appreciable number of the discussions focused more on personalities and it was during such discussions that a lot of the indecent expressions were used.

Specifically, most of the moderators handled their programmes with professionalism and interjected to restrain or repudiate discussants/callers if they deviated from the issues or made unguarded statements. Some of them were proactive in announcing their ground rules and educating callers in particular about the requirement to be civil in their use of language. Others obliged panellists/callers to withdraw unwelcome comments, or required them to substantiate allegations that sounded implausible or unfounded. In one particular instance, the presenter simply ended the whole programme when a caller made an indecent remark.

On the other hand, some hosts/presenters allowed their platforms to be used to make unsubstantiated allegations and to verbally assault political opponents. This usually happened during in-studio discussions and call-in segments. Certain individuals who had been cited in the MFWA's weekly reports as being abusive were nonetheless repeatedly hosted or entertained on certain radio stations thereby giving such individuals the platform to continue the habit of using indecent expressions on air.

In the absence of delayed broadcast equipment, moderators sometimes find it difficult to avoid the utterance of indecorous expressions on their networks. However, in the case of text messaging, producers and hosts/presenters, to a large extent, have control over what is aired and what is not because they receive and collate the messages before reading them. In spite of this fact, some show hosts/presenters read out on air indecent text messages sent in by some listeners. A few of the presenters were also captured using indecorous language themselves.

Comparison of First, Second and Third Quarter Findings

A comparative analysis of the findings of the first (April to June), second (July to September) and third (October to December) quarters of the monitoring period show that there were differences in the number of indecent expressions recorded over the three quarters. The differences in the findings were in the areas of the expressions used, political party affiliation of those who used indecent expressions and the radio stations on which the expressions were made.

Comparison of the Expressions Used Over the Three Quarters

The findings showed that the second quarter of the monitoring registered the highest number of indecent expressions whereas the third quarter recorded the least. From the data in Table 3.3 the use of indecent expressions rose marginally from 180 in the first quarter to 188 in the second quarter when the electoral campaign activities were gathering momentum. Paradoxically, in the third quarter when electoral campaign activities peaked, there was an appreciable decrease; indicating that to a large extent the monitoring project was arguably contributing significantly to curb the use of indecent language in the campaigning—and by extension, to the promotion of issues-based discussions. Table 3.3 also shows how specific categories of indecent expressions were used over the three quarters.

Table 3.3: Expressions Used in the First, Second and Third Quarters of Monitoring

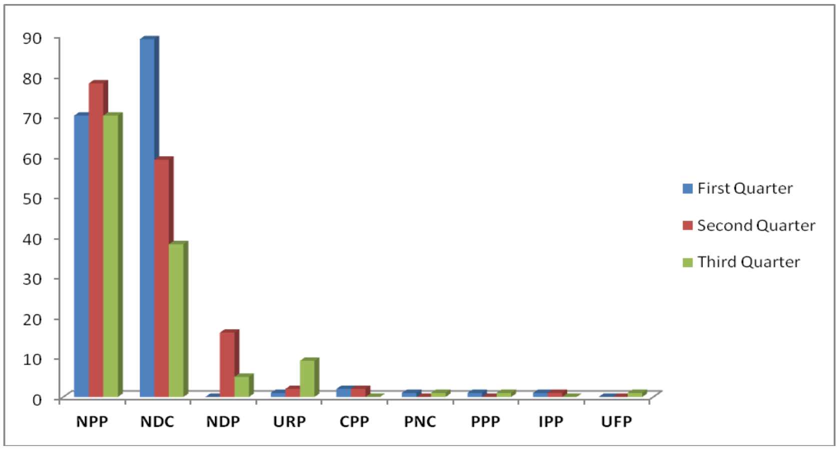
Types of Expressions Used	*Frequency*			*Total*
	First Quarter	*Second Quarter*	*Third Quarter*	
Insulting/offensive comments	58	71	64	193
Unsubstantiated allegations	63	62	38	163
Provocative remarks	17	35	20	72
Innuendoes	15	8	6	29
Remarks calling for confrontation/violence	15	4	3	22
Divisive comments	6	1	3	10
Inflammatory remarks	0	4	3	7
Ethnic slurs	2	1	4	7
Gender-specific indecent expressions	2	1	0	3
Prejudice & Bigotry	2	1	0	3
Total	**180**	**188**	**141**	**509**

Comparison by Political Party Affiliation

There were notable variations in the use of indecent expressions by affiliates of the main political parties in the country. Whereas affiliates of the NDC were in the lead in the use of indecent expressions during the first quarter, affiliates of the NPP became more abusive in the second and third quarters. The score of the URP over the three quarters was also significant although the number of indecent expressions the party recorded was relatively low. From one (1) and two (2) indecent remarks in the first and second quarters respectively, the URP registered eight (8) indecent remarks in the third quarter. The founder of the party, Kofi Wayo, was the only individual who made the eleven (11) indecent expressions registered by the URP over the nine months.

Another notable phenomenon in the course of the monitoring was the formation and registration of the National Democratic Party (NDP). As at the end of the first quarter, the NDP had not been formed. The party was formed by some leading members of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the second quarter of the monitoring period. That explains why in Figure 3.4, findings of the first quarter do not reflect the performance of the NDP. Other details of the findings concerning the number of indecent expressions recorded by affiliates of all the nine political parties during the respective quarters are presented in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Political Party Affiliation by Indecent Expressions Used during the three quarters



Note: The 62 indecent remarks not captured in Fig. 3.4 were expressions made by individuals whose political affiliation could not be established (28) as well as the rebroadcast of indecent expressions by radio stations (34).

Comparison by Radio Stations

Similar to the variables above, there were some differences in the number of indecent expressions captured on the 31 radio stations selected for the monitoring exercise. Apart from the three radio stations that did not register any indecent expression, each of the remaining 28 registered at least one unacceptable remark in at least one of the three quarters. It is notable that whereas the scores of indecent expressions registered on most of the radio stations reduced at least in the third quarter, *Angel FM* registered more indecent expressions in the second and third quarters. Table 3.4 provides details of these findings.

Reactions to the Findings

Feedback is an essential component in project implementation as it provides information on the efficiency of processes and outputs while identifying areas that need attention for improved performance. In this section, the reactions that were received on the project are presented along with an indication of how those reactions contributed to the overall success of the project.

The responses received about the monitoring exercise were varied. Whereas some welcomed the whole exercise and followed the weekly reports, others expressed disagreement with, and disapproval of, the project. Apart from the general feedback from listeners of the various radio stations and online comments, there were responses from some radio stations, leading members of some political parties, public figures and members of the public. Below are some of the reactions/comments received.

Feedback from the Media

The media's responses to the weekly findings came in different forms. The weekly reports of the monitoring exercise were often given space in newspapers and news websites and broadcast time on radio and television, especially during their major news bulletins and discussion programmes.

Table 3.4: Indecent Expression Recorded on Radio Stations

Radio Station	*Frequency of Indecent Expressions on Radio*			*Total*
	First Quarter	*Second Quarter*	*Third Quarter*	
Oman FM	49	38	28	**115**
Radio Gold	14	20	16	**50**
Angel FM	7	15	21	**43**
Classic FM	9	22	11	**42**
Adom FM	7	23	6	**36**
Asempa FM	2	12	12	**26**
Skyy Power FM	4	9	7	**20**
Kessben FM	12	7	1	**20**
Space FM	8	5	5	**18**
Citi FM	13	1	3	**17**
Peace FM	12	5	0	**17**
Hot FM	2	8	6	**16**
Royals FM	7	3	4	**14**
Ankobra FM	5	6	2	**13**
North Star FM	6	3	4	**13**
Fox FM	4	1	3	**8**
Rites FM	0	3	4	**7**
Diamond FM	3	1	1	**5**
Radio Upper West	4	1	0	**5**
Uniiq FM	4	1	0	**5**
Radio Progress	4	0	0	**5**
Jubilee Radio	2	0	1	**3**
Obuoba FM	0	3	0	**3**
Yes FM	0	0	3	**3**
Ahomka FM	0	1	1	**2**
URA Radio	1	0	1	**1**
Joy FM	1	0	0	**1**
Lorlornyo FM	0	0	1	**1**
Meridian FM	0	0	0	**0**
Radio Justice	0	0	0	**0**
Word Radio	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**180**	**188**	**141**	**509**

This was one of the positive feedbacks and cooperation that the project received because the gatekeepers considered the reports relevant, informative and educative enough to be given publicity. Beyond the weekly publicity, some radio stations, both within and outside Accra, contacted the MFWA to respond to issues arising from the weekly reports; or to grant news interviews; thereby educating the general public on the exercise.

Other forms of reactions received from the media, particularly radio stations included the following specific cases:

- ***Royals FM***: The manager of the station requested for the specific indecent expressions that were reported as having been aired on their network. The MFWA responded to the request by sending the specific indecent expressions to the station and this was taken in good faith.

- ***Citi FM***: After the first week's report, *Citi FM* wrote to the MFWA a strongly-worded four-page response which was also published on some websites and in some newspapers. The response questioned the findings of the monitoring exercise because the station had been named as registering the highest number of indecent expressions for that week.

Feedback from Political Parties

Generally, the smaller political parties in the country never made a public statement directly or indirectly about the project. It was mainly the two major political parties, the NPP and the NDC that publicly responded to some of the weekly reports that were published. Some of their reactions sought to suggest that the negative expressions that were attributed to them had been taken out of context. Others questioned the credibility of the whole exercise and called on Ghanaians to ignore the monitoring reports. In some instances, some political activists who thought they had not used indecent expressions but had been taken out of context contacted the MFWA to register their protest.

On the other hand, there were a few political party officials who made reference to the weekly reports in their discussions and sometimes used them to score political points against their rivals. Officials of some political parties whose affiliates were cited as leading in the use of indecent remarks also indicated in radio interviews that they were going to talk to their communicators and activists to be civil in their language use on radio.

Reactions from individuals/groups

The feedback from individuals and groups came from different channels—phone calls, public forums, emails, online comments, columns and blogs. While some of the comments commended the exercise, others disagreed with the findings. Other individuals questioned the methodology used and why indecent expressions in newspapers were not included as well in the monitoring. Some also requested that the specific indecent expressions should be made public to all Ghanaians so they could make their own judgments.

Email responses/reactions were mostly received from other civil society groups and regional bodies. Specifically, some of them requested that a similar exercise be undertaken in other countries that would soon be going to the polls.

Integration of Feedback into the Monitoring Project

Generally, the feedback received was carefully analysed and appropriate steps taken on the issues raised. At different public fora, the MFWA addressed some of the concerns that were raised about methodology, indecent expressions in newspapers and why the specific indecent expressions used could not be made public.

In terms of methodology, the processes of developing the monitoring instrument and category definitions were explained at almost every public engagement. Furthermore, the category definitions and monitoring instruments were sent to all the radio stations selected for the project as well as the various political parties. To further ensure that the process was thorough, a review meeting was organised for the monitors in Accra. A refresher training session was also organised for all the 31 monitors.

With regard to the publication of the specific indecent expressions used, a special note was included in the subsequent weekly reports that explained why the expressions could not be rebroadcast. It indicated that:

Note: *As a policy, the MFWA has decided not to publish the indecent expressions people make since it will amount to rebroadcasting of those remarks. The MFWA has been urging radio stations to desist from the replay of indecent expressions on their networks since they tend to amplify such expressions and their potentially negative ramifications. Thus, the rebroadcasting of the specific indecent expressions recorded in this monitoring exercise will amount to the same inappropriate action. The specific expressions used by persons cited in our reports are, however, available at the MFWA.*

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The media have historically assumed the role of setting the agenda for national and political discourse in the public domain. With specific regard to radio, one of the major programming platforms that set the agenda for public discussion is radio talk shows on a number of issues, especially politics. These programmes are important and help citizens to make reasonable political judgements and decisions. They also serve as a vehicle of communication between governments and the citizenry.

This peculiar role of radio broadcasting has made the medium a central part of political life in Ghana especially during election seasons. The political discussion programmes on radio offer both the ruling government and the competing political parties the opportunity to showcase their proposed policies, reforms and development agenda to the electorate to elicit votes.

The findings of the monitoring exercise have shown that this opportunity is sometimes abused. Some of the people who featured on the discussion programmes monitored and sometimes some media practitioners themselves used the radio platform to hurl insults and other invectives on political opponents. These findings have raised relevant issues that need to be addressed in order to keep a vibrant, but professional and ethical broadcast industry.

This chapter discusses the pertinent issues raised and their implications for the development of the broadcast industry and the country at large. Specifically, the discussions focus on the implications of the findings in the areas of political communication, broadcast journalism and media ethics.

Implications on Political Communication

Political communication is the process of sharing information through both the media and interpersonal means with the intention of influencing the political environment. It is specifically aimed at influencing public knowledge, beliefs, and actions on political matters. Political communication includes political discussions, political speeches, news media coverage, and ordinary citizens' talk.

The monitoring exercise focused on and assessed the conduct of the key players in political communication processes: the transmitters (political groupings), the channel (the media), and the recipients (the citizenry). The findings of the monitoring, therefore, reflect the trends observed in political communication in Ghanaian terms of the communication structure and framework of the various political parties, the conduct of the media and the participation of the general public in the governance of the country.

The findings of the monitoring indicate that political communication is increasingly becoming more structured with most of the people who feature on the various political talk shows being national executives, communication directors, communication team members and serial-callers of some of the political parties in the country. In fact, the phenomenon of organised serial-callers in political communication is evidence of how structured political parties have become in their communication strategies. The serial callers are dedicated or assigned to particular political programmes on identified radio networks on which they usually call in to make contributions on behalf of their political parties. This practice is meant to show a favourable swing of "public opinion" behind the caller's party.

One result of these organised strategies is that almost all political discussions split along party lines. This trend was observed as part of the communication framework of most of the political parties. Most issues, irrespective of their nature and ramifications were discussed purely on political party lines. The discussion of national issues based on partisan biases tends to undermine the values and pursuit of national cohesion and development.

Another implication of the failure to critically analyse issues from a detached, objective distance, is the failure to produce and pursue well-informed policy options. Even though the radio stations that offered their platforms to panellists, interviewees, callers and those who sent in text messages usually set the agenda for discussions, affiliates of the various political parties seemed to have their own agenda whenever they came on air. They usually twisted issues to suit their political interests and took statements from political opponents out of context.

Affiliates of political parties resorted to personality attacks which usually resulted in the use of indecent expressions and derailed the discussion of other issues. This did not help in the contest of ideas as expected in a multi-party democracy. And if the management of radio stations, producers and moderators do not exert professional editorial judgment over discussion programmes, politicians will inevitable hijack the platforms to push their agenda at the expense of discussing developmental issues that have a direct impact on the well-being of Ghanaians.

The abuse of political opponents and the twisting of issues and statements appeared to be part of the political communication framework and specific strategies adopted by some political parties, especially the NPP and the NDC and later, the NDP, to derail the arguments of opponents. Some also sought simply to indict political opponents' credibility and reputation. Examples of such utterances, some of which do not bear repeating within the content of this report, are presented in Appendix A for illustrative purposes.

This practice, however, has the potential of sowing seeds of discord in the political culture of the country. It also suggests that increasingly, politicians and political activist are becoming less and less tolerant of each other. Such a situation could easily create the conditions for animosity and conflict. And while such verbal attacks did not always evoke an immediate, manifest, reaction they inevitably lead to antipathy between political rivals.

On some occasions, however, the use of offensive expressions provoked a direct tit-for-tat, bare-knocked, verbal exchange between the interlocutors. Examples of such exchanges are presented in Appendix A (Nos. 3 & 4; 5 & 6).

The use of such incendiary campaign language illustrates the growing intolerance among political opponents; and the increasingly adversarial nature of political contests in the country. It also shows that the media have become willing allies—or unwitting lackeys—of their political *benefactors*.

Implications on Broadcast Journalism

The findings of the monitoring exercise raise a number of issues that have implications for broadcast journalism in the country, particularly radio. Specifically, the monitoring has brought to attention some developments in the broadcast industry and their associated challenges. It also raises issues about programming, political party interests versus the public's right to know, ownership of radio stations, the conduct of broadcast journalists and other issues of concern that have ramifications for the future of the industry.

One of the positive developments was in the area of interactivity on radio. The monitoring shows remarkable audience interactivity with radio; people are able to participate in radio programmes through in-studio discussions, interviews, phone-in segments, text messages; and even via social media platforms like Facebook/Twitter and whatsapp messages. This is positive for enabling active public participation in the governance processes of the country. Thus, radio broadcasting, by enabling the sharing, exchange, or even contest of ideas and viewpoints is helping to entrench freedom of expression, promote participatory governance, and ultimately nurture the country's democracy.

On the other hand, it appears that this opportunity to participate in the governance process is being abused by some radio programme discussants and hosts. The monitoring showed that with the exception of rebroadcast of indecent expressions and a few presenters who either read or made some unacceptable remarks, most of the indecent expressions were made by discussants, interviewees, callers and commentators who sent in SMS, or Facebook or twitter messages. That is, most of the indecent expressions were recorded during the interactive segments of the programmes monitored.

This suggests that even though interactivity on radio is improving and giving more people access to the media, the corresponding responsibility on the part of both radio stations and the individuals who feature on the stations is not being honoured.

As a result of the excessive politicisation of discussions on radio, the content and formats are all beginning to seem and sound the same, which is a worry. The monitoring showed that as the elections drew closer practically all the radio stations seemed to abandon all regular programming in favour of adversarial political discussion and phone-in formats. The majority of these programmes took the form of newspaper review segments, in-studio discussions and phone-in segments. Additionally, most of the topics that were discussed were picked from newspaper reviews. This was the trend on almost all the political discussion programmes monitored.

Thus, even though there is a nominal plurality of radio stations in the country, there was not much diversity in terms of the form and content of their programming. This apparent lack of sophistication or self-initiative in programme concept design and production enabled the two main political parties to hijack the airwaves for the perpetration of partisan propaganda fare. The result is that the parties effectively subverted the public's right to be well-informed about where they and their candidates stood on the important national issues of education, health, unemployment, and so on.

The issue of the homogenisation of programming and programme content as well as the hijacking of radio by politicians also suggest that there is not much fair and equitable coverage and reportage of the activities of competing political parties (especially the small parties). The major political parties, especially those with representation in Parliament were those that dominated the media landscape. Their members and spokespersons were used by programme hosts/producers as in-studio discussants and interviewees on almost all major issues that came up in the course of the monitoring. Unless an issue directly affected the 'small' political parties, their views were often not sought or carried/reported.

Another issue related to the lack of diversity in programming and programme content was the persistent use of specific individuals as resource persons on political discussion shows. Even in the discussion of subject-specific issues that needed expert opinion, political activists and social commentators, some of who had little or no knowledge in the subject area, were the ones whose views were sought on the issues. What was particularly significant is the fact that even specific individuals who had been repeatedly cited and indicted for their use of indecent language were persistently invited or entertained as panellists on particular stations and programmes; thereby implicitly promoting the perpetration of impunity on the airwaves.

The public interest obligation is the media's main claim to being regarded as the metaphorical Fourth Estate of the realm. The media are the bridge between the contenders for political office and the electorate. Political parties and their candidates must depend upon the media to explain their promises and programmes to the electorate. At the same time, since a bridge is not crossed in only one direction, the media become the arena within which individuals and groups can demand redeemable promises and canvas for specific items on their electoral *wish list* to be ratified in a party manifesto or policy position.

When the media conduct this normative function the public are able to make enlightened electoral choices through an informed consideration of divergent views and policy alternatives. Public enlightenment helps the electorate to make informed decisions about who should lead and govern them. On the other hand, since a mirror can also distort, the media could otherwise pervert and even subvert the rights of the electorate to legitimate representation by being reduced to the arena for the trading of verbal fisticuffs. The monitoring project show that the radio stations were wont to be used for the trading of insult and innuendo among rival candidates and leaders. This is partially also because in Ghana, much of the media reporting is very much personality-focussed; a reflection both of Ghana's (and Africa's) brand of political culture and of the general deficits in professional journalism training among practitioners.

Another phenomenon closely linked to the use of political activists in political discussion programmes is the influence of politicians on the news cycle. It was noticed during the monitoring that when political representatives make controversial statements, some of those statements end up as headlines in newspapers the following morning. The headline stories, including those statements, are then discussed for the day. Thus, the same individuals and issues are looped back into an endless revolving door of partisan polemics. This was the news cycle that was observed during the monitoring. Obviously, whenever these discussions focused on pronouncements by rival political leaders, the subsequent discussions phone-ins easily degenerated into personal attacks and the use of indecorous expressions.

The other aspect of the news cycle was the recycling of issues over extended periods of time without any new perspectives. On some networks, certain controversial issues are discussed approximately over a one-week period. The more controversial issues were repeatedly discussed, the more indecent expressions were used.

The ownership of radio stations is another issue that may impact the radio industry in future. Radio stations that are owned by politicians and those that are politically aligned recorded more indecent expressions. The findings of the monitoring showed that the content of programming, the line of questioning and discussion of issues, especially on pro-political party radio stations were, to a large extent, influenced by the political interests and preferences of the radio stations which were determined by the political loyalties of the owners.

The hosts/presenters on the pro-political party networks also tended not to practice the ethos of professionalism—impartiality, responsibility, objectivity, and balance in reporting political events, national issues, and other activities. Their statements and lines of questioning easily betrayed the parochial interests and the political biases of their radio stations. Such presenters also tended to indulge rather than restrain discussants/callers who were also inclined towards their own political preferences. This made it difficult for the presenters to ask such discussants and owners of radio stations in particular, to support their unsubstantiated allegations with evidence or to withdraw the offending expressions. Where some hosts seemed inclined to get the right thing done, some discussants defiantly refused to retract the indecent remarks or to provide evidence for their accusations. At best the host then purported to disapprove of the offending statement by disassociating himself and his station from the statements. The two examples in Appendix A (Nos. 13 & 14) are illustrative.

Some of the moderators were professional in handling their programmes. They often tried to bring discussants/callers in line with the issues that were slated for discussion. They took proactive steps by educating callers to be civil in their language-use even before their phone-in segments began. Others insisted that panellists/callers withdraw unsavoury comments or else substantiate their allegations.

Implications for Media Ethics

The repeal of the criminal and seditious libel laws has expanded the free expression rights and opportunities of the public and the media (and especially, radio) in Ghana. The public have come to depend on information supplied by the media (especially radio) to make sense of their world, organise their lives, and make rational and informed choices and decisions. Therefore, to the extent that the ethics of the journalism profession are routinely violated or compromised, the constitutional guarantees secured for the media are betrayed. This raises questions about the regulatory framework in the broadcast industry and the extent to which broadcasters and media outlets respect and adhere to the ethics of the journalism profession.

The irresponsible exercise of free expression rights by the public and media promote an insidious culture of disrespect, division and even conflict and social anarchy. As instruments of social change and advocacy, the media are supposed to help the citizenry to guard against such practice, but for the media to be the platform on which such expressions were made says a lot about the disregard of the ethics of the journalism profession by some broadcasters in the country.

Provisions of the National Media Commission's *Guidelines for Broadcasting* require that "all political broadcasts should be in decent language" and that "controversial or offensive references to opponents must be avoided…" Additionally, Article 5 of the *Code of Conduct for Ghana Election 2012* published by the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) says that broadcasters should refuse to broadcast, among other things, utterances that are seen to be "…insensitive to the reputation… of others." As revealed in the findings, however, this was the practice on the monitored radio stations nine months prior to, and during the elections. Several incidents of the use of indecent expressions, including insulting and offensive remarks and direct attacks on the reputations of others, were documented throughout the monitoring exercise.

Article (1) of the GJA *Code of Ethics* also talks about the public's right to true information. The ceding of the media space to political propagandists, peddlers and spin doctors detracts from this right of citizens. Furthermore, the lack of background research/investigations/verification of issues on the part of programme hosts and their producers also made it difficult for them to provide truthful and factual information to the public and to probe issues thoroughly for the public good.

The NMC *Guidelines for Broadcasting* provides that, "Media practitioners must remain neutral in partisan politics and avoid all associations and activities that may compromise their integrity as journalists or damage their credibility." Furthermore, "the host of any political programme who is identified with a particular political party should be required to be fair to all parties." However, the findings of the monitoring did show that because of political associations, some broadcast journalists were quite biased in the moderation of their programmes thereby losing their fairness and objectivity in addressing panellists/callers and even in their own statements. This denied the other political parties fairness in coverage and reportage of their issues and the general public, the right to fair, balanced and objective news/information.

Article (2) of the GJA *Code of Ethics* also talks about the responsibility of journalists to the public and the various interests of society. The code acknowledges that journalists can take positions on issues but they are to separate comments and conjecture from facts. Some presenters, however, did not conduct themselves as such. However, some radio stations persistently used individuals who had been cited as being very abusive as in-studio discussants/ resource persons. This is also in spite of the express provision of the GIBA *Code of Conduct for Ghana Election 2012*, which indicates in Article 16 that "to serve as a deterrent to notorious offending panellists, member stations should collaborate to deny any such repeated offenders access to the airwaves."

From all indications, provisions of the GJA *Code of Ethics*, the

GIBA *Code of Conduct for Ghana Election 2012* and the NMC *Ghana Guidelines for Broadcasting* were routinely violated. This suggests that neither the moral admonitions and guiding principles of the NMC nor the self-regulatory codes of the media associations themselves are adequate to address the pervasive infractions of the ethics of the profession by radio presenters and their media houses.

In the absence of relevant legislative powers to impose effective sanctions, the NMC is able only to persuade and exhort journalists and media houses to comply with its guidelines. The National Communication Authority (NCA), which has the constitutional backing to allocate and withdraw frequencies, is also not taking any action possibly because it does not regulate content. Ironically, the NMC which has the mandate to regulate content does not have the legal backing to allocate or withdraw frequencies.

Unfortunately, even when the Constitution Review Commission recommended in its report that the NMC should be made responsible for the authorisation of broadcast frequencies while relying on the technical expertise of the NCA, the Government White Paper rejected these proposals on the ground that frequency allocation involved more than broadcast frequencies and extended over matters of national security, aviation, shipping etc.

Compounding these unclear lines of duty between the NCA and the NMC is the absence of a national broadcasting law. This further makes it difficult to legally regulate the broadcast industry with stringent regulations as well as the ethics of the profession.

One thing that is clear from the findings as discussed so far is the fact that there are a lot of ethical infractions in the broadcast industry. Unfortunately, the media associations' codes of ethics/conduct are not being adhered to possibly because they are not binding. And in the absence of broadcasting law, it appears that broadcast journalists and their media outlets operate on their own and as such do not have any responsibility to anyone but to their own commercial and political interests. This trend of unprofessional journalistic practice poses threat to media freedoms, freedom of expression rights, and indeed, the democracy being enjoyed in the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The repeal of the criminal and seditious libel laws in 2001 has expanded media freedoms and freedoms of expression. The proliferation of media outlets, especially radio stations, and the introduction of talk shows or discussion programmes where all citizens are given the opportunity to participate in governance processes has further entrenched Ghana's democracy. However, the media platform is abused when inflammatory and indecent language is used to discuss personalities instead of issues during the election campaign process. Sometimes this creates unnecessary tension and confrontation among the citizenry.

It is important to be reminded that the objective of the project was to contribute to free, fair and peaceful elections through issues-based discussions devoid of vitriolic language. Data was gathered from 31 radio stations selected across the 10 regions of Ghana over a nine-month period with the help of 31 university graduates who were trained as monitors. This chapter presents a summary of the findings, lessons learnt, challenges encountered in the course of the monitoring and some recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

Summary of Findings

A total 509 indecent remarks were recorded over the nine-month monitoring period; 475 of them were made by individuals while the remaining 34 were rebroadcast of intemperate expressions by some radio stations. Most of the indecent expressions were recorded during political discussion shows in the Akan language. It was also found that the subject matter of discussion sometimes precipitated the trading of indecorous expressions.

Altogether, 10 categories of indecent expressions were recorded: insulting and offensive comments (193); unsubstantiated allegations (163);

and provocative remarks (72) were the three most common types of indecent expressions used against political opponents. Even though the exercise was aimed at naming and shaming individuals and groups who made indecent remarks, pacifist comments were also noted and commended.

Radio provides a unique tool for political parties to market themselves and their programmes to the electorate. The findings of the monitoring, however, show that some agents and affiliates of political parties used the interactivity on radio to rather abuse their opponents. In this regard agents and affiliates of the main opposition party, the NPP, and the ruling party, the NDC, were found to be the main culprits.

With regard to the 31 radio stations, it was found that indecent expressions were recorded on 28 of them. Accra-based *Oman FM* and *Radio Gold,* which have strong political leanings towards the NPP and the NDC respectively, were expressively partisan and demonstrated little regard for objectivity, fairness and accuracy. *Oman FM* recorded the highest number (115) of indecent expressions followed by *Radio Gold* (50). This finding may suggest that the primary motivation of radio stations with political leanings is to promote a parochial political agenda; and not to pursue some presumably utopian ethical and professional ideals.

Programme hosts/presenters on radio stations with political leanings were generally less objective and ethical in their moderation of programmes. They often seemed unable or unwilling to rein in panel members who tended to share their political sympathies and biases. On the other hand, some of the moderators were very professional in the conduct of their discussion shows. The monitoring also found that some radio stations purposively replayed indecent expressions on their networks.

The political communication environment in the country is very vibrant and the frontiers of interactive radio have expanded to incorporate comments and reactions from social media platforms. This means more and more Ghanaians are getting access to the media and an opportunity to participate in the governance processes of the country.

However, the abuses recorded on radio platforms monitored and the obvious infractions of journalistic ethics testify adversely to the larger social goals of broadcast pluralism and freedom of expression and democratic politics. It suggests that politicians are not using radio platforms to educate the electorate on their programmes, but rather as propaganda machinery and platforms for abusing and denigrating political opponents. The dominance of politicians in the discussion of all issues as was noticed during the monitoring creates monotony in programming and programme content, narrows the spectrum of news sources and even impacts the news cycle.

The conduct of some programme hosts, especially those on pro-political party radio stations casts a negative verdict on professional practice and poses a threat to the credibility of the media as a whole. The findings also imply that training institutions would have to improve their training efforts, including short courses that seek to address the emergent and changing needs of society.

The relevant responsible regulatory institutions must also respond to questions about policy and regulation on practice.

Challenges

A number of challenges were encountered in the implementation of the language monitoring project. Most of the challenges had to do with the critical stakeholders of the project such as political parties, the media and the researchers who were trained and assigned to monitor the 31 selected radio stations.

From the beginning of the project, getting officials of the various political parties to attend meetings and other public engagements was difficult. The situation became even more challenging when campaign activities peaked. In instances where the political parties decided to send representatives to those engagements, some of them did not seem to be sufficiently influential within their parties to be able to inspire the desired behaviour change among their party members.

Another challenge that the project encountered was getting enough media attention and publicity. The routine nature of the project and the fact that the findings were released on a weekly basis over a nine month period may have generated a gradual feeling of fatigue among the media as well as the monitors. There were instances when the press releases did not receive the needed media attention. Additionally, whenever the release of reports of the findings coincided with other topical issues/events, not much media space/airtime was given to the reports.

Some personal issues also affected the efficiency of the project, for example when monitors fell ill and were unable to provide reports on the stations for which they had responsibility. Some political party activists, not wishing to be publicly indicted for their role in the perpetration of indecent language on radio, decided to channel their derogatory remarks through radio stations which were previously not noted for such practices and which were not part of the radio stations included in the monitoring exercise. However, challenges associated with project reporting and securing extra funding made it practically impossible to extend the monitoring to cover such radio stations.

The nationwide electricity load-shedding at the time of the language monitoring also had an impact on the exercise. It made it difficult for the monitors to be as efficient as they might be with their reporting. Besides, there were intermittent breaks in transmission of three of the radio stations monitored as a result of the frequent power outages.

Lessons Learnt

Every project has its own peculiarities; from the planning, through implementation to evaluation. But at the end, each project provides practical lessons that can be used to improve subsequent activities. In the case of the monitoring of electoral campaign language on radio, some of the challenges encountered and how they were managed have provided useful lessons for engaging stakeholders, sustaining public interest in projects as well as attracting media attention and publicity.

The challenges encountered in getting especially political parties to attend some of the public forums organised have shown that a lot of factors must be considered when trying to engage stakeholders. Specifically, invitations must always be extended early to enable invitees integrate the proposed programme into their agenda or give feedback on their unavailability so alternative arrangements can be made. It is also important to get a fair idea of the activities of stakeholders. This helps to strategise so that planned project meetings and other activities do not coincide with that of stakeholders.

Drawing flexible and well-spaced implementation plans and timelines is another important lesson learnt from the project. This makes it possible to accommodate the rescheduling of meetings, incorporate suggestions and new ideas which may come up as the project rolls out. Very tight implementation plans with little spacing between activities brings about fatigue on the media, staff and other stakeholders.

Publicity was an important component in the monitoring project. The project sought to name and shame perpetrators of indecent expressions and therefore, publicity was very instrumental in achieving this objective. However, with the reality of competing political issues/events especially in an election year, this was not always possible. With the experience gained in managing this challenge, it is always important to reschedule planned activities to an earlier or a later date/time when it is identified early that the planned programme is likely to clash with other competing ones which may take over media attention. That way, the programme can receive the desired media publicity when it is finally executed.

Routine activities such as the weekly reports can also result in the apathy that characterises familiarity. Therefore, other publicity activities such as press conferences, public forums and other stakeholder engagements can be undertaken to attract media attention to projects. This approach helped in sustaining interest and media attention on the monitoring project. Specifically, a number of press conferences and public forums were organised on different issues around the monitoring and this was very useful in keeping the public up to date on the findings of the project.

The monitoring project has also shown that project reviews during implementation are very important. They help in early identification of issues and challenges that could affect the achievements of milestones and project objectives so that they can be mitigated early. Also, in projects that use data collectors, periodic reorientation exercises and refresher trainings can be very useful. This contributed to the quality and quantity of monitoring reports that were received.

Another lesson drawn from the monitoring exercise is that where data collectors need to be recruited, it will be better to recruit individuals who are not already employed so that they can be reached especially by phone at all times. It will also help to ensure that they stay focused on gathering data and not their other duties.

Recommendations

From the findings of the monitoring exercise and the challenges encountered, a number of recommendations have been collated to help strike the right balance between media freedoms, freedom of expression and corresponding responsibilities. The recommendations have been sub-divided into three sections: recommendations for the media, the media regulator and media associations; political parties; and other stakeholders.

Media

The media are key players in all democratic dispensations. Apart from their watchdog role, the media serve as channels of communication between governments and the governed and vice versa. The media are able to shape and organise thoughts on specific issues through their reportage—how they frame reports and what they place emphasis on. It is, therefore, recommended that the media and broadcast journalists in particular insist on decency on their networks. They should be diligent in exhibiting professional control over their guests and programmes in order to ensure that decorum prevails in the media.

Moderators and producers of the various radio talk shows should also enhance the quality of programming on their networks. Particularly in the area of text messaging, producers in particular should screen text messages and forward only those that are civil to the hosts/presenters to air. This will eliminate the situation where hosts/presenters begin airing text messages only to terminate them half-way through because they contain abusive language.

Also, it is recommended that moderators and their producers do their own investigations and verification about issues so that they can present the facts of issues to the citizenry. This will save the ordinary citizen from the confusion political activists create when they present politically biased versions of issues and events. It will also help moderators to thoroughly probe statements from politicians who sometimes make unfounded statements and try to evade questions pertaining to specific issues. As much as possible, journalists should try to separate their opinions and comments from facts.

It is also recommended that hosts/presenters/anchors, producers and other journalists undergo regular refresher training programmes and workshops to enhance their capacity to handle their respective roles professionally. Specifically, moderators of radio talk shows should undergo training on the conduct of interviews, handling of difficult panellists and the moderation of controversial issues. Also, if producers enhance their capabilities through training workshops and seminars, they will be able to produce other programmes on other issues of relevance to the public. This will introduce some variety into radio programming and minimise the problem of monotonous programme contents.

Above all, journalists have to be accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and one another. This means they must abide by the same high ethical standards to which they hold others. Therefore, they should admit their mistakes and correct them. They have to recognise that there can be no freedom without a corresponding obligation or responsibility. It is only when they strive for a balance between freedom and responsibility that they would be contributing to national development and social cohesion.

As part of their responsibility to those who patronise their services, journalists should not be content with the use of disclaimers to disassociate their radio stations and themselves from unsavoury remarks. Instead, they should insist on evidence for unsubstantiated allegations and ask those who make indecent expressions to retract and apologise where necessary. In extreme cases, moderators should not hesitate to walk difficult discussants out of their studios to serve as a deterrent to others.

In line with this, it is recommended that radio stations, producers and hosts/presenters should not invite as resource persons and panellists, individuals who persistently use abusive language. This will help reduce the level of indecency on the airwaves. Also, the rebroadcast of indecent remarks should be stopped since their ramifications could be dangerous for the stability of the country.

With the advances in technology, an emerging solution to preventing indecent remarks on radio is the use of delay or dump broadcast system. It is appropriate for all radio stations in Ghana to adopt the technology to complement their efforts at ensuring decorum on their broadcast platforms.

Finally, the media have sacred responsibilities to foster national cohesion and engender a sense of belonging in the citizenry. At the same time, the media and media practitioners could represent a threat to the freedoms they currently enjoy. Thus, the media are critical to national unity, peaceful coexistence and the overall stability of the country.

The Media Regulator and Media Associations

The media regulator and media associations in the country have the task of ensuring that journalists and media outlets operate with high ethical standards. A number of recommendations are, therefore, made for the NMC, GJA and GIBA to help improve professionalism in the media.

The monitoring exercise greatly contributed to the reduction of indecent language-use on radio and by extension, the promotion of issues-based discussion and professionalism in the media. Therefore, if the exercise is continued, decorum on the airwaves will improve. It is thus recommended that the NMC pursues the idea of institutionalising the monitoring of radio stations. When political activists and radio stations know that they are constantly being monitored, they will be more careful with their statements and conduct. This will promote issues-based discussions and national development while minimising the incidence of indecent expressions on radio platforms.

Also, even though the NMC does not have the constitutional mandate to sanction or withdraw licenses, it should liaise with the NCA to appropriately sanction media outlets and practitioners who do not uphold professionalism in their line of duty.

The GJA and GIBA are also encouraged to be more actively engaged in self-regulating their members. The GJA and GIBA should find ways to enforce their own codes of ethics/conduct to improve professional standards in journalism practice.

The findings on the infractions recorded over the nine-month period reinforce the imperative of a National Broadcasting Law. Such legislation will infuse decorum and circumspection in the broadcast industry while regulating the activities of the broadcast media.

Political Parties

The media and radio in particular serve as channels that enable political entities to engage their publics on their programmes and policies. Because of its accessibility, portability and cost effectiveness, radio presents a unique tool for political parties to reach the masses with their messages. The proliferation of radio stations and the introduction of political discussion programmes on a lot of radio networks have enabled political parties to share their political and developmental agenda with the electorate. It has also helped political parties in their pursuit to persuade the electorate about their policy options and manifesto promises. It is thus recommended that political parties and their communication directorates optimise the opportunity of free airtime they get on radio talk shows to explain their programmes and policies to the masses instead of abusing the platforms given them to insult and provoke political rivals.

It is also recommended that when party officials make unsavoury remarks, the leadership of the party should publicly condemn the act to portray to the electorate that the party believes in decent politicking and frowns upon unguarded statements.

The political environment in Ghana makes it possible for political parties to organise serial callers and use them to champion their causes. To ensure that these serial callers remain relevant and contribute to the fortunes of their respective political parties, they should be educated on the programmes, policies and developmental projects of their political parties and how such programmes would benefit the generality of Ghanaians. They should be made to understand that hurling abusive words on political rivals do not bring votes but rather discredit the reputation of their political parties.

Journalism Institutions

The findings from the monitoring have revealed a number of shortfalls in the work of some broadcast journalists. Prominent among the gaps identified are issues of ethics and the conduct and moderation of talk shows; specifically, the handling of in-studio discussions and interviews. Institutions that provide training in journalism must, therefore, improve their curricula in these areas so that the calibre of journalists produced from those institutions become relevant to industry practice.

It will also be helpful for the institutions of learning to run short courses and refresher seminars for already practicing journalists. Beyond that experts in the field of journalism should reach out to practising journalists through regular training and capacity building workshops. This will help to upgrade and horn the skills of practicing journalists to better manage their respective programmes.

Other Stakeholders

The general public must also contribute their quota to the democratic health of the country by desisting from the use of indecent expressions in the media. State institutions such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) should also help in sanitising the airwaves by providing public education against the use of derogatory remarks against others while promoting issues-based discussions at all levels of discourse. In addition, it is recommended that civil society organisations and corporate bodies join to champion decorum on the airwaves.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Examples of Negative Language Use on Radio

1. "… if you go to the Castle, you will see [Koku Anyidoho], wobbling like an Atebubu chicken…such a confused non-entity who is now a [Communications Director] for the people of Ghana…" (Ernest Owusu Bempah (NDC); on Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme; June 7, 2012).

2. "…Koku Anyidoho pays women to penetrate his anus with vibrators…" (Ernest Owusu Bempah (NDC); on Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme; June 7, 2012).

3. "[Jacobs Allotey], now your life has changed for good. I know you very well. President Mills once told you in Cape Coast that he will not include you in his campaign because of issues concerning some paint and cement." (Ernest Owusu Bempah (NDP); on Adom FM's *Dwaso Nsem*; July 17, 2012).

4. "[Owusu Bempah], I think you smoked *wee* before coming here this morning." (Jacobs Allotey (NDC); in response to Owusu Bempah above on the same programme).

5. "President John Evans Atta Mills is the most useless president Ghana has ever had." (Abu Gyinapo (NPP); Adom FM—*Dwaso Nsem*; July 19, 2012).

6. "*Mentra hɔ na wondidi me President atɛm sɛ ɔyɛ useless*. Hopeless gay like you…" (I will not allow you to insult my president that he is useless). (Anita De-Sousa (NDC national women's organiser); in response to Abu Gyinapo above on the same programme).

7. "…shut up! Bullshit! My friend shut your fucking mouth! (Kwabena Sarpong (NPP communications team); to Agbesi Nutsu (of NDC); Hot FM programme, *Maakye* programme; August 28, 2012).

8. "[Former president Rawlings] is suffering from temporal [*sic*.] madness." (Mike Nagumo (NDC); on Radio Upper West programme, *Common Course*; June 4, 2012).

9. "*…Okudzeto Ablakwa ɔyɛ awi paa! Fiifi Kwetey! me se ɔyɛ awi paa; ne ho bɔn wɔ mu kankankan ɛwɔ corruption nti mma ommue n'ano koraa. Sɛ Ghana ha sɛ yɛɛte society for Ataa Ayi … yɛbɛma mo executive members. Aban wei sei no yɛɛpɛ minister of lies a, Fiifi Kwetey ka ho, Okudzeto Ablakwa no nso ka ho…*" (Okudzeto Ablakwa is a thief! Fiifi Kwetey! I say he is also a thief. He's very involved in corruption and so he should keep quiet. If a society for Ataa Ayi [convicted robber] were to be set up in Ghana, they will be made executive members. If we were to name a Minister of lies in this government, Fiifi Kwetey will be one of them, and so will Okudzeto Ablakwa). (Maxwell Kofi Djumah, (NPP MP); on Adom FM's *Niamehunu Dwumadie* programme; September 26, 2012).

10. "Three years ago Nana Akuffo Addo said that the people of Bawku should be allowed to kill themselves so that their place could be used for a palm plantation." (Osman Mohammed Konwieh (NDC); on Classic FM's *Big Breakfast Show*; August 2, 2012).

11. "Zongo people and northerners are violent." (Eric Bawa (NPP) on Classic FM's *Big Breakfast Show*; August 28, 2012).

12. "It is an open secret that [Anita De-Souza] is a prostitute…" (Ernest Owusu Bempah (NDC); on Adom FM's evening news; May 24, 2012).

13. "*…[Yaw Boateng Gyan] ɛna organize nkrɔfoɔ ma yɛ twe nkontimmaa ɛkɔ chase Mrs. Rawlings ɛwɔ Cape Coast*. (Yaw Boateng Gyan was the plan behind it…he organized people to chase Mrs. Rawlings with clubs in Cape Coast. [Yaw Boateng Gyan] was the plan behind it…). (Ernest Owusu Bempah (NDP); on Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme; September 6, 2012). The host (Kwabena Kwakye), interjected and asked Owusu Bempah to provide evidence but he did not. The host then announced that he was disassociating himself and the radio station from the statement made).

14. "…[Yaw Boateng Gyan] joined NDC under duress… *Ɔkɔ wia cocoa bɔtɔ ena yɛ kyeree no* and that was what happened …" (…[Yaw Boateng Gyan] joined NDC under duress… He was arrested for stealing cocoa sacks …). (Ernest Owusu Bempah (NDP); on Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme; September 6, 2012). The host (Kwabena Kwakye) interjected and asked Owusu Bempah to provide evidence but he did not. The host announced that he was disassociating himself and the radio station from the statement made).

APPENDIX B

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SCHEDULE

Monitoring of Campaign Language on Selected Radio Stations in Ghana

1. Date–Month – Year

Date	**Month**	**Year**

2. Time of Broadcast

Morning	**Mid-day**	**Afternoon**	**Evening**	**Night**

3. Name of Radio Station …………………...……………………………

4. Ownership of Radio Station

State	**Community**	**Politician**	**Business person**	**Politician/Business**

5. Location of Radio Station

City/Town	**District**	**Region**

6. Title /topic of Programme ………………………………………………

7. Brief Summary of Story Coded ……………....……………………….
....
....
....
....

8. Type of Programme
   01. 6:00am news (including interview within news)
   02. Mid-day news (including interview within news)
   03. 6:00pm news (including interview within news)
   04. Morning political discussion programme

05. Mid-day political discussion programme
06. Evening/night political discussion programme
07. Newspaper review programme
08. Specific election programme of the radio station
09. Political advertisements/jingles
10. Coverage of major political rally/congress
11. Interview granted by a given source. Please specify ……………
12. Media release from a given source. Please specify ……………..
13. Other (Please specify) ………………………….......................

9. Origin of Programme
   01. Radio station's own programme
   02. From an affiliate radio station (please specify)…………………
   03. From a newspaper (please specify) ……………………………
   04. From a TV programme (please specify) ……………………….
   05. Unplanned programme
   06. Political advertisement/jingle
   07. Other (Please specify) ……………………………………………

10. Language of Broadcast of Programme/Discussion
   01. Akan (Asante Twi, Akwapem Twi and Fante)
   02. English
   03. Ewe
   04. Nzema
   05. Kasem/Nankani/Buli
   06. Gurune/Kusaal
   07. Hausa
   08. Dagbani
   09. Mampruli
   10. Dagaare/Waale
   11. Awutu/Efutu
   12. Ga
   13. Dangme
   14. Brosah
   15. Other (please specify) ……………..........………………………

11. Duration of Programme
   01. 15 minutes

02. 30 minutes
03. 45 minutes
04. 60 minutes (1 hour)
05. 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes)
06. 90 minutes (1½ hours)
07. 120 minutes (2 hours)
08. 150 minutes (2½ hours)
09. 180 minutes (3 hours)
10. Other (please specify) ……………….........……………………

12. Name(s) of Programme Host/News Presenter(s) …………………….
……………………………………………………………………............

13. Number, Names, Gender & Political Party/Group Affiliation of Guests/ Discussants or Interviewees

Number	**Names of Guests/ Discussants**	**Gender of Discussant**	**Political Party/ Group Affiliation**

14. Main Subject of Story/Programme/Discussion
01. Political party activities/matters (please specify) ………………
02. Internal wrangling in political parties
03. Aid, grant, foreign support, etc.
04. Party fundraising, sponsorship, donations, etc.
05. Corruption
06. Defection
07. Conflicts, disagreements, demonstrations, etc.
08. Media pluralism
09. Women’s issues/participation in politics, etc.
10. Constitutional matters

11. Human rights
12. Voter education
13. Biometric registration
14. Infrastructure, service provision, health, education, sports, etc.
15. Employment and labour issues
16. Other subjects (please specify) ………………………….

15. Attribution/Sources of News/Programme Content
    01. President
    02. Vice-President
    03. Castle officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    04. Ministers of State (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    05. MCEs/DCEs (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    06. NDC party officers/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    07. NPP leaders/officials/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    08. CPP leaders/officials/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    09. PNC party leaders/officials/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    10. GCPP leaders/officials/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    11. PPP leaders/officials/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    12. DPP leaders/officials/sources (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    13. Religious leaders (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    14. Chiefs, other male traditional rulers
    15. Queen mothers, other female traditional rulers
    16. Women, gender advocates, etc.
    17. Pressure groups (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    18. Political party activists/serial callers, etc. (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    19. Non-party state officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    20. Radio station's own sources
    21. Affiliate radio stations (Name them) …………………………….
    22. Newspapers (Please specify) …………………………………….
    23. Other sources (Please specify) …………………………………

16. Political Party Mentioned/Referred to or Attacked
    01. NPP
    02. NDC
    03. CPP
    04. PNC

05. GCPP
06. PPP
07. DPP
08. Independent Parliamentarian
09. None mentioned
10. A combination of ……………………………… (Please specify)
11. Other (Please specify)…………………………..………………

17. Main Actor(s) Named in the Programme, News Story or Discussion
    01. President
    02. Vice-President
    03. Castle officials (Spokespersons, etc. indicate (a) male (b) female)
    04. Ministers of State (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    05. Government officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    06. NDC party officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    07. NPP leaders/officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    08. CPP leaders/officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    09. PNC party leaders/officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    10. GCPP leaders/officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    11. PPP leaders/officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    12. DPP leaders/officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    13. Foreign government officials (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    14. Religious leaders (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    15. Chiefs, other male traditional rulers
    16. Queen mothers, other female traditional rulers
    17. Political activists (Indicate (a) male (b) female and party)……
    18. Women, gender advocates, etc.
    19. Pressure groups (Indicate (a) male (b) female)
    20. Others (Please specify) ……………………………………….

18. Type of expressions used on the Programme (Identify per discussant/caller/host in the Table below)
    01. Pacifist and conciliatory
    02. Civil, non-controversial, acceptable
    03. Provocative remarks
    04. Insulting and offensive comments
    05. Expressions containing prejudice and bigotry
    06. Gender specific insults

07. Expressions containing tribal slurs
08. Expressions or comments promoting divisiveness
09. Remarks calling for confrontation and violence (overtly or covertly)
10. Innuendoes (indirect references to something rude and unpleasant)
11. Unsubstantiated allegations
12. Inflammatory remarks
13. Other (Please specify) ....

Name of Discussant/ caller	**Gender of Discussant**	**Political Party/ Group Affiliation**	**Type of expression Used (use the list above)**	**Other Remarks**
Host/Presenter 1				
Host/Presenter 2				

19. Give specific quotations of the indecent or extraordinarily decent remarks made by the discussants/callers/hosts during the programme
    i) ....
    ii) ....
    iii) ....
    iv) ....
    v) ....

20. Type of Story Embellishment/Enhancement Used
    01. Proverbs
    02. Known expressions widely/generally used
    03. Religious expressions
    04. Anecdotes

05. Lines of music/songs sung or recited
06. Ridicule/Mocking
07. Name-calling
08. Sarcasm/Cynicism
09. Figures of speech (similes, metaphors, etc.)
10. Idolising/Exalting/Praise-singing
11. Other (Please specify) ....
12. None

21. Tone of Programme/ News Item/ Discussion (Identify per discussant/ host in the Table below)
    01. Conciliatory and pacifist (friendly, encouraging unity, agreement)
    02. Favourable (calm, decorous, civil, normal, etc.)
    03. Unfavourable (screaming/shouting, loud, confrontational, etc.)
    04. Adversarial, harsh, provocative (insulting, abusive, using invectives, etc.)
    05. Threatening, overbearing, swearing, etc. (admonishing, warning)
    06. Neutral (defies all the above classifications)
    07. Other (Please specify) ....

Name of Discussant/ caller	**Gender of Discussant**	**Political Party/ Group Affiliation**	**Type of expression Used (use the list above)**	**Other Remarks**
Host/Presenter 1				
Host/Presenter 2				

22. Assessment of Host/Presenter/Moderator's Handling of Programme

PROGRAMME SEGMENT	ASSESSMENT	
	Good	Bad
In-studio Discussion		
Phone-in		
Text Messaging		
Interviews		

Explain your assessment of the host by indicating the actions or inactions of the host for each indecent remark made on the programme

....

....

....

....

23. Focus of News/Programme/Discussion
    01. Issues-based
    02. Personality-based
    03. More issues-based than personality-based
    04. More personality-based than issues-based
    05. Both issues and personality-based in equal measure
    06. Difficult to classify
    07. Other (Please specify) ……………………………………….

24. Event/Occasion Broadcast
    01. Interviews granted by politicians
    02. Press statements/releases; conferences, media briefings, etc.
    03. Parliamentary proceedings
    04. Party congresses, rallies or meetings
    05. Radio station's journalists in official entourage
    06. Radio station's own newsgathering or programme schedule

07. Social ceremonies (funerals, banquets, get-togethers, etc.)
08. Religious functions
09. Other Occasions (Please specify) ……………………………….

25. Story Setting
    01. Locality of the radio station
    02. District of the radio station
    03. Region in which the radio station is located
    04. Regional capital
    05. Another region of Ghana
    06. National capital
    07. Other settings (Please specify) ....
    08. Not specified/Undisclosed
    09. Multiple settings (Please specify) ....

26. Any Other Observations
    (Including exceptional/remarkable moments, repeated sound bites, near fights, particular music/songs played, refrains used extensively, etc.)

    ....

    ....

    ....

APPENDIX C

CATEGORY DEFINITIONS FOR CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE MONITORING ON RADIO

Date Monitored

- The study is conducted over a nine-month period, from April to December 2012.
- The date of monitoring is the date on which the particular programme content was aired.
- It is recorded as the day, month, and year of recording.

Time of Broadcast

- The time of broadcast of the programme being monitored is recorded as:
  a) Morning,
  b) Mid-day,
  c) Afternoon,
  d) Evening or Night
- The specific time is to be given in the box provided.

Name and Ownership of Radio Station

- There are 31 radio stations whose programme contents are to be monitored and studied.
- They are identified by name and coded.
- They are mostly (except 3) privately owned and are selected from all 10 regions of Ghana.
- For more detail, however, ownership examines whether the station is owned by:
  a) State
  b) Community
  c) Business person
  d) Politician/Business person

Location of Radio Station

- The radio stations to be studied are located throughout the country — in all 10 regions.
- Greater Accra has the highest number of 10 followed by Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Northern regions with 3 radio stations each.

- Eastern, Central, Western, Volta, Upper East and Upper West regions have 2 radio stations each.
- They are all identified by city/town, district and region in which they are located.

Programme Identification 1

- The programme to be coded is identified by:

1. Title/topic

  - This specifies the exact title or topic of the programme coded. Coding could be on a segment of the programme but we need to identify the programme itself by name.

2. Brief Summary of Story Coded

  - A brief summary of the particular news story or item monitored would be provided in a sentence or two to aid in an assessment of the story at a glance.

Programme Identification

1. Type of Programme

  - Looks at whether the item monitored was a news story/item or written from the radio station's own sources and aired as its main news story/item; or
  - A discussion programme aired in the morning, mid-day, afternoon, evening, night; or
  - A release from some external groups such as the government, the opposition or some other pressure groups; or
  - An interview granted by any of the above sources.

2. Origin of Programme

  - Records whether the programme coded is part of the radio station's own programme schedules; or
  - Is one broadcast from an affiliate radio station;
  - From another radio station; or
  - From an identifiable newspaper source; or
  - From a television station.
  - It also makes provision for political party ads or jingles and unplanned programmes.

3. Language of Broadcast of Programme
- This documents the language(s) in which the particular programme or item was broadcast.
- It does not necessarily record all the languages in which the radio station concerned broadcasts.

4. Duration of Programme
- Records the duration of the entire programme within which the segment coded was broadcast.
- It is measured in minutes.

Host/Guest Identification

1. Name of Programme Host/Presenter
- Identifies the host or presenter of the programme or item coded by name.

2. Number, Names, Gender & Political Party/Group Affiliation of Guests/Discussants
- Political discussions usually have a number of guests or discussants who represent various political parties and/or pressure groups.
- The number and names of guests/discussants and their political representations are to be recorded.

Main Subject of Story/Programme/Discussion

- The main subject of the story or programme can be political, economic, social, cultural or a mixture of these involving politicians.
- Subjects will include political party activities, defections, corruption, conflicts, disagreements, voter education, etc.
- For the purposes of this study, the programme or news item is classified as political if it relates to the government, opposition parties, their officials and all their activities.

Attribution/Sources of News/Programme Content

- These were the sources or originators of the broadcast programme/news item.
- They could be the President, Vice-President, opposition politicians, pressure groups, other political actors;
- Also, radio station’s journalists or other news media sources such as

newspapers, GNA, Reuters, CNN, BBC, affiliate stations such as Peace FM, Joy FM, etc.

- The story is classified as "un-sourced" or "anonymous" if it has no clearly identified source from whom/which information was obtained.

Political Party Mentioned or Referred to

- The study focuses on political discourse and involves all registered political parties in Ghana's parliament and their followers.
- Stories/programmes/discussions of and about these people and their parties are coded.
- Also coded is political discourse involving pressure groups and other political parties which may affect political parties in the study.

Main Actor(s) Named in the Programme, News Story or Discussion

- This addresses the question: who is the main subject of the programme, discussion, news item or story?
- The person or people involved in the story or about whom it is broadcast or people quoted or referred to in the programme, story or discussion.
- They include the President, the Vice-President, former Presidents, former Vice-Presidents, leaders and officials of ruling and opposition parties, etc.
- They also include those acting on behalf of the political actors and/or their political parties.
- There could be more actors in a given story. The study notes and records the three (3) main actors.

Language/Expressions Used on the Programme and its Import 1

- This records the nature and type of language—remarks, expressions, comments used in the programme or item coded.
- It seeks to document whether the language used is:
  a) provocative or conciliatory;
  b) civil or controversial;
  c) insulting or otherwise;
  d) promotes prejudice/bigotry or otherwise;
  e) divides or unites;
  f) is capable of provoking or engendering violence (physically, verbally or otherwise) or not, etc.

Language/Expressions Used on the Programme and its Import 2

- Adjectives or adverbs or some other emotive words which have the tendency to convey more than their superficial meanings.
- They might include value-laden words which would be examined for their denotative and connotative meanings.
- Coders are expected to record verbatim the exact words, phrases or sentences broadcast which have been coded under the category selected above.
- This helps substantiate or verify the exactness of the categorization and to add to the repertoire of language use in that category.

Definition of Different Language/Expression Types 1

1. **Insult:**
    - They are any words, expressions or language meant to degrade or offend others. Insults attack the person using words such as thieves, fools, stupid, greedy bastards, unintelligent people, etc.

2. **Hate speech:**
    - Insults which are said against a group of people based on their ethnicity, religion, etc. to degrade and/or offend them and hold them out to public scorn and hatred.

3. **Prejudice and bigotry:**
    - Expressing instinctive views or biases against someone based on preconceived ideas and/or unreasonable dislike for a group of people.
    - “Ewes are backward and inward-looking.”
    - “Ashantis are proud people.”
    - “Akyems are arrogant people.”
    - “What else do you expect from a Northerner?”
    - Bigotry also encompasses intolerance of the views of others.

4. **Inflammatory expressions:**
    - Statements likely to provoke anger in others and/or promote violence in society.
    - “Ghana will burn if we don’t win”. “Ghana will be like Kenya …”

5. **Incitement:**
    - Statements which provoke immediate action by others and can lead to violence.
    - “Go and besiege the EC office with implements to prevent our opponents from cheating”.
    - “Slap any opposition member who annoys you”.
    - “Confiscate suspicious ballot boxes”, etc.

6. **Expletives:**
    - Swear words. Rude and unsavoury expressions unfit for publication/ broadcast but used in reference to others, nonetheless.

7. **Ethnic slurs and stereotyping:**
    - Similar to issues which result in hate speech

8. **Unsubstantiated allegations:**
    - Statements meant to offend and impugn the integrity of a person calculated to bring them to public ridicule.

9. **Gender Specific Insults**
    - Offensive words or speech directed at someone just based on their gender; usually more painful.
    - “You are a prostitute or a witch”; or
    - “Only prostitutes enter into male domains”.
    - “No decent woman will speak the way you speak”.
    - “Any man worth his salt will be bold enough to enter the presidential race or debate”.
    - “When we are talking about men, we do not include the likes of you or him”, etc.

10. **Divisive expressions:**
    - Any expression that seeks to create division among groups of people or communities on the basis of party affiliation, religion or ethnicity;
    - It could also be based on other such groupings as making allusions to previous conflicts which exist or have the potential to ignite old wars among identified groups of people or create ill-feeling.
    - Examples: “A Muslim cannot be President of Ghana” or “a Fanti cannot lead this nation.”

Type of Story Embellishment/Enhancement Used

- Programme enhancements or embellishments include proverbs, well-known expressions, jokes, anecdotes, portions of songs/music and laughter.
- These are sometimes contained in news stories, programmes or people's submissions during discussion programmes.
- Also, any adjectives, adverbs or phrases with the tendency to colour or embellish the story, item, programme or news report.

Tone of Programme/News Item/Discussion

- "Tone" examines the discourse of the programme or news story/item by recording how words are used to denote an atmosphere of:
  a) civility or belligerence,
  b) whether the general tone is favourable/friendly, or not;
  c) conciliatory; insulting or provocative;
  d) unfavourable/adversarial; etc, or neutral
- It is favourable when more civil words are used, or when the general tone suggests a betterment of relations.
- It is unfavourable when there is a belligerent or confrontational tone.
- It is insulting when insults or invectives are traded or used; etc.

Programme Handling by Hosts

- This assesses the critical role of hosts/presenters in moderating programmes coded.
- It examines their handling of in-studio discussions, phone-in segments, interviews and time allocation.
- Depending on their performance, they are rated:
  a) Good, or
  b) Bad
- Monitors are expected to give reasons for their answers and to indicate which host is being referred to. The reasons must indicate the exact action or inaction of the host whenever an indecent remark was made during the programme.

Focus of News/Programme/Discussion

- Monitors are expected to code whether the news, programme or discussion is:

  a) Issues-based;
  b) Personality-based; or
  c) A mix of the two categories in given proportions.
- If the programme defies any such categorization, monitors are expected to indicate so.

Event/Occasion Broadcast

- This looks at the event or occasion based on which the broadcast is made or news item is broadcast.
- Occasions identified include:
  a) Press conferences, media briefings, etc.
  b) Political party congresses,
  c) Parliamentary proceedings,
  d) Interviews granted to the radio station by politicians or others in which political actors and/or their parties are mentioned,
  e) Social events; and
  f) Efforts by reporters or journalists to gather their own news through environmental scanning.

Story/Programme Setting

- The setting of the story, programme or item broadcast looks at the location where the event reported took place.
- This includes:
  a) the locality and district of the radio station,
  b) other districts,
  c) the region or regional capital, or
  d) the national capital of Ghana.

Any Other Observations

- Monitors are to note down all observations made about the news, programme or discussion they code including:
  a) particular music/songs played,
  b) refrains used,
  c) repeated expressions made,
  d) specific sound bites repeated,
  e) attitudes/behaviours of hosts and/or particular discussants, etc.

ISBN 978–9988–1–6306–8