

WOMAN OF STEEL – EXPLORING NEWS MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF GHANA’S FIRST
FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE - NANA KONADU AGYEMANG-RAWLINGS

by

MARTHA DAKWA SEFFAH

(Under the Direction of Denetra Walker)

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigated the Ghanaian news media's portrayal of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings during the 2016 and 2020 elections, employing Feminist Standpoint Theory and Framing Theory. Findings reveal a dominant "relational identity" frame, defining her primarily by her familial ties, thereby diminishing her political agency. Other frames, including "Exceptional Woman" and "Incompetence," further illustrate gendered biases. Despite these limitations, the study identifies significant "feminist themes" such as "Political Agency" and "Challenging Dominant Structures" inherent in her actions. The pervasive "Male Dominance" in authorship and sources, alongside the reinforcement of "Gender Roles," indicates a deeply patriarchal media ideology. This research highlights how Ghanaian journalism constructs reality, impacting public perception and women's political participation. It advocates for critical media self-reflection and the integration of feminist perspectives to foster more equitable representation and democratic inclusivity.

INDEX WORDS: Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, Women, Media, Politics, Ghana, FST

WOMAN OF STEEL – EXPLORING NEWS MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF GHANA’S FIRST
FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE - NANA KONADU AGYEMANG-RAWLINGS

by

MARTHA DARKWA SEFFAH

BA., THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, GHANA, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2025

© 2025

Martha Darkwa Seffah

All Rights Reserved

WOMAN OF STEEL – EXPLORING MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF GHANA’S FIRST
FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE - NANA KONADU AGYEMANG-RAWLINGS

By

MARTHA DARWKA SEFFAH

Major Professor: Denetra Walker

Committee: Karin Assmann

Carolina Acosta-Alzuru

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott

Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School

The University of Georgia

August 2025

DEDICATION

To the paths forged in the scorching sun and in the uncertainties of the night

To the outcomes that deepen our pain, forging insight and grounding our experiences

Life - with its highs and lows, ins and outs, gains and losses, births and deaths

To Salome Mamle Daitey & Joseph Darkwa Seffah

Till we meet again – Rest in Peace

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis committee members and mentors. To my supervisor, Dr. Denetra Walker, thank you for your insightful feedback, patient mentorship, and consistent support throughout this journey. Your expertise and encouragement were invaluable. I am equally grateful to Dr. Karin Assmann and Dr. Carolina Acosta-Alzuru for their constructive critiques and generous contributions to the refinement of this work.

To my dear friends, thank you for your encouragement, understanding, and occasional distraction when I needed it most. Your companionship helped me stay grounded and motivated, and I am deeply appreciative of your support.

To my loving husband, Kofi Darkwa Seffah, thank you for believing in me even on the days I did not believe in myself. Your patience, emotional support, financial support, and constant reassurance made all the difference. And to my wonderful children, Summer and Saleti, your smiles and hugs kept me going more than you will ever know. Thank you for being my greatest source of joy and inspiration.

This accomplishment is not mine alone—it is shared with all of you who walked with me through the highs and lows of this academic journey. I am forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Women, Politics and the Media	2
Why Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings	5
Purpose of this study	6
CHAPTER 2:	8
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings	8
Women in Politics	10
Women in Media	12
Representations of women in politics in the media	13
Ghanaian Media Landscape	15
Journalism Practice and Media Coverage of Women in Politics in Ghana	16
Feminist Standpoint, Objectivity, and Framing: A Critical Lens on Ghanaian Journalism	17
Research Questions	20
CHAPTER 3	22
METHODOLOGY	22
Research Design	22
Data Collection Methods – Sources and Challenges	24
The Daily Graphic.....	27
Daily Guide.....	27
Ghana News Agency (GNA)	28
AllAfrica.com	28

Data Sampling and Timelines	29
Data Analysis.....	30
Theoretical Framework and Thematic Analysis.....	31
Reflexivity and Positionality	34
CHAPTER 4.....	36
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	36
RQ1-Media Frames and Descriptions.....	36
Relational Identity – Wife, Spouse, and former First Lady	36
Exceptional Woman Frame.....	38
Disruptive/Controversial Frame.....	41
Incompetence Frame	42
Emotional Woman Trope.....	46
Exclusion and Silencing.....	48
Nurture/Mother Frame	49
RQ2: Identified Feminist Themes	50
Advocacy and Activism.....	50
Political Agency.....	53
Challenging Dominant Structures.....	55
RQ 3: Dominant Ideology in Ghanaian Media	56
Male Dominance in Ghanaian Media	56
Gender Roles.....	58
Family/Death as major news subject	59
Figure 3: News subjects – what topics were most frequently discussed?.....	60
Male Superiority	60
CHAPTER 5.....	62
DISCUSSION	62
The Wife as a Politician (RQ1)	62
Emotions and Morality as Political Assets	64
Resistance and Agency (RQ2).....	64
A Patriarchal Lens (RQ3)	66
CHAPTER 6.....	68
CONCLUSION	68
Summary of Key Findings	68
Implications and Significance of the Findings	69
Practical Implications.....	71
Contributions to the Field	73
Limitations of the Study	73

Recommendations for Future Research	74
<i>Bibliography</i>.....	76

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Number of articles collected per year and media outlet	29
Table 2: Codebook.....	33

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Media News Sources -which voices were often heard?	57
Figure 2: Author Gender	57
Figure 3: News subjects – what topics were most frequently discussed?.....	60

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Being married to President Rawlings, I am seen as just an appendage...Systematically, I want to be able to explain who, where, and what I am...”

(Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, interview on TV3 Ghana, March 2019)

On December 7, 2016, Ghana’s presidential election ballot papers featured a distinct yet familiar face: Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings, the first female presidential candidate in Ghana. Before this, she was known as (and remains) the longest-serving first lady of the country, a title that arguably hindered her chances of becoming the first female president of Ghana. Although her presidential ambitions appeared to represent a victory for women’s empowerment, news media reports, discussions, and analyses from media outlets seemed unable to look beyond her status as the former First Lady. Essentially, she was framed as the “Woman of Steel, who sparked excitement and controversy in Ghanaian politics(Asmah , 2016).” Henaku (2020) asserts that Agyeman-Rawlings elicits strong and often contradictory opinions in Ghanaian politics, stemming from her political performances and the close ties between her politics and those of her husband, Flight. Lieutenant. Jerry John Rawlings, Ghana’s former president and founder of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) political party (Henaku, 2020). The Ghanaian Chronicle manifests this in a news report stating:

What is going on is a struggle for control and power over the NDC and by extension, the government. What is unfolding is essentially a mixture of messianic delusions, dynastic ambitions for themselves [Rawlingses] and their children.” ...It is a wrong move by Mrs. Rawlings and her group because Ghanaians do not want a dynasty... (Odoi-Larbi, 2012)

Such media narratives seemingly morphed into public opinion that her potential presidency would merely extend her husband’s rule. This notion overshadowed her political competencies and undermined her agency during the 2011 presidential primaries. She seemed to have no fighting chance from the start and eventually lost the presidential primaries in 2011, as well as the presidential elections in 2016 and 2020.

While her losses may be attributed to several factors, it is worth considering the media's role in this context. What influence did the Ghanaian media have in shaping such strong public opinions about her? How was she described and framed? How did her framing differ from that of her male counterparts? What do such differences in media reports on male and female political figures reflect about the ideologies and core assumptions of Ghanaian media and journalism practices? How do these ideologies impact the portrayal of women in Ghana's politics? These questions are at the core of this study.

Women, Politics and the Media

The mass media is considered a critical source of information in democratic politics worldwide, serving as the main link between governments, political parties, candidates, and voters (Votmer, 2005). The mass media, particularly news media, also play a crucial role in spreading information that's essential for a democracy to function through the organization and broadcasting of political and civic education programs (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). This makes the mass media not just channels for conveying the messages politicians want to communicate to voters, but active

participants in the portrayal of presidential candidates as well as the creation of political messages (Voltmer, 2005).

Consequently, the media facilitates global democracies by enhancing individuals' understanding of political events, by providing information on political agents and candidates, regardless of gender. However, significant differences have been noted in media representations of male and female political agents (Osei-Appiah et al., 2023).

Researchers have documented multiple stereotypical representations of women in the US media that stem from long-standing cultural ideas about gender (Damico, 2022). Such stereotypical representations portray “women as submissive, less intelligent than men, sexual objects, and preoccupied with their roles as sexy wives and mothers” (Roessner, 2012, p. 329). While objectification, the depiction of women as “sex symbols,” was thought to be the bane of women in entertainment media (films and advertisements), Gothreau et al. (2023) found that women political candidates are not spared the ordeal. Women in politics have been subject to objectification in a way that men have not (Gothreau et al., 2023). This objectification results in the denial of their personhood characteristics, including their autonomy, agency, intelligence, warmth, and competence. “Women in politics are thus portrayed as ‘political outsiders, suspects, or pretenders.” (Lira, 2022)

The situation is no different in Ghana, where, for a long time, women's participation in politics seemed non-existent, stemming from their systematic erasure from political activities and discourses (Mohammed, 2023b). Similarly, media coverage of women politicians reveals gender biases and stereotypical representations that favor male politicians, perpetuating deeply rooted

impressions of women as emotional and empathetic. In contrast, their male counterparts are portrayed as competitive, aggressive, and assertive (Arriola et al., 2021; Coffie & Medie, 2021).

To mitigate the adverse effects of the media's sexist reporting on women in politics in Ghana, governmental, international, and civil society organizations (CSOs) have implemented initiatives focused on the media. For instance, UNESCO has provided media training to a selection of Ghanaian journalists on how to cover women candidates, and several media houses and journalists have received training on gender-sensitive reporting (Lonta, 2024; MFWA, 2019). Following such initiatives, notable media houses in Ghana have dedicated spaces and times for discourses centered on gender-related issues to increase women's participation in political and governance processes (Coffie & Medie, 2021). Although the country has made some gains, women's participation and political representation in Ghana remain low. As of 2012, there were 29 (11%) females and 246 (89%) males among the 275 Members of Parliament (MPs). Ghana's Parliament, following the 2016 general elections, had 35 (13%) female MPs and 240 (87%) male MPs out of the 275 Members of Parliament. The 2020 general elections resulted in 40 female MPs (14.5%) and 235 male MPs (85.4%) .

Global assessments of women's representation and participation in politics mirror the situation in Ghana. However, a UN Women's Report (2023) indicates that regional disparities, such as income and education levels, exacerbate and sustain this underrepresentation (UN Women, 2023). Such disparities also contribute to the predominance of Western democracies in studies on the representation of female political candidates in the media, while knowledge about non-Western countries, including Ghana, remains limited (Arriola et al., 2021). As such, while some level of attention has been given to women leaders globally, including Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, and

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Donohue & Arrington, 2020; Lips, 2021), the same cannot be said of the experiences of women such as Ghana's Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings.

Why Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings (discussed further in Chapter 2) is noted as the longest-serving first lady and first female presidential candidate in Ghana. Her political journey can be traced back to Ghana's post-independence era, where her husband and former Ghanaian president, Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings led a revolution in the 1980s (Skinner et al., 2024). She served as first lady from 1981 to 2001, advocating for women's rights, promoting female empowerment, and encouraging women's participation in socio-political dialogues (Fofie, 2016). Nana Konadu transitioned from first lady to presidential candidate when she contested in the 2016 elections on the ticket of her newly formed National Democratic Party (NDP).

Anderson (2002) asserts that the transition from first lady to presidential candidate appears to be a “logical next step” because, through their traditional role as presidents' spouses, first ladies gain significant governance and political experience that could be invaluable to their citizens and country. However, first ladies who become political candidates find themselves in a “double bind”—a conflict between their political ambitions and societal expectations of their roles. This double bind, along with stereotypical media representation, affects public perceptions of their identity .

This was the case for Nana Konadu, whose candidacy, while challenging the prevailing gender norms in a predominantly male-dominated political environment, was contrasted with her long-standing role as a former first lady.

As such, her political journey, achievements, and historic strides provide her with a unique standpoint, making her a significant source of knowledge and a fitting subject for studying media portrayals of women in politics. Investigating her experiences will offer insight into her political identity and leadership, as well as the interplay of gender and power in Ghana's evolving democracy, providing a window into the lives of other Ghanaian, African, and non-Western women in politics.

Purpose of this study

While Henaku (2020) utilized a discourse on Nana Konadu's political experiences from 2016 to argue for a Global Southern view on women's politics, I analyze her 2016 and 2020 representation in the Ghanaian news media through a feminist standpoint to explore the dominant ideologies underlying Ghana's media and journalism practices and how such ideologies impact the portrayals of women in politics. To do so, I explore how Nana Konadu is represented in the Ghanaian media by analysing news articles from four selected news outlets. Such content analysis will help answer the research questions by identifying what descriptions and media frames were used for Nana Konadu during the 2016, and 2020 electioneering activities, determine what feminist themes were evident in these media story frames, and examine how the identified media frames and themes reflect the dominant ideologies underlying Ghana's media/journalism practices. Identifying and understanding the dominant ideologies will provide the foundation for advocating a more constructive framework for media narratives on women in power. Such advocacy has been necessitated by the fact that current media depictions of women remain remnants of historically stereotypical representations of women in the media.

Consequently, current media narratives about women in politics, such as news frames surrounding Nana Konadu as the first female presidential candidate in Ghana, establish a framework for subsequent discussions on female presidential candidates in the country. Analyzing media narratives about Nana Konadu will help develop a positive framework for representing women in politics through the media.

Given the existing gap in the literature, the study's findings will contribute to a growing body of research on women, gender, politics, and media representations in Ghana, Africa, and non-Western states. The findings would also reveal the subtle and overt gender biases that exist in media and journalism practices, shaping public perceptions of women in politics, while highlighting the structural and institutional barriers that work against women's political ambitions. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to policy debates on gender equality, media framing, and media accountability by offering important recommendations for gender-sensitive media practices and a more constructive framework for media narratives about women in politics in Ghana and beyond. Findings are based on a reflexive thematic analysis of news articles from five selected Ghanaian news outlets.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section examines the literature on gender, media, and politics, focusing on the representation of women in these fields while evaluating the media's role in shaping and sustaining gender discussions. The review explores key areas related to the study, including a comprehensive analysis of women's political participation in Ghana, Africa, and globally, as well as an overview of the Ghanaian media landscape and journalism practices within the context of feminist standpoint and framing theories, which form the theoretical framework for this study.

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings is a Ghanaian politician noted for her role as the country's longest-serving first lady, founder of the '31st December Women's Movement', National Democratic Party (NDP), and first woman presidential candidate in Ghana. She briefly served as Ghana's first lady when her husband, Jerry John Rawlings, was Head of State in 1979 after staging a coup d'état (Fofie, 2016). Rawlings staged a second coup on December 31, 1981, and stayed in power until domestic and international agencies pressured the military regime to re-democratize (Fofie, 2016). Rawlings retired from the military to establish the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which won the country's first presidential election in 1992. After his second term win in 1996, Rawlings served as president from December 1992 to January 7, 2001 (Fofie, 2016). As such, Nana Konadu was the country's first lady under military governance from December 1981 to 1992 and under democratic governance from 1993 to January 2001.

In May 1982, she founded and served as the president of the 31st of December Women's Movement, a non-governmental organization that offered economic empowerment to women (Skinner et al., 2024). The group's activities included creating gainful employment opportunities for women, establishing daycare centers, and a nationwide campaign on girl child education (Ninsin et al., 1993). Nana Konadu and the foundation are highly credited with their instrumental efforts in facilitating the reform of the interstate succession law (PNDCL 111) in 1985. The law is noted for its favorable property distribution system and protection of widows in cases where a deceased husband or father made no valid will (Skinner et al., 2024).

In 2010, Nana Konadu returned to active politics when she was elected vice chairperson of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Later, she ran for the party's presidential nomination in July 2011 but was unsuccessful. That same year, she broke away from the NDC to establish her own party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), which she planned to use to contest the 2012 presidential elections. However, she was disqualified because of an administrative mistake in submitting her nomination papers to the Electoral Commission of Ghana. She made a comeback in 2016 and was officially listed on the ballot as Ghana's first female presidential candidate. She ran again in December 2020 despite predictions that she would withdraw after her husband's death a month earlier.

In November 2018, Nana Konadu launched her autobiography, "It Takes a Woman: A Life Shaped by Heritage, Leadership, and the Women Who Defined Hope." This initiative is part of a series that provides deep insights into Nana Konadu's political activism and experiences (Agyemang Rawlings, 2018). In her book, Nana Konadu identifies herself as a Black woman, an African woman, a Ghanaian of Asante royal lineage, a wife, mother, former First Lady of Ghana, and a gender advocate. Politics was said to have always been a part of her life. Her father was

friends with notable politicians of the day, including Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president and independence leader, and her husband was the longest-serving president of Ghana.

Consequently, she became a political icon in Ghana, serving as the country's longest-serving first lady from June 4, 1979, to September 24, 1979, and from December 31, 1981, to January 7, 2001.

Besides politics, Nana Konadu has direct connections to royalty. An interview on her website describes her lineage to the Ashanti kingdom of Ghana, which explains the origins of her name, "Nana Konadu Agyeman," and her political influences.

"...Konadu means 'fight 'til the end,' ... Named after the valiant Ashanti Queen Mother, Nana Konadu Yiadom II, who ruled the Ashanti kingdom in the absence of the exiled Asantehene Nana Agyeman Prempeh I in 1896." (Agyemang Rawlings, 2018 p.1)

Similar family and political influences shaped her views on gender and drove her advocacy. Notable amongst them was her mother's experiences as a married woman under British rule.

Women in Politics

While women's levels in education and participation in the paid economy have seen significant progress over the past two decades, the same cannot be said of their representation in national politics (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Women remain underrepresented in top political positions globally. As of January 2023, only 17 countries out of 151 had a female head of state, and only 19 out of 193 had a female head of government. Women constituted 22.8% of cabinet ministers and 26.5% of parliamentarians worldwide. Only six countries had 50% or more female parliamentary representation (UN Women, 2023).

According to the report, this underrepresentation is exacerbated and sustained by persisting regional disparities. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has the lowest percentage

of women in national parliaments, despite the United Arab Emirates having one of the highest gender parities. Over the 1990-2020 period, the MENA region averaged 10.2% female parliamentary representation. In contrast, Latin America and the Caribbean had the highest average at 22.4%, followed by Europe and Central Asia (21.8%), Sub-Saharan Africa (18.4%), East Asia and the Pacific (18.1%), and South Asia (14.6%).

Income levels also influence representation. High-income countries consistently outperformed lower-income countries in terms of female political participation. Between 1990 and 2020, high-income countries averaged 22.4% female parliamentary representation, compared to 14.4% in lower-middle-income countries (Acheampong et al., 2024).

Significant barriers remain for women in achieving equal political representation. These include gender stereotypes, discriminatory laws, limited access to resources, and long-standing cultural norms (Acheampong et al., 2024; Alhassan, 2022; Osei-Appiah et al., 2023; Wagner et al., 2021).

Relatedly, Paxton and Kunovich (2003) emphasize the prevalence of social-structural, political, and ideological explanations for women's representation in politics. "Social-structural explanations focus on the pool of available women, political explanations focus on the openness of the political system to women, and ideological explanations focus on general impressions of women in politics and how viable women are as candidates and leaders." (Paxton & Kunovich 2003, pg. 88).

Of these three, the authors found ideological beliefs to be the strongest predictor of women's political participation. Paxton and Kunovich describe ideological beliefs as societal ideas that inform public opinion about women's place in power and politics. These ideas stem from cultural norms, historical incidents (such as the works of political theorists), and religious systems.

Ideological beliefs impact both supply (a woman's motivations for office) and demand (voters' views and perceptions about women running for office) in politics (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003).

Women in Media

Scholarly works on women in media have approached the subject from several perspectives: women's representation and portrayal in mainstream media, women as media players and producers, and women as audiences or media consumers. Researchers have documented multiple stereotypical representations of women in U.S. media that stem from long-standing cultural ideas about gender across various media forms, including news, advertisements, film, television, and online content. Such stereotypical representations portray "women as submissive, less intelligent than men, sexual objects, and preoccupied with their roles as sexy wives and mothers (Kosut, 2012; Roessner, 2012).

Consequently, these media stereotypes evolved into the dominant imagery of "womanhood," as their regularity and reproduction facilitated their "easy passage into everyday discourse," establishing them as social ideologies for defining gender roles, maintaining gender inequalities, and trivializing women's contributions and narratives in society (Damico, 2022). To challenge this status quo, feminists critiqued women's marginality and misrepresentation, leading to a broader range and scope in women's depictions over the past three decades). By the 1980s, women were portrayed as successful career women, mothers in film and advertising, and as having achieved sexual equality with men in the 1990s.

However, problematic stereotypical representations of gender persist in current media trends across the globe, as the remnants of historical representations still inform depictions in media today (Damico, 2022). The media, both traditional and digital, have been found to perpetuate

“contemporary stereotypes” and new forms of sexism by offering “girls and women feminist messages stripped of their political significance” while encouraging women to embrace a brand of girl power that entails purchasing unlimited amounts of beauty.” This way, “the media reinforces that true power for women lies not in personal achievement or economic independence but in the guise of beauty—the strategic deployment of one’s body (Reosnner, 2012, pg 330). ”

Representations of women in politics in the media

Women in politics have been subject to objectification in a way that men have not (Gothreau et al., 2023). While objectification, the depiction of women as “sex symbols,” was thought to be the bane of women in entertainment media (films and advertisements), Gothreau et al. (2023) found that women political candidates are not spared the ordeal. This objectification of women denies their personhood characteristics, including their “autonomy, agency, intelligence, warmth, and competence ” (Schooler & Aubrey, 2024 p.307). Women in politics are thus portrayed as “political outsiders, suspects, or pretenders” (Lira, 2022 p.221).

In studies examining how prominent female candidates Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin in the U.S. were treated differently than their male counterparts, Carlin and Winfrey (2009) assert that their appearances were frequent “ fodder for discussion,” often undermining considerations of their qualifications and positions (Schooler & Aubrey, 2024 p.306). In another study examining the differences in media representation of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first female president of an independent African state, Liberia, researchers observed that media reports and journalists explicitly mentioned Johnson-Sirleaf’s appearance. Meanwhile, nothing was said about her male rival, George Opong Weah’s clothing (Anderson et al., 2011). The study compared African media reports on the same subject to international media reports and found that international media also

focused on Johnson-Sirleaf's clothing. "The focus by the media on such trivialities makes female politicians less appealing to the serious-minded reader or politician " (Anderson et al., 2011 p. 2512).

While the experience of women politicians appears negative globally, Lira (2022) notes that discourses vary among countries, as socio-cultural issues heavily influence them. As such, the experiences of "white, well-educated, and upper-class women in industrialized countries" are not the same as those of "a non-white with an Indigenous background located in an underdeveloped country. The experiences of female politicians in areas with lower female political participation, such as Latin America, are even more challenging " (Lira, 2022 p.220).

In the 2024 Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum, Ghana ranked 119 out of 146 countries on the gender parity and political empowerment scale, while Sub-Saharan Africa ranked 6th out of 7 regions (WEF, 2024). Although the country has made some progress towards the 30% and 40% benchmarks set by the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) for quotas, women's participation and political representation in Ghana remain low. As of 2012, there were 29 (11%) females and 246 (89%) males among the 275 Members of Parliament (MPs). Following the 2016 general elections, Ghana's Parliament recorded 35 (13%) female MPs and 240 (87%) male MPs out of the 275 Members of Parliament, while the 2020 general elections saw 40 female MPs (14.5%) and 235 (85.4%) male MPs (Azinim & Musah, 2023).

These results suggest that Ghana, like many countries in Africa and Latin America, faces lower female political participation, resulting in more challenging conditions for female politicians.

Thus, despite their similarities, the experiences of an American female politician, such as Hillary Clinton, cannot be the same or as harsh as those of an African female politician, such as Nana

Konadu Agyeman Rawlings. However, Western and European female politicians dominate research on women in politics, and little is known about the experiences of Indigenous and African women in politics (Osei-Appiah et al., 2023).

Ghanaian Media Landscape

Ghana is a West African nation located on the Gulf of Guinea. Historically known as the Gold Coast, Ghana gained independence from British Colonial rule in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. About a decade later, the country endured a period of economic decline, political instability, and military regimes that lasted through the 1980s (Owusu-Ansah, 2014).

Nkrumah's reign marked a nationalist phase for Ghana, characterized by stringent media controls. Having used newspapers to critique the colonial government, he sought to indemnify himself from the same through the acquisition of major newspapers and the institutionalization of the 1960 Criminal Libel Laws (Anyidoho, 2016).

Following such stringent controls, press ownership in Ghana by the 1960s was divided among the government, foreign companies, and Ghanaian entrepreneurs who viewed the media as a business enterprise. Subsequent governments slightly favored press freedom and private media operations but upheld the criminal libel law until its repeal in August 2001 (Owusu, 2011). This led to the proliferation of private media outlets, increased freedom of expression, and enhanced journalistic freedoms.

However, the historical precedents of press power and ownership established a structure for the Ghanaian media landscape, which is currently shaped by the interplay of government interests and ownership influence (Danso, 2025). Scholars argue that political leaders often attempt to control media narratives to protect their reputations and suppress dissenting views (Kellam & Stein, 2016).

Ownership structures in the Ghanaian media further compromise editorial autonomy, as many media outlets are owned or influenced by politically affiliated individuals or entities (Dragomir, 2024).

Journalism Practice and Media Coverage of Women in Politics in Ghana

While Ghana's media is often praised for its role in shaping public opinion and promoting democracy, the representation of women in politics reveals a harsh reality. A closer look shows a deeply ingrained system that favors men and the wealthy, marginalizing women's voices and experiences. For example, a 2018 report on Ghana's top 50 journalists found that only 10 women were included in the list (Avance Media, 2018). This imbalance carries over into public discussions, with a 2014 study by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) finding that women made up just 17% of radio program participants (359 out of 2,172), while men dominated at 83% (1,813). As Agyemang Asante (2020) notes, these powerful voices—often partisan and from privileged backgrounds—are “trotted out” to shape national conversations, effectively leaving out many people, including those outside the capital, people with disabilities, and women (Agyemang Asante, 2020). This leads to a systemic erasure of women in politics, media coverage, and public discourse, creating the perception that their participation in politics is almost nonexistent (Mohammed, 2023).

Historically, this erasure has been the norm. In Ghana's fight for independence, women played crucial, yet often overlooked, roles. According to Akuffo (2023), they made significant contributions as propaganda secretaries, international lobbyists, journalists, and organizers who raised awareness and funds, with some even facing jail time for their activism. However, their stories are often lost in the traditional male-dominated narratives of national history (Akuffo, 2023;

Mohammed, 2023b). This dominant masculine perspective, combined with the marginalization of underrepresented groups and sexist biases, has shaped the framework for media coverage and journalism practices in Ghana (Akita, 2010). As a result, media coverage of male politicians tends to focus on socio-political issues, while gendered biases and sexist reporting often skew coverage of female politicians (Osei-Appiah, 2019a).

Feminist Standpoint, Objectivity, and Framing: A Critical Lens on Ghanaian Journalism

Despite these challenges, media and journalism practices have been instrumental in advancing Ghana's sociopolitical development, shaping public opinion, promoting democratic principles, and holding duty-bearers accountable through normative principles such as public interest, accountability, and objectivity (Dwumoh, 2023). The notion of journalistic objectivity, formalized by Walter Lippmann in the 1920s, continues to influence Ghanaian journalism today, primarily introduced through colonial legacies and institutionalized through the Ghana Journalists Association's (GJA) Code of Ethics. The GJA Code commits journalists to principles such as accuracy, fairness, and balanced reporting, aiming to preserve objectivity and neutrality.

The GJA Code states that it:

- *Recognizes the public's right to fair, unbiased, accurate, balanced, and comprehensive information.*
- *Differentiates between fact, opinion, and commentary such that news is presented objectively without embellishments.*

(Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) CODE OF ETHICS, 2024)

Based on these statements, the GJA upholds the highest standards of objective journalism practice as the benchmark for the profession in Ghana.

However, Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) offers a critical epistemological challenge to the assumption of journalistic objectivity. Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) challenges the concept of journalistic objectivity, exposing its inherent limitations and the inevitability of bias in journalism practice and news reports. FST is an epistemological framework that prioritizes the experiences of marginalized groups, particularly women, as a vital source of knowledge. It suggests that society is shaped by power relations that position dominant and marginalized groups in unequal ways (Wood, 2012), resulting in distinct forms of knowledge for both. However, members of marginalized groups may be uniquely positioned to produce knowledge that is less distorted, more complete, and more representative of society (Intemann, 2020a). FST focuses on how power structures, such as patriarchy, influence social knowledge production by centering women's experiences to challenge dominant assumptions and produce more comprehensive knowledge (Harding, 1987).

A core assumption of FST is that knowledge is situated and never value-free. Therefore, all knowledge is rooted in the observer's vision of the world (Haraway, 1988), meaning the observer's social and political location—race, sex, gender, and class—profoundly influences how they understand and interact with the world (Jaggar, 2015). Donna Haraway's (1988) concept of "situated knowledge" reinforces this point by arguing that all knowledge claims are rooted in the specific standpoint of the knower, shaped by their social, cultural, and political context (Haraway, 1988).

By extension, a journalist's socio-cultural orientation inevitably influences their production and understanding of news. This assumption directly counters traditional approaches to knowledge production, which assume the journalist is a neutral observer striving for absolute objectivity. The notion of absolute objectivity in journalism then becomes debatable given the media's inevitable situation within a broader socio-cultural environment.

Applying FST to journalism suggests that the supposedly "neutral" journalist is, in fact, influenced by their own standpoint—gender, class, ethnicity, and institutional affiliations. As such, despite the entrenched ideal of journalistic objectivity in Ghanaian media, feminist standpoint theory illustrates that absolute neutrality is unattainable. The biases in Ghanaian media's coverage of women in politics are then not accidental but closely linked to the perspectives of those producing the news and the organizational structures within which they operate.

Here, the discussions about situated knowledge, the inevitability of bias, and framing theory intersect. Framing theory (see Goffman, 1974) and further developed by Entman (1993) emphasizes how journalists select, emphasize, and exclude aspects of reality to produce a specific narrative. The very act of framing—choosing which facts to highlight and how to interpret them—is inherently shaped by the journalist's standpoint. The "masculine point of view" that dominates Ghana's media landscape becomes the default frame, influencing how stories are told and whose voices are heard. The Ghanaian media's tendency to focus on male politicians' policies and achievements while emphasizing women's personal lives, emotions, or appearance reflects such gendered framing (Osei-Appiah, 2019).

In effect, the "objective" perspective promoted by institutions like the GJA, although it appears neutral, can be seen as a dominant viewpoint that often supports and legitimizes the existing status quo. Since the dominant journalistic perspective is primarily male and elitist, what is presented as "objective" news unintentionally reflects and reinforces those views, subtly normalizing them and marginalizing others. The historical erasure of women's contributions to Ghana's independence, as well as current media portrayals of women in politics, is therefore a direct consequence of a dominant narrative that prioritizes certain stories and renders others invisible. News framing then becomes a process through which biases stemming from specific standpoints are reflected in media content.

Ultimately, Feminist Standpoint Theory's critique of journalistic objectivity aligns with the insights of Framing Theory. Both theories demonstrate that journalism is not a neutral reflection of reality, but a selective process significantly influenced by perspective, power, and institutional routines. Together, they help explain how dominant narratives are constructed, revealing that journalism is a selective, perspective-driven practice rather than a neutral mirror of society. By recognizing this connection, journalists can move beyond viewing bias as merely a personal flaw and understand how their viewpoints shape their representation of reality. This understanding is particularly important for the public's perception of women in politics and for encouraging women's participation in the political sphere.

Research Questions

This study analyzes the descriptions and media frames used for Nana Konadu during the 2016 and 2020 electioneering activities to assess which feminist themes were evident in the media narratives

and how such frames can be reconstructed through feminist lenses by answering the following questions.

1. *How did the news media/journalists in Ghana cover Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings during the 2016, and 2020 elections in Ghana?*
 - a. *What descriptions and media frames were used for Nana Konadu during the 2016, and 2020 electioneering activities?*
2. *What feminist themes are evident in these media story frames?*
3. *How do the identified themes reflect the dominant ideology(ideologies) underlying Ghana's media/journalism practices?*

By answering these questions, I argue the need for feminist perspectives in Ghana's Media and global media reports on women, particularly women politicians.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter lays out the research design and methods used to examine how Ghana's first female presidential candidate, Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings, is portrayed in the news media. It explains the qualitative approach, data collection methods, sampling techniques, and the analytical framework, which is based on Feminist Standpoint Theory and Framing Theory. This approach aims to give a clear and transparent account of how the research questions for this study were answered.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research method, specifically content analysis, to examine representations of Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings in Ghanaian news media.

Qualitative research methods are ideal in studies where the data is generally not suited for counting or measuring, as in exploring questions about experience, meaning, and perspective (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Qualitative content analysis (including thematic content analysis) is a qualitative research method used to systematically interpret and analyze textual data by identifying patterns, categories, themes, and meanings within the content. It focuses on both the explicit (manifest) and underlying (latent) messages in communication, allowing researchers to explore how language, framing, and context shape meaning (Schreier, 2012). While quantitative content analysis focuses on counting and frequency, qualitative content analysis highlights interpretation, allowing for a deeper understanding of how social constructs such as gender roles are communicated. This makes

it especially valuable for studying media texts, political discourse, and cultural narratives, where context and subtle messaging are key to understanding the data.

Qualitative research methods thus significantly benefited this study by enabling a rich and nuanced analysis of how gender roles are communicated and reinforced in Ghanaian media. It allowed me to go beyond surface-level descriptions to uncover the deeper meanings and ideological patterns behind the portrayal of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings and other female political figures. Through thematic analysis, I identified and interpreted how recurring frames shaped public perceptions of women's political legitimacy.

While quantitative methods could have been used, a qualitative approach is more suited for the study, which aimed to explore, understand, and interpret Nana Konadu's experiences from a particular standpoint. Qualitative research is ideal for this task, as it allows for a detailed understanding of any social phenomena and, in this case, the interpretation, meaning, and identification of underlying patterns within media content beyond simple frequency counts (Oranga & Matere, 2023).

Qualitative research enabled a deeper understanding of how gender roles and identities are constructed in media narratives, particularly in the portrayal of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, by focusing on interpreting the meanings, language, and framing used by the media. These aspects are best examined through qualitative methods. This approach enabled the identification of underlying themes, patterns, and ideologies that quantitative methods would not fully capture. Additionally, qualitative research aligned with the feminist lens of the study, allowing for a critical examination of power relations and the marginalization of women in political discourse. It also made space for reflexivity, where my experiences and standpoint could inform the analysis,

leading to richer and more contextually grounded insights and contextual understanding of how knowledge is produced and how power dynamics work in media (Harding, 1987).

Data Collection Methods – Sources and Challenges

To conduct this study, a purposive sample of news articles was selected from four news outlets: *The Daily Graphic*, *The Daily Guide*, *The Ghana News Agency*, and *AllAfrica.com*. The selected news outlets represent a diverse and influential segment of Ghana's media landscape, including both state-owned and private media. This provides a more comprehensive understanding, as well as varying editorial perspectives, on how gender and political roles are shaped and communicated across different media platforms. The Daily Graphic and the Ghana News Agency are state-owned media outlets that present official narratives, while The Daily Guide and AllAfrica are private outlets that offer alternative perspectives. Analyzing these outlets helps identify patterns, differences, and similarities in media portrayals across different institutional and ideological lines. However, the absence of a robust archiving system in Ghanaian media outlets and public libraries, combined with the financial requirements to access the necessary data, posed a challenge to the data collection activities for this study.

Except for AllAfrica.com, which is an online news site, all other media outlets were contacted directly for both physical and digital copies of the needed data. Only the Daily Graphic had an organized archiving system for older publications from which it could provide scanned copies of the data required for a fee of GHS 1,500 (approximately USD \$101.69).

A public university library was also contacted regarding the other newspapers, but those attempts were also unsuccessful. This situation aligns with Kwadzo and Annor's (2020) findings that access to past newspapers may be a challenge in the future, as none of the libraries in their study (including the one contacted) were digitizing their collections (Kwadzo & Annor, 2013).

My challenges in accessing data directly from the media outlets in Ghana suggest the existence of both structural and financial barriers that significantly restrict access to historical news content in Ghana. The situation, however, seems no different among 22 ethnic newspapers in three Pacific Northwest states of the USA, where Gustafson (2015) found “inadequate physical and digital space, limited personnel and financial resources, and a lack of technological know-how for archiving the newspapers” as barriers to newspaper archiving (Gustafson, 2015).

Similarly, many media organizations in Ghana rely on outdated, manual storage methods due to limited infrastructure and inconsistent funding, making it challenging to preserve and retrieve older publications. Public libraries, which should act as repositories of collective memory, are often underfunded and lack the technology, resources, and skilled personnel needed to digitize and systematically archive news materials (Asare-kyire et al., 2013; Kwadzo & Annor, 2013).

Ringel (2023) finds that even when digital archives are available, some degree of information is inevitably lost in the digitization process as digitized materials often fail to replicate their original physical forms fully (Ringel, 2023). Access is also sometimes limited by cost (in my case) as individuals must pay to retrieve articles or view archived materials, creating a financial barrier that excludes researchers, students, and the public who cannot afford these fees. These structural and monetary issues reduce the availability of reliable historical records, hinder scholarly and

journalistic work, and weaken public access to information. They also suggest that access to archived media articles (both physical and digital) may be a challenge in the future.

As such, data for the study had to be accessed through a readily available and more accessible means. With the physical copies of the Daily Graphic in hand, all Articles from the Daily Guide, the Ghana News Agency, and AllAfrica.com were accessed through FACTIVA, a subscription-based news database available through the University of Georgia Library System.

Gilbert & Kelley (2024) found that there has been a significant increase in the use of news websites and public databases over the decade, with Factiva among the most popular resources for accessing news content for research purposes (Factiva, 2025; Gilbert & Kelley, 2024). However, Factiva's high institutional subscription fees may pose a barrier to smaller and low-funded institutions.

Factiva features news from top international news sites, covering 200 countries in 32 languages, from 33,000 global sources (Factiva, 2025). One such source is AllAfrica.com, an African news aggregator that produces and distributes news content from over 110 African news organizations (AllAfrica.com, 2025). AllAfrica collects and distributes news from select Ghanaian news organizations, including *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, *The Ghanaian Times*, as well as other smaller private newspapers, making it an ideal alternative for accessing Ghanaian news content.

Articles on Factiva were accessed between January 15, 2025, and March 14th, 2025, while the scanned copies from the Daily Graphic were accessed between January 15 and March 9, 2025.

The Daily Graphic

Articles were directly retrieved by staff from the archives department at *The Daily Graphic*, a state-owned newspaper renowned for its wide national reach and influence. It is the first newspaper launched by the Graphic Communications Group Ltd (GCGL) in 1950 (Daily Graphic, 2025). The newspaper market in Ghana is dominated by the Daily Graphic, which claims a daily circulation of about 100,000 copies and features an average of 72 pages, depending on the day of the week (source). A 2017 GeoPoll report also identified the Daily Graphic as having the largest readership base in the country, with a share of 36.25% (2,290,000 readers) (UNESCO, 2023). Given its status as Ghana's most widely circulated newspaper, the Daily Graphic was an essential source for this study. As a result, physically scanned copies were used for its articles, while content from the other outlets was accessed digitally.

Daily Guide

The Daily Guide is a private newspaper founded by Freddy Blay in 1984. It has been considered one of Ghana's most widely distributed private newspapers since 2001, with a circulation of about 25,000 as of 2017. While it is noted for its persistence in pursuing social justice, it has been accused of speaking on behalf of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), one of Ghana's two major political parties. Incidentally, the founder of the paper (Freddy Blay) was elected Chairperson of the NPP in 2018. An audience research study by GeoPoll in 2018 established the paper's readership at approximately 726,000, with a daily circulation of around 60,000 copies nationwide (Fofie, 2016; UNESCO, 2023).

Ghana News Agency (GNA)

As the sole news agency in Ghana, the state-owned Ghana News Agency (GNA) was founded in 1957. Based in Accra, it has offices throughout the country. GNA provides a range of news services, including daily home news bulletins that feature stories from its headquarters, regional offices, and stringers. It also offers foreign news bulletins, export news (foreign news generated in Ghana), and a daily summary of major agency coverage. The agency's main subscribers are newspapers, radio and TV stations, and other foreign news agencies (UNESCO, 2023).

AllAfrica.com

AllAfrica.com is a leading African news aggregator and content distributor that curates and disseminates news stories from over 100 African news organizations. Established in 2000, the platform sources content from a wide range of local media outlets, while offering comprehensive coverage of political and socio-economic issues across the African continent (AllAfrica.com, 2025). In this study, AllAfrica.com served as a crucial digital archive for accessing archived articles from The Ghanaian Chronicle and The Ghanaian Times, two of Ghana's leading newspapers. Due to the challenges associated with physical archiving and the limited availability of digitized historical media content in Ghana, AllAfrica provided a dependable and readily accessible alternative. Its aggregation model ensures that content from smaller or less digitally advanced media houses—such as those in Ghana—remains available for academic and journalistic inquiry. This made it an essential tool for data collection in this study.

Data Sampling and Timelines

The study collected all articles that mentioned Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings during the periods from January 2015 to December 2016, and January 2019 to December 2020. These intervals encompassed the lead-up to the 2016 and 2020 general elections. Although she declared her intention to contest the 2012 elections on the ticket of the newly formed National Democratic Party (NDP), she was disqualified by the Electoral Commission of Ghana due to an administrative error during the filing of her nomination forms. As a result, she was not listed on the official ballot, and her absence from the race limited the volume and relevance of media coverage concerning her candidacy during that period. Given the study's focus on media portrayals of her as an active presidential candidate, articles from the 2012 election year were excluded from this study on the basis that Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings did not officially participate in the presidential race. Only articles from election years in which she successfully qualified and appeared on the ballot, namely, 2016 and 2020, were considered to ensure analytical consistency and alignment with the study's objectives.

Ultimately, a total of 263 articles were selected for sampling.

Table 1
Number of articles collected per year and media outlet

Media Outlet	Articles per Year	
	2016	2020
Daily Graphic	31	20
Daily Guide	56	21
Ghana News Agency (GNA)	55	30
AllAfrica.com	30	20
Total	172	91

Data Analysis

I employed Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019), to examine the media representations of Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings, Ghana. Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is a content analysis method rooted in qualitative inquiry, systematic identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes), as well as interpreting patterns of meaning within a dataset. RTA emphasizes the researcher's active role in the knowledge production process, allowing for theoretical engagement and reflexivity throughout the analytical journey (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Byrne, 2022).

The analysis process followed Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) six-phase framework for reflexive thematic analysis. While maintaining the framework, I imported the articles into MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software that enables systematic organization, coding, and retrieval of data. The software is suitable for handling, organizing, and interpreting large volumes of text-based data, such as newspaper articles, through a systematic coding and categorization of media content, while still preserving the flexibility to interpret language, tone, and context. The analysis process featured all six phases of reflexive thematic analysis.

The first phase involved deep familiarization with the data, during which the articles were read multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and identify early impressions and potential patterns. This phase established a strong foundation for the coding process, leading to the creation of the deductive codes. The second phase consisted of generating initial codes through both deductive and inductive coding. Deductive codes (shown in Table 2) were informed by the study's guiding theoretical framework, as well as reflections from related studies on gendered media frames and patriarchal notions about the Ghanaian media landscape.

Inductive insights emerged organically through detailed interactions with the texts. For instance, the topics discussed during this period proved relevant during the coding process, facilitating an understanding of which media subjects were most closely associated with Nana Konadu (e.g., her husband's death versus Voter Registration Issues). This inductive and deductive approach ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the study's theoretical framework while still allowing room for data-driven discovery.

The third phase involved searching for themes by collating related codes into broader, interpretive thematic categories by identifying patterns of meaning that recurred across different texts and media portrayals. These initial themes were then subject to critical evaluation and refinement in the fourth phase, where each theme was reviewed for internal coherence and checked against the coded extracts and the dataset to ensure consistency and relevance to the research questions.

The final phases involved organizing, naming, and clearly defining the themes. Each theme was carefully defined to capture its specific focus and significance to the research aims and findings. Initial descriptive labels were also modified to reflect the broader thematic areas (supported with data extracts) and how they addressed the study's objectives and research questions.

Theoretical Framework and Thematic Analysis

The research questions were used to organize the thematic analysis, with each question anchored in a specific theoretical perspective as follows:

RQ 1 How did the news media/journalists in Ghana cover Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings during the 2016 and 2020 elections in Ghana? What descriptions and media frames were used for Nana Konadu during the 2016 and 2020 electioneering activities?

Research Question 1 focused on how the Ghanaian media framed Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings. This analysis drew on framing theory and framing analysis (D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers, J. A. (2009)., 2016; Entman, 1993) and the concept of gendered media frames commonly used to analyze representations of women in politics (Acheampong et al., 2024; Akapule, 2020; Schooler & Aubrey, 2024). Themes identified under this question included *Exceptional Woman Frame*, *Disruptive/Controversial Frame*, *Incompetence*, *Exclusion and Silencing*, *Emotional Woman Trope*, *Nurture/Mother Frame*, and *Relational Identity*—all of which reflect existing gendered frames identified in existing literature as well as nuanced frames encountered in the familiarization phase.

RQ 2: What feminist themes are evident in these media story frames?

Research Question 2 examined the presence of feminist themes in media narratives, guided by feminist thought and feminist standpoint theory. (Harding, 1987; Intemann, 2020b; Jaggar, 2015) The analysis identified themes of *Political Agency*, *Activism/Advocacy*, and *Challenging Dominant Structures*. These themes captured representations of Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings as an agent of political change and as a challenger of patriarchal norms.

RQ 3 How do the identified themes reflect the dominant ideology(ideologies) underlying Ghana's media/journalism practices?

Research Question 3 investigated the reinforcement of dominant ideology, particularly in relation to gender. Drawing on scholarship that characterizes Ghanaian society and its media institutions as patriarchal, male-dominated, and elitist, (Agyemang Asante, 2020; Akita, 2010; Mohammed, 2023a) this analysis focused on themes of *Male Superiority*, *Gender Roles*, and *Male Dominance*.

These codes illuminated how media narratives often reproduce and legitimize existing gender hierarchies, marginalizing women's political participation.

A comprehensive codebook was generated to illustrate the analysis process (Table 2).

Table 2: Codebook

Theme	Code	Definition	Example from Findings
RQ1: Media Framing	Exceptional Woman Frame	Portrays her as an anomaly in male-dominated politics, emphasizing achievements as rare or extraordinary for a woman.	"Explicitly referred to as a 'woman of steel,' an inspirational leader with a 'strong attitude and charisma,' who 'distinguished herself as morally upright, diligent and visionary leader.'"
	Disruptive/Controversial Frame	Frames her as problematic or divisive, especially when deviating from gender/political norms.	"Statements suggesting she was 'in cahoots with the fast-sinking NPP...' to 'create an escape route for NPP.'"
	Incompetence	Suggests she lacks the skills or judgment for political leadership; may include legal or procedural shortcomings.	"Her nomination forms... did not meet the requirements..." and a court ruling "described the suit as incompetent" due to a "wrong procedure."
	Exclusion & Silencing	Her political presence or voice is minimized, ignored, or suppressed.	Example implied: Emphasis on relational identity over political issues or policies.
	Emotional Woman Trope	Suggests her behavior is driven by sentiment rather than rational thinking, undermining authority.	Implicit: The framing of "tough-talking" may imply emotional defiance; not directly cited in negative form.
	Nurture/Mother Frame	Emphasizes her caregiver role; can limit political identity to traditional gender roles.	"Positioning her as someone who would 'empathise and sympathise with the plight of the average citizen'..."
	Relational Identity	Defines her through relationship to male figures, especially her husband, diminishing her autonomous political identity.	"Framed highly on relational identity as spouse, wife and former First Lady..."
RQ2: Feminist Themes	Political Agency	Presents her as a self-determined political actor with her own goals and capacity.	She was characterized as a leader... who possessed the zeal and capability to lead Ghanaians."
	Activism/Advocacy	Highlights her advocacy for causes, groups, or justice — beyond political ambition.	Her founding of the 31st December Women's Movement... empowering women and freeing them from being hewers of wood and drawers of water..."
	Challenging Dominant Structures	Shows her actively resisting or questioning patriarchal or institutional norms.	"Her actions, such as 'suing the electoral commission' and 'calling for a new voters register,' explicitly highlighted her challenging of governmental bodies and electoral processes."
RQ3: Dominant Ideology	Male Superiority	Suggests men are inherently more suited for leadership — directly or indirectly.	"Even a 'Woman of Steel' is notable because she exceeds expectations, suggesting men define competence."
	Gender Roles	Reinforces stereotypical expectations for gendered behavior or roles.	"Her 'tough-talking' could imply... deviating from expected feminine political demeanor..."
	Male Dominance	Normalizes male power and visibility while sidelining women in political/public spheres.	"The consistent foregrounding of her 'relational identity'... implies her legitimacy is still heavily tied to a male figure..."

Reflexivity and Positionality

In July 2013, I got my first job as a journalist in Ghana. It was the ideal opportunity to do some social good—to tell the stories of the marginalized, and to speak up about the socio-political challenges confronting women and children. But I soon learned that politics was the preserve of men, both on stage and in the newsroom. I came to this conclusion after incessantly hearing the phrase “politics is not for women” from my editors and fellow journalists. Unsurprisingly, my male colleagues were considered “tough” enough to report on politics, while the women were routinely assigned “soft stories.”

Similar comments were made during the coverage of female subjects in the news particularly women in politics. I recall the editorial meetings and conversations concerning Nana Konadu’s decision to contest the presidential primaries and her subsequent presidential candidacy. It became clear to me that journalism in Ghana suffered from long-standing patriarchal systems that privileged dominant groups over the marginalized, particularly women, children, religious minorities, and persons with disabilities.

While many groups face systemic marginalization, I begin with women. As a woman and a former Ghanaian journalist, I hold two overlapping perspectives on women in Ghana’s media: first, the institutionalized marginalization of women as media practitioners, and second, the media’s portrayals of women as news subjects, particularly in political reporting. This study examines the latter by focusing on how Ghana’s first female presidential candidate, Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings, was framed in news reports during the 2016 and 2020 elections.

Nana Konadu has always stood out to me—not only for her pioneering candidacy but also for the complexities and contradictions with which she has been portrayed. In her story, I see reflections of my own experience navigating a media environment that repeatedly diminishes women’s roles in shaping public discourse. These connections motivated me to approach this study not just as an academic exercise but as a means of critical reflection and feminist advocacy. I see it as an opportunity to challenge the dominant narratives that shape public perceptions of women in power and to advocate for more equitable and conscious journalism in Ghana, in line with Feminist Thought.

Aligned with feminist thought and FST, I selected Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as the methodological approach for analyzing the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). RTA is particularly appropriate for this study because it acknowledges my subjectivity and interpretive role in the analytic process. Rather than striving for objectivity, RTA emphasizes reflexivity and transparency, allowing me to engage honestly and critically with the data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents key findings from the thematic analysis of selected Ghanaian news media articles and their coverage of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings during the 2016 and 2020 elections. This section presents the findings related to the research questions. Direct quotes from news texts are integrated throughout to illustrate the findings and support their interpretations.

RQ1-Media Frames and Descriptions

In response to the research question “What descriptions and media frames were used for Nana Konadu during the 2016 and 2020 electioneering activities?” the study found that Ghanaian news media coverage consistently portrayed a dominant framing of Nana Konadu primarily based on her relational identity. Other frames identified and discussed below are the Exceptional Woman Frame, the Disruptive/Controversial Frame, the Incompetence Frame, Exclusion & Silencing, the Emotional Woman Trope, and the Nurturer/Mother Frame.

Relational Identity – Wife, Spouse, and former First Lady

News media descriptions and frames of Nana Konadu often prominently focused on her roles as “spouse” and “wife,” resulting in the heavy use of the “former First Lady” frame. While these are indeed facets of her identity, this framing often overshadowed her distinct political identity as a party flagbearer or presidential candidate in many instances. Even in articles where

she was actively serving as a party flagbearer or political candidate, such as on a campaign trail, her relational ties were frequently highlighted first, taking precedence over her current political office or aspirations, which occasionally appeared as secondary identifiers, as in this article by the GNA.

Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, a former First Lady of the Republic of Ghana, has said it was only through the empowerment of women that Ghana can witness significant development... Nana Konadu said this during an interaction session with the Western Regional Queen Mothers Association in Takoradi...Nana Konadu, also the founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP), stated that the party was focused on transforming the country's future through technical and vocational education (GNA, 2016c).

This article introduces Nana Konadu primarily as a “former First Lady,” downplaying her current role as founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and making her political leadership and development agenda appear secondary to her marital identity, although she is speaking in her capacity as the founder and political leader of the National Democratic Party (NDP). This frame was prominent in both state-owned and private media outlets, particularly the GNA and the Daily Guide.

Former first lady Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings has sworn never to return to her husband's party, the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). It follows rumors that she's negotiating to be the running mate to President John Mahama in the 2016 general elections. Konadu left the NDC to form her own political grouping, the National Democratic Party (NDP), although she is the wife of former President Jerry John Rawlings, who is credited as the founder of the governing party. (Takyi-Boadu, 2015)

Overall, “the former first lady” was mentioned in most articles, while “wife” appeared in more articles than the “spouse” frame. The ‘wife’ frame mostly appeared in stories related to her husband, family roles, and governmental duties, where they were performing as a couple. Following the former first lady’s and wife’s frames was the occasional use of her identity as

“President of the 31st of December Women’s Movement” in governmental and advocacy roles, which tended to highlight her activism. She was also referred to as a widow, particularly in the stories concerning her husband’s demise.

Most of the media outlets, including the state-owned Ghana News Agency, perpetuated the relational identity frame through their heavy and repeated usage of the “former first lady” and “wife” labels. However, the private media particularly the Daily Guide recorded the most incidents, while the state-owned Daily Graphic had no significant incidents. The state-owned Daily Graphic used her consistently referred to her as founder, presidential candidate, or presidential aspirant of the National Democratic Party (NDP) in articles focused on her presidential candidacy, and only as the former first lady, widow, and wife in stories related to the death of her husband and former president Jerry John Rawlings, mainly in 2020.

Overall, the consistent prioritization of her relational identity, particularly as “former first lady and wife,” suggests a tendency to define her mainly through her connection with her male spouse, rather than acknowledging and emphasizing her political agency and achievements.

Exceptional Woman Frame

Findings under this theme reveal that Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings was often framed as an “Exceptional Woman” for remarkably succeeding in a male-dominated space. She is thus portrayed as a unique and formidable figure in Ghanaian politics, distinguished by a range of admirable qualities and actions, such as her pioneering role in women’s empowerment and women’s movement through her founding of the “31st December Women’s Movement.”

The organization was consistently recognized for mobilizing and empowering women, particularly those in vulnerable situations, to engage in the democratic process. Her leadership of the

movement was credited with giving women a voice and freeing them from traditional domestic roles, enabling their participation in politics. This empowerment and leadership style was often described as “strong and charismatic”, “sacrificial and serviceable,” making her an inspiring figure with a determination to tackle national challenges.

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings has been on a mission since 1982 to empower a generation, one woman at a time. Today, she is the first female presidential candidate in Ghana on the ticket of the National Democratic Party (NDP). Her candidature has undoubtedly inspired other women and paved the way for women in politics to run for the highest office in Ghana. (Political Desk, 2016)

The use of phrases like “to empower a generation, one woman at a time” and “undoubtedly inspired other women” portrays Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings as a symbol of female empowerment and role model, emphasizing her influence beyond political office. It also depicts her as a transformative figure whose actions create ripple effects on women’s aspirations and social progress. Another highly referenced personal trait under this theme was her “moral integrity.”

“Mr. Asamoah said Mrs. Rawlings had distinguished and demonstrated herself to be a morally upright, diligent, visionary leader with an admiring sense of duty to the country. (Ampomah, 2020b)

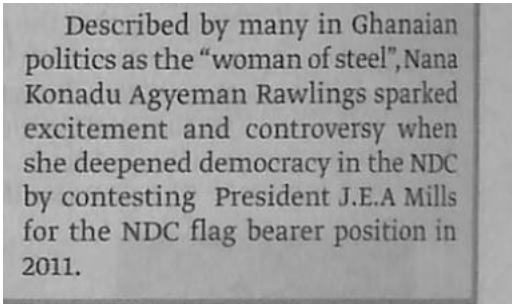
These positive qualities painted a picture of a leader with exceptional character, possessing both intelligence and courage to thrive in a male-dominated space, as well as compassion, a love for the vulnerable, and the capacity to make a real difference. However, descriptions such as “tough-talking ex-first lady” and “woman of steel” by the Daily Graphic (Asmah, 2016) hold both negative and positive connotations.

The news media analyzed in this study describes Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings as the "woman of steel," creating a strong image of her as a resilient, bold, and unyielding figure in Ghana’s

political scene. This label suggests strength, determination, and endurance qualities often associated with male leaders, challenging traditional gender roles that typically depict women as softer or more nurturing. Calling her the “woman of steel” recognizes her ability to withstand political challenges, assert her independence, and maintain a commanding public presence in a male-dominated field.

However, while the phrase seems empowering at first, it also has complex gendered implications. It presents her toughness as an exception for women, implying that such strength is unusual or noteworthy only because she is female. This subtly reinforces the idea that political toughness is inherently masculine, and that women need to have “steel-like” qualities to be taken seriously. Additionally, the term can be a double-edged sword, a double-bind of sorts that is used to praise her as inspiring and criticize her as too aggressive, uncompromising, or difficult, echoing stereotypes that often undermine powerful women.

As such, while the “woman of steel” label is a symbolic acknowledgment of Nana Konadu’s political resilience, it also reflects the media’s tendency to gender-strengthen and define women’s leadership through exceptionalism rather than normalcy. It highlights both her trailblazing role and the ongoing barriers female politicians face in being seen as legitimate political figures.



Described by many in Ghanaian politics as the “woman of steel”, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings sparked excitement and controversy when she deepened democracy in the NDC by contesting President J.E.A Mills for the NDC flag bearer position in 2011.

Compared to the relational identity frame, the exceptional woman frame had a lower incidence rate, with the Daily Graphic having the highest and most detailed news stories that reflected this theme. News articles by the Daily Graphic seemed to have a positive tone, often highlighting Nana Konadu's achievements, particularly in women's empowerment and advocacy.

Disruptive/Controversial Frame

The third most dominant frame identified in the data is the "Disruptive/Controversial Frame." This portrayal depicted her not only as a political competitor but also as an ongoing source of political provocation, controversy, and allegations. Regarding political provocation, news articles present her as intentionally creating discord, implying her actions were calculated maneuvers to destabilize the political arena. For instance, she is said to be "in cahoots with the fast-sinking NPP" in an attempt to attack the NDC.

"It is common knowledge that she is in cahoots with the fast-sinking NPP, and because the Party is under serious pressure, she has decided to attack the NDC, so we go into a dog fight with her to create an escape route for NPP," the statement noted.(AllAfrica, 2015c)

The news articles also consistently linked her to various past and present contentious issues. These included allegations of improper privilege (e.g., the use of a "police escort"), accusations of financial impropriety (e.g., a company with "95 percent ownership by SSNIT" managed by a relative), and claims of an "unbridled quest for power," even to succeed her husband. Notably, the incidence of contention and controversy was prominent among opinion and feature articles (quoted below) by the private media outlets, some of which utilized highly negative and personalized language in directly associating her with severe historical criticisms and family controversies.

Naturally, I felt sick to my stomach...For truth be told: I had never ever for the life of me

envisaged Mrs. Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings as anything more than the criminally collusive wife or domestic partner of Chairman Jerry John Rawlings, the pathologically impenitent Butcher of Sokoke. (Okoampa-Ahoofe, 2016)

In her contemporary political role, she was described as actively challenging governmental bodies and the electoral process. News articles highlighted her criticism of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) as well as the Electoral Commission of Ghana, through her calls for Ghanaians to “reject the Mahama-led government” and her “calls for a new voters register,” framing her as a systemic disruptor. In addition, coverage of internal party conflicts, such as her breakaway from the NDC and her high criticism of the NDC government, further emphasized her contentious role in national politics. Collectively, these narratives framed Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings as an inherently disruptive and controversial figure, deeply entangled with conflict, contentious issues, and a challenging political legacy.

Incompetence Frame

The Incompetence Frame highlighted instances of procedural failures, perceived administrative oversights, and a broader lack of capability in navigating crucial electoral and legal requirements, leading to her disqualification by the Electoral Commission and High Courts. This was predominant during the 2016 election year, when she was initially disqualified by the Electoral Commission (EC). The EC disqualified 13 out of 17 presidential candidates, including Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, citing incorrect filing procedures and failure to meet some stipulated requirements for their nomination documents. However, after legal challenges, the Supreme Court ordered the EC to allow disqualified candidates, including Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, to

correct errors on their nomination forms. As a result, she was eventually cleared to contest the election, where she ran as the first female Presidential Candidate in Ghana.

The Commission is unable to accept Mrs. Rawlings' nomination because the number of subscribers to her forms did not meet the requirements of Regulation 7 (2) (b) of CI 94. One subscriber on page 89 of her nomination forms is not a validly registered voter and illegally registered twice and so is on the Exclusion list of multiple voters.

...

She was disqualified with 12 other presidential nominees because they failed to meet some requirements of the electoral laws ahead of the December polls. (GNA, 2016b)

While she was often reported to have been disqualified alongside 12 other presidential nominees, her decision to contest the disqualification drew more press coverage related to disqualification and court issues.

42 News Visit www.graphic.com.gh Daily Graphic, Friday, October 28, 2016



• Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings leaving the court with his lawyer Ace Ankomah

Nana Konadu drags EC to court again

• After losing earlier suit

By Emmanuel Abo Hawkson, ACCRA

THE Flag bearer of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, has again dragged the Electoral Commission (EC) to court barely four hours after her first suit challenging her disqualification from the December polls was struck out by the Accra High Court.

The court, presided over by Mr Justice George K. Koomson, had earlier yesterday described Nana Konadu's suit as "incompetent" and dismissed it on procedural grounds.

It held that it was wrong for the presidential aspirant to seek judicial review of the EC's decision to disqualify her and also an enforcement of her fundamental human rights in one writ.

But the former First Lady filed a fresh application at the Human Rights Division of the Accra High Court seeking an enforcement of her fundamental

human rights.

The writ, which will be moved by her legal team on November 1, 2016, has the NDP, the former First Lady and her running mate, Mr Kodjo Mensah Sosuh as applicants with the EC and the Attorney-General as the respondents.

Earlier setback

The dismissal of Nana Konadu's first legal action followed certain preliminary objections raised by the EC which prayed the court to throw out the suit because it was not in tandem with the rules of court.

Apart from dismissing the application, the court further ordered Nana Konadu to pay a fine of G100,000 to the EC.

According to the court, the presidential aspirant and her political party failed to follow the laid-down rules of practice and procedure in initiating the action.

In the ruling which upheld the objection on the procedure used by the NDP, the court was of the view that the procedure and rules governing the

application for judicial review and an enforcement of fundamental human rights were different.

"It is very clear that from the rules that the procedure for the two are not the same and, therefore, putting the two actions together will pose inconvenience, delay and the non-compliance of some of the rules."

"The application for judicial review and the enforcement of fundamental human rights is hereby struck out as incompetent," the presiding judge held.

The court, however, held that Nana Konadu could initiate a fresh suit if she wanted to do so.

"The door is still open so you can do the right thing," the presiding judge said.

Reliefs

In her new writ, Nana Konadu is seeking a declaration that the decision of the EC to close the nomination of presidential candidates on September 30, 2016 and "not October 30, 2016 when deposits of nomination/filing fees were received was a breach of her rights under Article 23 of the 1992 Constitution."

She also wants a declaration from the court that pursuant to regulation 9 of CI 94, the EC should have informed and afforded her the opportunity to "make the necessary amendments or alterations" when it determined that "the particulars of a person subscribing to her nomination forms were not required by law."

The presidential aspirant, therefore, wants an order from the court to "compel the EC to accept her nomination forms and to include her name on the ballot for the 2016 presidential elections."

Numerous suits

The former First Lady's action against the EC is one of the various cases that the electoral body is battling after it disqualified 12 presidential aspirants in the December polls.

Other suits challenging the EC's decision to disqualify some of the aspirants because of its claim that they breached electoral laws include those of Dr Papa Kweku Nduom of the Progressive People's Party and Mr Hassan Ayariga of the All People's Congress.

Quick Read

Adehyeman Savings & Loans

10th ANNIVERSARY
FINANCING A BETTER FUTURE

Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, the flag bearer of the National Democratic Party (NDP), has filed a new suit at the Accra High Court challenging the EC's decision to disqualify her from the upcoming election.

EC will not rescind decision on disqualification of Nana Konadu

• From contesting Dec 2016 poll

By Mabel Aku Baneseh, ACCRA

THE Electoral Commission (EC) will not rescind its decision on the disqualification of the presidential candidate of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, from contesting the December 7, 2016 poll.

A letter written on its behalf by its lawyer, Mr Thaddeus Sory, said the EC followed due process prescribed by law. It also noted that it was not in doubt of the NDP's resolve to pursue the matter to its logical conclusion in response to NDP's threat to resort to the court to have its issues addressed.

Responding to an October 11, 2016 letter from lawyers of the NDP, its flag bearer and running mate, the lawyer for the EC, Mr Thaddeus Sory, said the EC "finds no legal basis to rescind its decision, especially that the statutory provisions upon which your letter is grounded does not allow our client such discretion."

"We do not doubt your clients' resolve to pursue their cause to the ends afforded them by law but we trust your clients will as dutiful citizens of the Republic of Ghana, support our client's constitutional mandate and effort to deliver free, fair and credible elections."

"The smooth sailing of the process of our democratic evolution should be our mutual concern as well as primary and collective responsibility," the EC's letter, dated October 13, 2016 noted.

Disqualification

The EC, on Monday, October 10, 2016, disqualified 12 presidential aspirants from contesting the December 7, 2016 election. Mrs Rawlings was disqualified alongside 12 others for various reasons ranging from forgery, impersonation and perjury.

A number of the subscribers of the presidential aspirants did not meet the requirements as stipulated in the Constitutional Instrument (C.I) 94 meant for the conduct of the election.

Some of the subscribers also sponsored more than one candidate with the same names and voter registration details.

According to the EC, they only changed their signatures.

Addressing a press conference last Monday in Accra, Mrs Osei indicated that issues of forgery, perjury, impersonation and deceit of a public officer would be referred to the Ghana Police Service and the Attorney General for investigations and prosecution.

The disqualified aspirants are Dr Papa Kwesi Nduom of PPP, Mr Hassan Ayariga of APC, Dr Edward Nasigri Mahama of PNC and Mr Kofi Apaloo of IPP.

Other disqualified aspirants are Mr T.N. Ward Brew of DPP, Mr Henry Lartey of GCPP, Richard Tetteh of USDP, Akua Donkor of GFP, Nana Agyenim Boateng of UFP and Nana Konadu Agyemang-



• Mrs Charlotte Osei — EC boss



• Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings — NDP

Rawlings of NDP.

The others are Kwabena Agyei of RPD and Kwame Asiedu Walker, an independent candidate.

Only four of presidential aspirants were cleared by the EC to contest Election 2016.

Letter from NDP

But the lawyer for the NDP, its presidential candidate and running mate, Mr Ace Anan Ankamah, wrote to the EC demanding that his clients be reinstated on the grounds that the EC had no power to disqualify Mrs Rawlings.

Mr Ankamah gave the EC 24 hours to meet the demands made or face legal action.

The letter, which was addressed to the Chairman of the EC, Mrs Charlotte Osei, emphatically stated that "please note that if these demands are not met forthwith and in any event within 24 hours of this letter, we have our client's further instructions to institute legal proceedings against you to compel you to meet the aforesaid demands without further notice or recourse to you."

EC's response

The lawyer for the EC said the NDP, upon the presentation of its nomination forms, was given the opportunity prescribed by regulation 9 (2) of C.I. 94 to make the necessary amendments and alterations to correct errors which the returning officer was capable of detecting without further checks, adding "your clients accordingly effected the appropriate amendments or alterations."

One of the issues raised by the NDP was that a person caught for double registration ought to have been convicted before that person could be disqualified but the EC holds a different view and said: "We take the view that the criminal sanctions that a person may suffer as a result of committing an electoral offence is only one of the consequences for violating the rules on registration as a voter. This consequence is of a condition sine qua non for disqualification."

It said the barring of such persons by the EC was totally and completely exclusive of the criminal process, adding that "this argument is the basis

upon which our client proceeds to clean the register periodically without any conviction of such persons".

According to the EC, it would be failing in its constitutional duties to deliver a free, fair and credible election, if

it acceded to the arguments of the NDP

The EC lawyer further argued that the provisions for electoral offences were very clear and devoid of any ambiguity, noting that the offence arose during the registration and not after registration.

He said the offence stated under section 27 (b) of PNDC 287 "is committed where in the process of applying to register in a divisional register, the same person applies to register in another divisional register without withdrawing his earlier application."

"Such a situation is completely different from a situation where the person has already registered his name in two different registers and has been

identified with two numbers such as with the case of Salifu Abdulai," Mr Sory said.

Counsel informed the NDP that "having regard to the facts applicable to the matter in respect of which your client was disqualified, we are in no doubt that section 27 of PNDC 287 provides no saving grace for your client."

Mr Sory said the EC disagreed with the NDP's argument that a person convicted of an offence under section 27 of PNDC 284 is still to enjoy the rights of a validly registered voter until he has finished serving his term of imprisonment.

Exclusion list

The NDP's candidate was rejected by the EC because Abdulai, one of the people who signed the nomination forms, was on the EC's exclusion list for double registration.

Mr Sory, therefore, argued on behalf of the EC that it was absurd for the NDP's candidate to insist on being reinstated when she was a strong advocate for a new register to ensure a credible electoral register free of minors, foreigners and multiple registrations.

"That your client now seeks to have multiple registrants included on the register with the right to vote more than once and upend the credibility of the voters register and the integrity of the elections, simply to advance her personal goals and ambitions; we find unacceptable," counsel argued.

The EC's lawyer argued that "it will be clearly subversive of the integrity of the electoral process to insist, as you now seem to be doing, that although our client's biometric verification cleared out all offending registration such persons should be allowed to enjoy the full rights of validly registered voters only because they have not been convicted and their names cannot be found in the record prescribed by section 43 of PNDC 284."

Interestingly, her legal challenges against the disqualification added to the incidence of the incompetence frame following a court ruling that explicitly described her political party's suit as "incompetent," on procedural grounds. This procedural misstep resulted in the court fining her GHC10,000, publicly penalizing her for perceived legal incompetence.

An Accra High Court on Thursday struck out a case against the Electoral Commission (EC) filed by the National Democratic Party over the disqualification of the party's flag bearer Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings. The court presided over by Justice George K. Koomson, in delivering its ruling, said the decision was due to a wrong procedure used by the plaintiff (NDP) and described the suit as incompetent. It said the applicants were wrong to include an application for judicial review and the enforcement of fundamental human rights in one writ, saying the two issues were distinct and the rules of court did not allow an applicant to apply for both reliefs in a single application. The court later fined the applicants GHC10, 000. (GNA, 2016d)

Beyond procedural failures, the news articles highlighted instances of disorientation and disorganization, describing moments where she "lost her voice in the middle of her remarks".

"Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, who lost her voice in the middle of her remarks, gave the assurance that her party would adhere to all the requirements of peace and unity until the final declaration of the results." (GNA, 2016e)

Another article described a moment when she "struggled" to recall the name of her former party.

...She said although she no more believed in the NDC, there was nothing wrong with her daughter joining it. "If she is standing for the N..N... N what is it called now... ?" she quizzed struggling to remember the name of her former party. "I've erased it [NDC] from my memory", she confessed. (AllAfrica, 2015b)

It can be argued that the above statement was meant to emphasize her emotional detachment from the NDC. Her hesitation in recalling the party's name was a deliberate dismissal, underscoring how little the party now meant to her. By saying she had erased it from memory, she asserted her complete dissociation. However, the moment has been interpreted as a moment of confusion or

forgetfulness, connoting a stutter or mental lapse when it could have been a symbolic gesture of rejection, not a sign of weakness.

These media narratives highlighted a consistent pattern of failing to meet crucial electoral and legal requirements, alongside instances of perceived disorientation, portraying Nana Konadu and her party officials as lacking administrative, procedural, and even communicative competencies essential for effective political leadership.

Emotional Woman Trope

The news articles' (mainly from Daily Guide and AllAfrica) portrayals of Nana Konadu occasionally leaned into the "Emotional Woman Trope," implying her political actions are driven by sentiment rather than rationality. This is evident when her strong reactions are highlighted with descriptions such as "she fumed," indicating an emotional outburst. An article by the Daily Guide quotes a male source (Prof. Hawi) who described Nana Konadu as "a bitter person who would not budge" in response to reconciliation attempts.

Professor Kwamin Ahwoi has revealed that former First Lady...had an unbridled quest for power. He said she even wanted to succeed her husband...In his book 'Working with Rawlings' Prof. Ahwoi said ... "Madam had serious ambitions and was angling to take over from Jerry and so when Jerry made it clear...that his preferred successor was Professor Mills, Nana Konadu felt that the Professor (Mills) had stolen something that belonged to her" ... Prof. Ahwoi appeared to portray Mrs. Rawlings a 'bitter' person in the book and said she even rejected goodwill gestures from Prof. Mills. "President Mills on his part tried many times to reach out to Mrs. Rawlings, but she would not budge. He is even alleged to have offered her the position of Foreign Minister in his government, following the lead that President Obama had shown in dealing with Mrs. Hilary Clinton, but Nana Konadu is alleged to have refused the position," he claimed. (Daily Guide, 2020)

Her alleged refusal of the ministerial position, linked to her perceived bitterness, suggests that personal emotional grievances may be driving her political decisions. This interpretation reinforces gendered stereotypes about women in politics being overly emotional. Prof. Ahwoi's descriptions of her as having an "unbridled quest for power" further portray her political ambitions as deeply personal and emotionally charged, rather than strategic or ideologically motivated. Such framing casts Nana Konadu not as a rational political actor making decisions based on principle or policy, but as a figure driven by wounded pride and bitterness, which undermines her legitimacy and reduces her political choices to emotional reactions. On the other hand, some emotional descriptions had a positive tone that seemed to work in her favor. These included descriptions of empathy, humility, and compassion.

Mr Peter Asamoah, Running Mate for the National Democratic Party says the leader of the party has a deep sense of empathy towards the plight of others. We need someone who would empathise and sympathise with the plight of the average citizen... I believe Dr. Mrs Agyemang Rawlings is the best choice for Ghanaians.(Ampomah, 2020b)

...

Prominent Asanti leaders have described Ghana's opposition National Democratic Party (NDP) presidential candidate, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, as a beacon of hope and a great source of inspiration. "What is at stake in Ghana is to vote for the right candidate who will rekindle hope for the progress and development of our country. The standard bearer of the National Democratic Party (NDP), Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, is a very intelligent woman, an achiever, a woman of action, and above all, a humble, kind, God-fearing and compassionate woman.(AllAfrica, 2016)

While some descriptions praise her empathy, compassion, and confidence, instances of anger, bitterness, and feeling personally wronged align more strongly with the "Emotional Woman Trope," as they frame her political motivations as emotionally charged.

Exclusion and Silencing

Findings on this description aligned with news stories on the incompetence frame as they demonstrated how institutional barriers and procedural demands by the Electoral Commission (EC) and judicial system disproportionately impact and potentially exclude smaller political parties and their candidates, including Nana Konadu. They also demonstrated Nana Konadu's resistance, activism, and challenging of dominant structures (discussed in the later paragraphs).

News stories about the EC's disqualification procedures, their decision to abolish parties without offices in two-thirds of the 216 districts, and the drastic increase in filing fees (GHc50,000 for presidential aspirants) are presented as direct threats to multiparty democracy. Small parties explicitly criticized these moves as “unrealistic” and a design to “narrow down the field for the two main parties,” suggesting a deliberate attempt to sideline competition and reinforce only the dominant political voices. A joint press statement by three of the smaller parties, including Nana Konadu's NDP illustrates how such procedural challenges denied them their rights as presidential candidates.

The three of us have had a terrible experience of spending close to six weeks in court litigating against the unnecessary attempted disqualification of our candidature as part of a deliberate scheme to frustrate our efforts in this election. This has brought us untold hardships financially, emotionally and taken energy and precious time from our campaigns. The Electoral Commission (EC) decided to utilize the regulations guiding the conduct of the 2016 elections as an oppressive tool to punish and deny us equal opportunity to campaign during the critical times of the campaign season. If a party in a competition loses six weeks of campaign time whilst spending on legal fees that were not budgeted for but occasioned by a frivolous scheme designed to frustrate and deny us fair opportunity to participate in the elections... (Daily Guide, 2016b)

This article underscores a perceived intentional marginalization, where the system actively works to silence dissenting voices and exclude formidable contenders through administrative hurdles.

Nurture/Mother Frame

Another dominant frame found within the news articles show Nana Konadu as maternal, compassionate, nurturing, and as a caregiver. Findings under the frame indicated that news stories described Nana Konadu with qualities and roles typically associated with maternal and caregiving figures. This frame emerged through direct address and descriptions of her character, as well as her advice. Her running mate explicitly referred to her as “our leader, and mother, Dr. Mrs. Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings,” immediately establishing a maternal association.

News reports also highlighted her public statements and advice on marriage, where she counseled younger individuals on readiness, honesty, and commitment in relationships, positioning her as a wise and experienced elder figure offering guidance on domestic matters, akin to a societal mother. A political ally's sentiment underscored this: “If my mother is gone, then what am I waiting for in the NDC?” and his descriptions of her as the “former mother of the country” (Daily Guide 2016). This statement reflects how the ally viewed her presence in the party as personally and emotionally anchoring, suggesting that her departure represents not just a political shift but an emotional rupture. It also portrays her as a maternal symbol within a nurturing, familial role, aligning with traditional notions of femininity and motherhood.

Specific descriptions under the emotional woman frame, such as “a humble, kind, God-fearing and compassionate woman (insert under emotional trope),” emphasized her nurturing and empathetic attributes. These narratives collectively cast Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings in a role of care, wisdom, and compassionate guidance, extending a traditionally domestic image into the political sphere.

RQ2: Identified Feminist Themes

Three major themes were identified in answering the question, '*What feminist themes are evident in these media story frames?*' The analysis identified themes of *Political Agency, Activism/Advocacy, and Challenging Dominant Structures, aligning with feminist thought*. These themes captured representations of Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings as an agent of political change and as a challenger of patriarchal norms.

Advocacy and Activism

The News stories prominently featured Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings in an Activism and Advocacy role, highlighting her consistent efforts to champion specific causes, challenge injustices, and actively promote social and political change.

Her broader advocacy included promoting open governance, electoral reform, transparency, and participatory democracy through her calls for a new voter registration system and the election of MMDCEs (Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives) as a strategic means of increasing women's involvement in decision-making processes.

The founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP), who opened up to the DAILY GUIDE, noted that the bloating of the voter register went a long way to influence the outcome of the 2012 elections... "So it has to be looked at again...something has to be done to restore integrity and trust in the EC and the voter register..."

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, former first lady and founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP), while sharing her husband's position, added that Charlotte Osei, the EC chairperson, has no other choice but to succumb to the demand of Ghanaians for a replacement of the electoral roll. (Daily Guide, 2015)

Founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and former first lady of Ghana, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, has also chimed in that the voter's register in Ghana is bloated and must be cleaned. According to her "it would serve the interest of Ghana and Ghanaians if the voter's register is revisited and we all re-register and weed out ghost names, foreign names and all that, see the real potential of the Ghanaian voter and let

them vote for who they want." She continued, "I think it is in our interest as a nation to do that because to pretend that we don't know that it's bloated and all that... I think it's a farce.(AllAfrica, 2015a)

These actions demonstrate a direct, hands-on approach to advocating for what she perceived as electoral integrity. Another core component of her advocacy centered on women's empowerment and gender equality, for which she is heavily credited with Ghana's success in promoting women's empowerment and political participation.

Ghana has paid tribute to proponents whose contribution led to the adoption of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995...Nana Oye Lithur, Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, who paid the tribute on behalf of the country, explained that the 20th anniversary offers us the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of global leaders and personalities who broke the historic ground. The Gender Minister acknowledged in particular the contribution of former first lady of Ghana, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, for her pioneering role in Ghana. "Under the inspirational leadership of Nana Agyeman Rawlings, Ghana played a leading role in 1995 and we want to repeat that 20 years after...(GNA, 2015b)

Activism and advocacy still seem a vital part of her persona as she is quoted frequently for her empowerment, activism, and advocacy activities, statements, and initiatives.

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, the disqualified presidential candidate of the National Democratic Party (NDP), has indicated that she would not relent in her efforts to empower all women in Ghana The NDP flag bearer recalled how she, together with some other women, worked to empower women socially, economically and culturally in the days of the 31st December Women's Movement, adding that women were no longer solely depending on their husbands and some of them became breadwinners of their respective families. She noted that the quest for true empowerment is an ongoing process that is never finished (Daily Guide, 2016a)

Her activism received substantial and extensive coverage from the state-owned media, GNA and Daily Graphic, which dedicated half and full pages to her electioneering activities.

Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings: Empowering a nation

By Political Desk

Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings has been on a mission since 1982 to empower a generation, one woman at a time. Today, she is the first female presidential candidate of Ghana on the ticket of the National Democratic Party (NDP).

Her candidature has undoubtedly inspired other women and paved the way for women in politics to run for the highest office in Ghana.

She started with women

As the Founder and President of the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM), a grassroots non-governmental organisation (NGO), Nana Konadu is a firm believer that women hold the key to breaking the cycle of poverty. For nearly three decades, she has been at the forefront of women empowerment. As Ghana's First Lady (1981 - 2001), Nana Konadu criss-crossed the globe raising a new level of awareness on gender issues in Africa. Through her skilful ability to achieve concrete, measurable results and convey them on platforms globally, she gained international prominence as a leading activist for African women.

Mobilising more than two million women across Ghana—from small-scale, village level, economic projects to standing for parliamentary elections, the 31st DWM became one of Ghana's earliest and most successful examples of a progressive grassroots women's movement. Since its inception in 1982, Nana Konadu has been the first wife of an African Head of State to use an organisational platform to systematically fight gender inequality and empower millions of women across Ghana and beyond.

A lineage of doers and thinkers

Nana Konadu Agyeman (maiden name) was born in Cape Coast in Ghana's Central Region on November 17, 1948. She is a direct descendant of the Asante Royal family in Kumasi, the former centre of an empire that once controlled much of present-day Ghana. Both her mother and father hail from a long line of royal ancestry with a proud tradition of leadership.

Activist First Lady

Nana Konadu, while as First Lady, stirred a national debate over what role a Head of State's wife should play. In spite of much criticism, she insisted on developing a more dynamic life. She forged a new identity for herself by engaging in meaningful political activity. She became wife, mother, activist

and First Lady.

A committed and progressive Nana Konadu successfully formulated and influenced legislative policies against human rights abuses such as *trokosi*, child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) that have historically and traditionally subjugated women in Ghana. However, she didn't stop there. "We recognised that for women to be really empowered for development, we needed to make them economically active. So we developed small-scale business models such as cassava processing plants, as well as other self-sustaining businesses such as vegetable cultivation, batik making, pottery design and



Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings

Nana Konadu has been the first wife of an African Head of State to use an organisational platform to systematically fight gender inequality and empower millions of women across Ghana and beyond.

soap production. By securing local and international donor funds, we were able to offer women some seed money to establish businesses. Through these projects run by women in the communities, whole families in communities witnessed an increase in their disposable income," she noted.

Her mission to empower a nation

After more than 30 years of contributing to the development of urban and rural communities in Ghana, Nana Konadu knows first-hand the meaning of true grassroots democracy where the people of Ghana are empowered to decide their own developmental objectives. She is

on a mission to empower Ghanaians under her party's manifesto, "Bold Actions to put Ghana Right Again."

In her words, "I am committed to laying the foundations of a prosperous future for Ghana so that all Ghanaians can have the confidence in a country built on a system that rewards their hard work and their sacrifice. I believe in creating a Ghana where mothers and fathers have the opportunity to invest in the future of their children; where Ghanaian genius is rewarded and where meritocracy is paramount. I believe in a thriving economy that creates equal opportunity for every Ghanaian."

The headline "Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings: Empowering a Nation" frames Nana Konadu in a positively symbolic and inspirational light, emphasizing her role as a nation-builder and agent of empowerment. The use of the verb "*empowering*" is active and forward-looking, suggesting that she is not merely a political figure but someone who is mobilizing change and progress, likely in areas such as women's rights, education, or grassroots development. These narratives highlight her achievements and proactive engagement, extending beyond merely seeking political office.

Political Agency

News articles under this theme extensively highlighted Nana Konadu as a self-determining and influential actor who actively shapes political discourse and advocates for change on her terms. This frame emphasizes her independent will and capacity to influence political outcomes.

She expressed her motivation for entering politics which underscored this agency: My political journey is not born out of “crave” for personal recognition or gain but chartered by a compelling sense of service to humanity, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, National Democratic Party (NDP) Flagbearer, said on Saturday. (Ampomah, 2020a)

This quotation, as highlighted in the news article written by a female journalist, positions her as someone driven by principle rather than personal ambition. Her active engagement in policy and national development was also a key aspect of this frame as she continually articulated the NDP's interest in “giving people at the grassroots the opportunity to contribute towards policy making and national development,” emphasizing a bottom-up approach to democracy and the inclusion of marginalized groups.

Her authority in advising young people and leadership in tasking queen mothers to “champion... degrading issues and help bring back the old tradition of discipline and respect for mankind” further showcased her proactive involvement in societal reform.

On moral decadence and lack of respect and environment sanitation, she tasked the queen mothers to champion these ever-degrading issues and help bring back the old tradition of discipline and respect for mankind. She said, “As queen mothers, you are the directors of the various locality that you serve and so you must help in reshaping the future of our dear country. (GNA, 2016c)

The news articles also reported her challenges to established political systems and her assertion of independent political thought. Her statement, “I am not myopic in my politics at all. I believe that

my husband is not myopic that is why he is able to criticize his own and will criticize anybody else along with it,” demonstrated her independent critical stance, even in relation to her husband. Her consistent advocacy for a new voter's register and an electronic data infrastructure for e-voting, as well as her public comments on national and political affairs, further underscored her independent assessment and willingness to speak out.

Finally, her status as the “first female presidential candidate of Ghana on the ticket of the National Democratic Party (NDP)” was frequently celebrated as a groundbreaking act of agency, explicitly stating that “her candidature has undoubtedly inspired other women and paved the way for women in politics to run for the highest office in Ghana.” This highlights her as a trailblazer whose political pursuit actively opened doors for other women.

By stepping into a space traditionally reserved for men, Nana Konadu’s candidacy was positioned as a moment of transformation, signaling to Ghanaian society that women could aspire to and contest for the presidency. The celebratory tone also suggests that her political visibility created new imaginaries of leadership for Ghanaian women, expanding the scope of what is considered possible for future generations. Yet, while these framing honors her symbolic power, it is important to note that such narratives sometimes emphasize inspiration over institutional analysis, which can obscure the structural challenges she faced during her campaign. Nonetheless, her candidacy remains a landmark in Ghana's democratic history, redefining norms around gender and political leadership.

Challenging Dominant Structures

This theme was evident in the preceding paragraphs, as it cuts across RQ1 and RQ2, particularly in the Exceptional Woman Frame and the Activism/Advocacy theme. News reports highlighted this theme by demonstrating her active resistance to established norms, institutions, and power imbalance, thus emphasizing her confrontational stance against the status quo.

Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, a former First Lady of the Republic of Ghana, has said it was only through the empowerment of women that Ghana can witness significant development. She said, we neglect women as a nation at our own peril, let empower them, give them the necessary skills and trade and we will be surprised how this could translate into the nurturing of useful leaders and propel the growth of the country as a whole". (GNA, 2016c)

Her direct challenge to the Electoral Commission (EC) regarding her disqualification was a prominent manifestation of this feminist theme, as it positioned her as directly confronting a key state institution. Her solidarity with other small political parties in criticizing the EC's decisions and procedures also demonstrated her opposition to policies perceived to be undermining the rule of law and multiparty democracy.

Beyond electoral politics, she was portrayed as challenging broader governance structures and societal norms through her calls for "transparency, probity, and accountability in the country," and her admonition to "bring back the old tradition of discipline and respect" further positioned her as a critic of governmental corruption and social reforms. "Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, the Leader of the National Democratic Party (NDP), has called for transparency, probity and accountability in the country to ensure that the economy provides meaningful prospects for graduates (GNA 2016).

Crucially, her actions and statements directly confronted gendered power structures. She frequently emphasized women's rise to higher positions in various fields, advocating for increasing women's participation and representation in both the local and national government structures. Beyond Ghana, her calls for a re-examination of Beijing commitments and holding nations accountable for gender equality, while highlighting violence and discrimination faced by women and girls, challenged the slow pace of systemic change.

These narratives demonstrated her abilities and compelling sense of service in disrupting the incumbent, challenging dominant structures, and bringing about transformative governance.

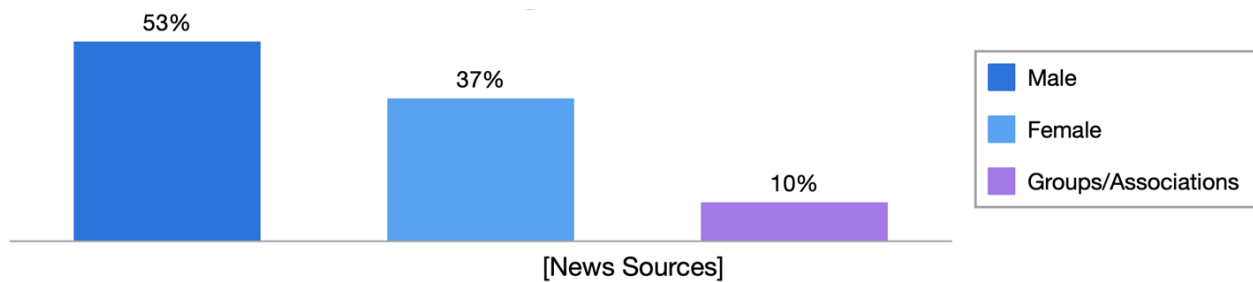
RQ 3: Dominant Ideology in Ghanaian Media

To identify the dominant ideology underlying Ghana's media and journalism practices, three main themes were explored in this section: Male Dominance, Gender Roles, and Male Superiority. These were identified by considering other vital aspects of the news articles, such as the gender of the authors and news sources.

Male Dominance in Ghanaian Media

The study's findings reveal a significant gender imbalance in how news segments referenced individuals in their portrayal of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings and in overall news reports. News articles and media outlets primarily feature male voices, accounting for a larger share of the segments. Female voices contribute a significant but smaller portion, while "Groups/Associations" make up the smallest segment. This indicates a notable gender imbalance and male dominance in the Ghanaian media and journalism (Figure 1)

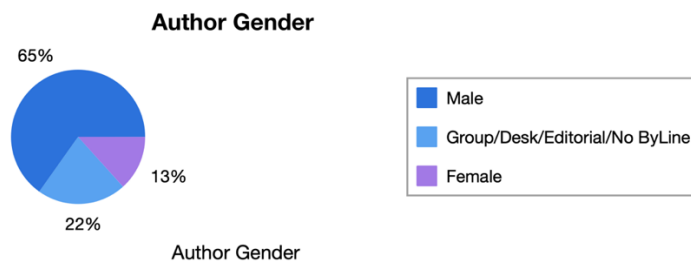
Figure : Media News Sources -which voices were often heard?



This finding reveals a clear pattern in Ghanaian media where male voices are overrepresented in news segments. The finding also suggests a dominant male framing in media discourse, even when reporting on a prominent female political figure.

Besides the sources, articles also had mostly male bylines, with most of the authors being male. Again, this confirms the male dominance in the Ghanaian media. This highlights a substantial gender gap and limited representation for women in journalism (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Author Gender



However, articles written by female authors tended to have a lower incidence of the relational identity and incompetence frames, even while they reported on and detailed court proceedings

regarding Nana Konadu's challenge to their disqualification. An article by Hafsa Obeng from the GNA reports a court proceeding as follows; "An Accra High Court on Tuesday adjourned the case in which Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings the Presidential Candidate of the National Democratic Party (NDP) is challenging her disqualification by the Electoral Commission (EC)" (GNA, 2016)

Instead, they presented the court proceedings in a way that aligned with feminist themes of activism, political agency, and challenging dominant structures. As a result, the articles maintain a positive tone and portray Nana Konadu in a favorable light. Both figures (on News Sources and Author Gender) confirm historic notions that male journalists overwhelmingly dominate the field of journalism. Female representation is minimal, suggesting potential challenges or barriers for women in the profession or a historical trend of male prominence and significant gender imbalance that could have implications for perspectives, reporting, and diversity within the Ghanaian media landscape.

Gender Roles

As with the Relational Identity frame, the study finds that there is a persistent reinforcement of traditional gender roles, particularly in how women in political spaces are framed. This is evident in the continual reference to women through their marital status and relational identities, as well as the social expectation of their behavior. This pattern plays a critical role in reinforcing patriarchal norms and diminishing women's independent political agency.

As previously illustrated, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, despite being the founder of the National Democratic Party and a presidential candidate in her own right, is consistently framed in

relation to her husband. Headlines and stories routinely refer to her as the wife,” “former First Lady,” or “spouse of the former president,” overshadowing her political leadership.

Her identity is primarily portrayed in terms of her familial role rather than her status as a party founder and national political figure. This framing extends beyond Nana Konadu to other high-profile women mentioned in the news articles. For instance, another aspiring female presidential candidate in the 2016 elections, Madam Akua Donkor, of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), was discussed in relation to her husband, despite the presence of leading party officials.

The Founder and presidential nominee of the Ghana Freedom Party (GFP), Madam Akua Donkor on Thursday, filed her nomination papers at the Electoral Commission (EC) to contest the December 7 election. Madam Akua Donkor was accompanied by her husband, Mr. Agyei Frimpong, and other leading members of the GFP. Addressing the media, Mr. Frimpong appealed to Ghanaians to give his wife a chance to govern the affairs of the nation.(GNA, 2016a)

Similarly, media coverage of official state functions lists women primarily by their role as wives of male leaders:

President Mahama made this call when he addressed the 58th Independence Anniversary Parade at the Black Star Square in Accra. Mrs. Lordina Mahama, First Lady, Vice President Paa Kwesi Bekoe Amisshah-Arthur and his wife Matilda Amisshah-Arthur, former President Jerry John Rawlings and spouse Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, and former President John Agyekum Kufuor were among dignitaries present.(GNA, 2015a)

In effect, family issues were the most dominant news subject in the news articles.

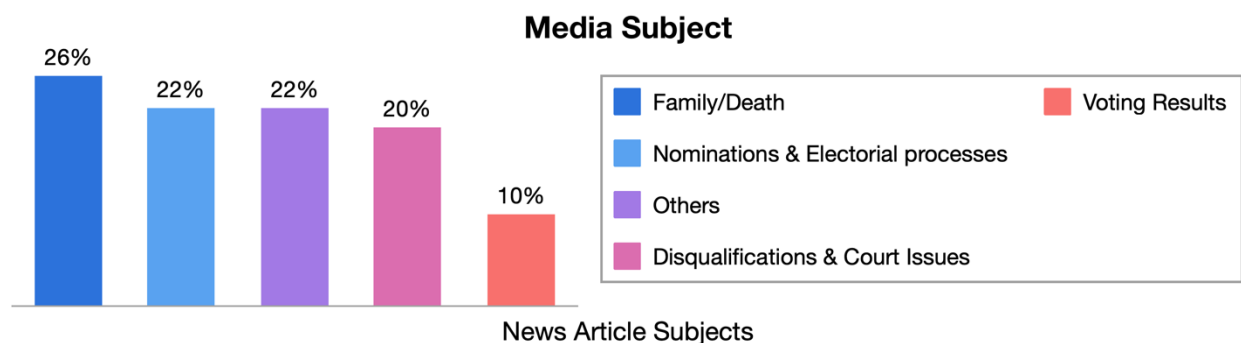
Family/Death as major news subject

The study reveals that the “family/death” thematic category constituted the most prominent subject of discussion, accounting for the majority of news article coverage on Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings. This finding is particularly salient in the context of gender roles, as well as the demise

of her husband, former President Jerry John Rawlings, in 2020. Given that this major personal event happened around the same time as her active campaign in the 2020 general elections, it's likely that the intense media coverage of her family role and the national mourning period for a former leader significantly increased her public identity as a family member and reinforced her gender role. As a result, this personal aspect of her identity appears to have dominated the media discussion, diverting attention away from her own political goals and activities and shifting the focus to her personal life and her husband's legacy (Figure 3).

In short, there is a persistent gendered media framing that positions women through relational, emotional, and supportive lenses, rather than as autonomous political actors. This pattern not only undermines women's authority and leadership but also sustains traditional gender norms within Ghana's political and media landscapes.

Figure 2: News subjects – what topics were most frequently discussed?



Male Superiority

The prevalence of male dominance in authorship and the sources of media articles serve as an indication of male superiority in news articles. Women were significantly underrepresented as journalists, subjects, and sources in news despite their high political offices. For instance, several

news articles in the study mentioned Charlotte Osei as the Electoral Commissioner of Ghana, yet she was rarely quoted as a source in the articles.

In contrast, men tend to be positioned as the default political actors, while women are treated as secondary participants or appendages. For example, men are introduced by their titles and positions— “former president,” “party leader,” or “minister”—while women are frequently defined by their relationships to men through marital status and roles: “Mrs.,” “wife,” “First Lady,” or “spouse of,” even when they hold independent positions of power.

For instance, in coverage of state events or political rallies, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings is introduced as “*former First Lady and wife of Jerry John Rawlings*,” often before her credentials as founder of the National Democratic Party (NDP) are mentioned—if at all. Meanwhile, Jerry Rawlings is portrayed as a magnetic force: “*Rawlings stole the show... mobbed by enthusiastic supporters...*” This juxtaposition highlights how male dominance is often celebrated, while female leadership is often diminished or sidelined.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter synthesizes the findings presented in the preceding chapter, interpreting them through the theoretical lenses of Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) and Framing Theory, as outlined in Chapter 2. Its objective is to address the overarching research questions by discussing how Ghanaian media framed Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings during the 2016 and 2020 elections, identifying the feminist themes that emerged from these narratives, and exploring how these themes reflect the dominant ideologies prevalent within Ghanaian journalism practices. Additionally, this discussion will examine the implications of these findings for understanding gender, media, and politics in Ghana and beyond. The ensuing discourse will underscore the study's contributions to understanding the relationships between gender, power, and media representation in Ghana, a context characterized by non-Western democratic paradigms.

The Wife as a Politician (RQ1)

News articles repeatedly showed that Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings was mainly portrayed in terms of her relationships, rather than her role as a politician. Her titles, such as “wife,” “spouse,” and “former First Lady,” were often used to describe her, overshadowing her work as a party leader. This result aligns with existing research on how women in politics are often defined by their family roles, and be may be characterized as the “wife of” rather than as an autonomous individual with their professional accomplishments (Adams, 2016; J. A. Anderson et al., 2011; Schooler & Aubrey, 2024). This situation is also true in Ghana, where women have been found to

be discussed in their family and traditional roles as wives and mothers (Akapule, 2020; Osei-Appiah et al., 2023).

The media's repeated focus on Nana Konadu's past as a First Lady closely aligns with Anderson's (2002) idea of the “double bind” faced by presidential spouses who move into independent politics. As the longest serving First Lady, Nana Konadu gained considerable exposure and experience. However, this study's findings indicate that her former role became a fixed point of view, rather than a logical next step that built on her experience (Anderson, 2002).

While the “relational identity” frame appeared somewhat appropriate in contexts directly related to her husband or family roles, its pervasive application, even when discussing her active campaign efforts, signifies a deeper societal inclination to circumscribe women’s public roles within traditional domestic spheres. The notable exception of The Daily Graphic in consistently using appropriate political identifiers for Nana Konadu aligns with Coffie & Medie’s (2021) findings that gender bias is less common in the Daily Graphic’s reports on women in politics, suggesting that intentional editorial choices can mitigate such gendered framing. The authors attribute the Daily Graphic’s success to women’s NGOs and CSOs, which aim to improve the representation of women in politics through journalism training and advocacy programs, resources that private media houses may not have, thus explaining the disparity in reporting styles.

In addition to relational identity, the study identified several other significant frameworks: Exceptional Woman, Disruptive/Controversial, Incompetence, Exclusion and Silencing, Emotional Woman Trope, and Nurturer/Mother Frame. The Exceptional Woman framework, although positive, paradoxically reinforces male superiority by emphasizing her accomplishments

as extraordinary for a woman, thereby suggesting that such achievements are deviations from the standard and she would have had to be made of “steel” to reach such accomplishments. This perspective aligns with established critiques indicating that such framing can lead to the tokenization of women rather than the normalization of their leadership.

The emphasis on procedural failures and perceived administrative oversights, particularly concerning her disqualification under the incompetence frame, suggested deliberate attempts to undermine her credibility and capability. This reflects a broader pattern in media coverage of female politicians, where their challenges are often magnified and their actions are subjected to intense scrutiny, a common tactic used to delegitimize female political contenders (Lira, 2022). To some extent, the Emotional Woman Trope further highlights this gendered scrutiny, where expressions of passion or frustration are reinterpreted as irrationality or "bitterness," thus undermining her authority.

Emotions and Morality as Political Assets

Conversely, some emotional descriptions (e.g., “compassionate,” “empathetic”) that align with the Nurturer/Mother Frame were not counted as marks of weakness in the news articles, but counted towards her Exceptional Woman Frame, thus emphasizing her emotional and moral strengths as political assets. This is particularly revealing as it contrasts sharply with typical gendered portrayals of women in politics, where such attributes are often twisted into weaknesses.

Resistance and Agency (RQ2)

Three main feminist themes were evident in the media coverage of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings: Political Agency, Activism/Advocacy, and Challenging Dominant Structures. These

themes emerged from her actions, statements, and how they were reported, indicating that even in a highly male-dominated political space like Ghana, a woman politician's inherent agency and feminist-aligned actions can still be recognized and documented. This also suggests the impact that women politicians can have within the media and political spaces if they rise to higher offices which aligns with findings that in political leadership particularly women's legislative representatives speak more often about women's issues including maternity leave, reforms to customary law, or problems of sexual and gender- based violence than their male counterparts. (Arriola et al., 2021).

Assessing this from a media perspective suggests that more female reporters are likely to cover issues related to women more frequently and portray female politicians in a more positive light. Indeed, other studies indicate that female newspaper editors tend to report the news more positively, while female reporters typically use more female sources in their stories (GMMP, 2010; Yeboah-Banin, 2011). These themes align with the core tenets of Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST), which posits that marginalized individuals possess unique insights and the capacity to generate knowledge that challenges dominant perspectives (Harding, 1987). The fact that articles by female authors tended to frame court proceedings related to her disqualification in terms of activism and challenging dominant structures further supports the idea that different standpoints yield different interpretations of reality.

Women's representations, their very presence and persistence in male-dominated spaces such as media and politics, are thus embodiments of this perspective, challenging dominant structures and advocating for transformation. Interestingly, the theme "challenging dominant structures cut across multiple findings" as her direct confrontations with the Electoral Commission and her

critique of broader governance issues demonstrate an active resistance to established norms and power imbalances. This aligns perfectly with FST's emphasis on exposing and resisting patriarchal structures. While such actions were sometimes framed as “disruptive” or “incompetent,” from a feminist standpoint, they represent vital acts of challenging the status quo and advocating for a more inclusive and equitable political system. In essence, while the dominant media frames often sought to diminish or misrepresent Nana Konadu's political identity, her actions consistently manifested feminist principles of agency, advocacy, and structural critique. This highlights a disconnect between the media's framing tendencies and the inherent progressive nature of a woman's political leadership.

A Patriarchal Lens (RQ3)

Research into the dominant ideology behind Ghana’s media and journalism practices revealed a deeply ingrained patriarchal and male-dominated system. Three key findings supported this: a male-dominated authorship and news sources, the persistent reinforcement of traditional gender roles, and an implicit assertion of male superiority. These findings align with existing research that portrays Ghanaian society and its media institutions as patriarchal, male-dominated, and elitist (Agyemang Asante, 2020; Akita, 2010; Mohammed, 2023a).

Men dominate the news in Ghana, making up most of the voices in news segments and most of the authors. This imbalance aligns with FST’s concept of "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1988). Since most news producers and sources are men, the "objective" news they create inevitably reflects a male perspective, normalizing it and marginalizing other viewpoints, especially women’s. This ingrained male viewpoint shapes how stories are told and which voices are heard, leading to the gender biases evident in Nana Konadu’s coverage. The ongoing reinforcement of

gender roles further strengthens patriarchal ideology, as the repetitive reference to women through their marital status underscores a societal expectation that women's primary identity is based on relationships rather than reflecting an autonomous culmination of the incidence of male superiority as observed in the study.

Collectively, these elements demonstrate that the "objectivity" espoused by institutions like the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) is, in practice, a reflection of a dominant, male-centric viewpoint. The purported "neutral" stance unintentionally perpetuates existing gender hierarchies, making gendered biases a systemic rather than an accidental feature of Ghanaian media.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis embarked on an in-depth examination of the Ghanaian news media's coverage of Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings during the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. Drawing upon Feminist Standpoint Theory and Framing Theory, the study aimed to dissect the descriptions and media frames used, identify evident feminist themes, and uncover how these reflections reveal the dominant ideologies underpinning Ghanaian journalism practices. The findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between gender, media, and politics in Ghana, particularly concerning female political leadership.

Summary of Key Findings

The study's core findings revealed a persistent pattern of gendered media framing that often diminished Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings' autonomous political identity. Her "relational identity"—as "wife," "spouse," and "former First Lady"—was the most dominant frame, frequently overshadowing her roles as a party founder and presidential candidate. While other frames like "Exceptional Woman," "Disruptive/Controversial," "Incompetence," "Exclusion & Silencing," "Emotional Woman Trope," and "Nurturer/Mother Frame" were also present, they often served to either tokenize her achievements, delegitimize her political actions, or confine her to traditional gender roles.

Despite these limiting frames, the analysis successfully identified significant "feminist themes" within the media narratives: "Political Agency," "Activism/Advocacy," and "Challenging Dominant Structures." These themes consistently emerged from Nana Konadu's actions and statements, portraying her as a self-determined leader, an active advocate for social and electoral reform, and a formidable challenger of established patriarchal and institutional norms. This highlights an inherent tension: while media framing often sought to contain her, her political being and actions inherently manifested feminist principles.

Ultimately, the study confirmed the prevalence of a "dominant ideology" in Ghanaian media characterized by "Male Dominance," the reinforcement of "Gender Roles," and implicit "Male Superiority." This was evidenced by the overwhelming male representation among news authors and sources, as well as the media's tendency to prioritize familial aspects (like her husband's death) over her political campaign. This patriarchal lens, rooted in the "situated knowledge" of predominantly male journalists, shapes what is considered "objective" news, thereby normalizing male leadership and marginalizing female political voices.

Implications and Significance of the Findings

This study makes several significant contributions to the field of mass media studies, particularly in the areas of gender, media, and politics, within the Ghanaian and broader African and non-Western contexts. It fills a critical gap in research, which often disproportionately focuses on Western female politicians, unlike Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings (Osei-Appiah et al., 2023). By so doing, it provides nuanced empirical evidence of how a prominent African female politician navigates a patriarchal media landscape, highlighting challenges unique to her socio-cultural context.

Secondly, combining Feminist Standpoint Theory and Framing Theory provides a robust analytical framework that extends beyond merely identifying biases to understanding their origins, connecting them to the specific knowledge of journalists and the dominant ideologies within media institutions. It shows how “objectivity” can inadvertently reinforce existing power structures.

Additionally, the study's quantitative findings on author gender and news sources offer solid evidence to back up the qualitative results showing male dominance in Ghanaian journalism. Notably, female authors were more likely to present stories in a positive light, often incorporating feminist themes, highlighting the need for more diverse newsrooms and leadership within media companies.

As a result, the findings of this study have significant implications. For media professionals in Ghana, the study acts as a crucial self-reflection tool, prompting them to examine their own perspectives and the unconscious biases that may influence their reporting. Acknowledging that journalism is a selective and perspective-driven practice is the first step toward more balanced and representative coverage. The study also emphasizes the importance of training that combines feminist media literacy and critical self-awareness in Ghana's media and journalism practices.

For women in politics, the study highlights the media obstacles they encounter, especially the difficulty of asserting an independent political identity amidst relational framings. Grasping these dynamics can empower female candidates to strategically navigate their media presence and narrative.

Finally, the study highlights how media frames influence public perceptions of women in politics, potentially affecting voter behavior and discouraging women's participation in politics.

Challenging these dominant narratives is essential for fostering a more inclusive democracy where women's political agency is fully recognized and celebrated.

Practical Implications

The findings of this thesis carry significant practical implications for various stakeholders:

For Journalists and Media Outlets: Ghanaian media professionals need to take a closer look at their biases and the idea of "objectivity" without examining it. Training programs should focus on media literacy, reporting that's sensitive to gender issues, and the importance of diverse perspectives in newsrooms. This will help create more fair and accurate portrayals of women in politics.

For Policymakers and Media Regulators: Media regulatory bodies should consider creating guidelines that promote fair and gender-equitable representation in news. This extends beyond simply balancing coverage to address underlying structural biases.

For women in politics, understanding dominant media narratives is a powerful tool. They can use this insight to craft their personal stories, showcase their political roles, and challenge gender stereotypes publicly. However, applying this knowledge and navigating the media landscape is challenging because media systems are often controlled by male-dominated organizations that favor traditional narratives and resist alternative frames that highlight women's leadership. Even when women shape their stories, these can be distorted, minimized, or reframed through gendered perspectives, reinforcing rather than dismantling stereotypes.

Additionally, constant media scrutiny pressures women to balance political strength with likability and assertiveness with humility. Attempts to oppose gender bias can be perceived as

confrontational or emotional, reinforcing the stereotypes they seek to challenge. Limited access to media platforms, fewer training resources, and potential public backlash also make it more challenging for women to manage their public image. Effective communication requires careful navigation of entrenched power dynamics, making it difficult for women to challenge dominant narratives without risking personal or political consequences. Their language choices, headlines, and storytelling focus can either reinforce traditional stereotypes, such as portraying women as emotional, symbolic, or relationship-oriented, or challenge these by emphasizing women's agency, leadership, and policy impact.

While there is no clear-cut solution, the role of journalists is important to shaping narratives about women, specifically women in politics who they cover. When journalists are aware of their role in either perpetuating or resisting gender biases, they can help create a more balanced, inclusive media landscape. Thus, feminist-inspired journalism can amplify women's voices, normalize female leadership, and shift the discourse toward meaningful evaluations of political performance rather than superficial or relational stereotypes.

For Civil Society and Advocacy Groups: Organizations focused on gender equality and media reform can leverage these findings to push for policy changes, track media performance, and equip citizens with critical media literacy skills to identify and challenge biased narratives.

This chapter sheds light on the persistent gendered portrayal of Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings in Ghanaian news media, with a particular emphasis on her role as a former First Lady and perceived dynastic ambitions. These findings underscore the profound impact of deeply ingrained ideological beliefs within the Ghanaian media landscape on the unique challenges faced by female

political candidates in non-Western democracies. By linking these media portrayals to established theoretical frameworks and existing literature, this research underscores the significance of critical media literacy and a concerted effort to transform journalistic practices, particularly through feminist journalism training and practices, thereby fostering a more equitable political environment for women in Ghana and beyond.

Contributions to the Field

This thesis presents several significant contributions to the existing body of research in mass media studies: It offers a contextualized African perspective and essential empirical insights into the media representation of women in politics within an African context, specifically Ghana, thus diversifying a research area predominantly influenced by Western studies. The effective integration of Feminist Standpoint Theory and Framing Theory presents a comprehensive model for analyzing media content, demonstrating how foundational ideological positions influence framing decisions and perpetuate gendered biases. The quantitative data on author gender and news sources provide empirical support for the pervasive male dominance in Ghanaian journalism, directly linking it to the qualitative findings on gendered framing. Finally, this study demonstrates that even within restrictive media frameworks, a woman politician's inherent agency and feminist-aligned actions can still be recognized, challenging a strictly victim-centric view of media portrayal.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The focus on specific election cycles (2016 and 2020) and a selection of news media outlets, while providing

depth, may not capture the full spectrum of media portrayal over Nana Konadu's entire political career or across all media platforms (e.g., social media, local radio). The qualitative nature of the media analysis, while robust, involves subjective interpretation of frames and themes. Furthermore, this study focused on media production and content, without directly assessing audience reception or the causal link between specific media frames and voter behavior.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on these findings and limitations, several avenues for future research are recommended:

Future research could conduct comparative analyses of media coverage of various female politicians in Ghana or across different African countries to identify broader patterns and contextual variations. A longitudinal study examining the media representation of women in politics over an extended period could track changes in framing practices and the impact of media reforms or increased female participation. Conducting a longitudinal analysis of media coverage of Nana Konadu Agyemang-Rawlings across multiple election cycles or her entire political career could also offer valuable insights. Another study could compare media portrayals of Nana Konadu with those of other pioneering female politicians in other African nations to identify broader regional trends and unique national contexts.

Integrating qualitative audience reception studies (e.g., focus groups, interviews) would provide valuable insights into how these media frames are consumed, interpreted, and influence public perception of women in politics. Research that explores the internal dynamics of Ghanaian newsrooms, including editorial policies, journalist training, and initiatives promoting gender diversity, could offer a deeper understanding of how news content is produced. Meanwhile,

investigating the impact of media training initiatives on the actual framing of female politicians by journalists in Ghana over time could lead to changes in journalist school curricula.

Finally, an analysis of digital and social media coverage of women in politics in Ghana would be beneficial, as these platforms may present different framing patterns and challenges.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acheampong, A. O., Opoku, E. E. O., & Rustagi, N. (2024). Gender quota, women in politics, and gender parity in education. *Economics & Politics*, ecpo.12287.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ecpo.12287>
- Adams, M. (2016). Context and Media Frames: The Case of Liberia. *Politics & Gender*, 12(2), 275–295. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X16000039>
- Agyemang Asante, N. A. (2020). *How free is Ghana's media?* | Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/how-free-ghanas-media>
- Agyemang Rawlings, N. K. (2018). *It Takes a Woman-A LIFE SHAPED BY HERITAGE, LEADERSHIP AND THE WOMEN WHO DEFINED HOPE.*
- Akapule, S. A. (2020). *Media coverage of female parliamentary candidates in Ghana, case study of the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times newspapers (July 2016 –December, 2016)* [Thesis, University of Education, Winneba].
<http://41.74.91.244:8080/handle/123456789/1109>
- Akita, E. M. (2010). *Hegemony, Patriarchy and Human Rights: The Representation of Ghanaian Women in Politics* [Ohio University].
https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/etd/r/1501/10?clear=10&p10_accession_num=ohiou1273265823
- Akuffo, A. G. (2023). The Unnamed: Exploring the Erasure of Women from the History of Ghana. *Society*, 60(6), 1009–1023. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-023-00884-3>

- Alhassan, M. K. (2022). Women Empowerment and Political Participation in Ghana. *Journal of Empirical Economics and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.46959/jeess.937157>
- AllAfrica. (2015a, October 13). LMVCA Petitions UN [document]. *AllAfrica.Com*.
- AllAfrica. (2015b, November 13). “I’ve Erased NDC From My Memory”—NDP Founder, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings. *AllAfrica.Com*.
- AllAfrica. (2015c, December 1). Nana Konadu Working With NPP to Distract Gov’t—NDC. *AFNWS*.
- AllAfrica. (2016, July 21). Ghanaian Leaders, Women Endorse Agyeman-Rawlings for Presidency. *AllAfrica.Com*.
- AllAfrica.com. (2025). *Home*. allAfrica.Com. <https://allafrica.com/>
- Ampomah, E. H. (2020a, August 5). My political journey is not for personal recognition – Nana Konadu. *GNA*.
- Ampomah, E. H. (2020b, August 27). Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings empathises with others’-Running Mate. *Ghana News Agency*.
- Anderson, J. A., Diabah, G., & hMensa, P. A. (2011). Powerful women in powerless language: Media misrepresentation of African women in politics (the case of Liberia). *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(10), 2509–2518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.02.004>
- Anderson, K. V. (2002). From Spouses to Candidates: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Elizabeth Dole, and the Gendered Office of U.S. President. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 5(1), 105–132. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2002.0001>
- Anyidoho, P. (2016). Ethnography of Print and Broadcast Media in Ghana. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(7).

- Arriola, L., Johnson, M., & Phillips, M. (Eds.). (2021). *Women and Power in Africa: Aspiring, Campaigning, and Governing* (1st ed.). Oxford University PressOxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192898074.001.0001>
- asare-kyire, afia, Borteye, E., & Teye, V. (2013). Problems Associated with Newspaper Management in a Ghanaian University Library. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)*. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/987>
- Asmah, K. (2016, July). NDP manifesto focuses on banishing corruption. *Daily Graphic*, 17 & 18.
- Avance Media. (2018). *Top 50 Ghanaian Journalists*. Avance Media, Ghana.
- Azinim, M., & Musah, H. (2023). *Under-representation of Women in Leadership in Ghana: Action needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. UNDP.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Byerly, C. M., & Ross, K. (2007). *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke’s approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(3), 1391–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>
- Coffie, A., & Medie, P. A. (2021). Media Representation of Women Parliamentary Candidates in Africa: A Study of the *Daily Graphic* Newspaper and Ghana’s 2016 Election. In L. Arriola, M. Johnson, & M. Phillips (Eds.), *Women and Power in Africa* (1st ed., pp. 141–160). Oxford University PressOxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192898074.003.0006>

- Daily Graphic. (2025). *Our History*. <https://corporate.graphic.com.gh/about-us-page/history-of-graphic-communications-group.html>
- Daily Guide. (2015, October 19). IEA Hosts Voter Register Debate Tomorrow. *Daily Guide*.
- Daily Guide. (2016a, October 22). Konadu Fights For Women. *Daily Guide*.
- Daily Guide. (2016b, November 24). PPP, PNC, NDP Cast Doubt On Credibility Of 2016 Election. *Daily Guide*.
- Daily Guide. (2020, August 13). Konadu Wanted To Succeed Rawlings Ahwoi. *Daily Guide Network*.
- Damico, A. M. (2022). *Women in Media: A Reference Handbook*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ugalib/detail.action?docID=7043324>
- D'Angelo, P., & Kuypers, J. A. (2009). (2016). *Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. (1st ed.). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Danso, S. (2025). Media and politics: Investigating government interests, ownership influence and media independence in combating corruption in Ghana. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 11(1), 2483391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2483391>
- Donohue, C., & Arrington, B. (2020). *She represents: 44 women who are changing politics ... and the world*. Zest Books, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group.
- Dragomir, M. (2024). The Capture Effect: How Media Capture Affects Journalists, Markets and Audiences. *Central European Journal of Communication*, 17(2(36)), 162–184.
[https://doi.org/10.51480/1899-5101.17.2\(36\).586](https://doi.org/10.51480/1899-5101.17.2(36).586)
- DWUMOH, J. S. (2023). *THE GHANA JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS AS A GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE IN GHANA: VIEWS OF SELECTED MEDIA PRACTITIONERS IN GHANA*.

- https://www.academia.edu/download/108842835/Journalism_ethics_research_proposal.pdf
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Ette, M. (2017). Where are the women? Evaluating visibility of Nigerian female politicians in news media space. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24(10), 1480–1497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1387104>
- Evans, C. (2019). *Objectification of women in the media*. ReferencePoint Press, Inc.
- Factiva. (2025). *Factiva*. Dow Jones Professional. <https://www.dowjones.com/professional/factiva/>
- Fofie, I. M. (2016). *Print Media Coverage of Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings as a Presidential Candidate in 2011*. University of Ghana.
- George, A., & I. Braimah, A. (2021). Leadership and Women Representation Riddle in Ghana. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 9(4), 169–179. <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-9-4-4>
- Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) CODE OF ETHICS. (2024). <https://www.gjaghana.org/index.php/code-of-ethics>
- Ghana media guide. (2023, May). *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13433793>
- Gilbert, S., & Kelley, R. (2024). Content Analysis of News Analyses: Examining Trends in News Content and Resources. *Journal of New Librarianship*, 9(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.33011/newlibs/15/1>
- GMMP. (2010). *Global Media Monitoring Project 2010*.

- GNA. (2015a, March 6). President Mahama wants collective efforts for socio-economic transformation. *Ghana News Agency*.
- GNA. (2015b, March 11). Ghana salutes Beijing Gender Advocates. *AllAfrica*.
- GNA. (2016a, August 30). Akua Donkor files nomination to contest election. *Ghana News Agency*.
- GNA. (2016b, October 16). Copy of Receipt of Nominations by the Electoral Commission. *Ghana News Agency*.
- GNA. (2016c, October 20). Empowerment of women is the key to our development. *Ghana News Agency*.
- GNA. (2016d, October 27). Court strikes out NDP's suit. *Ghana News Agency*.
- GNA. (2016e, December 1). The seven presidential candidates promise violence-free polls. *Ghana News Agency*.
- Gothreau, C. M., Alvarez, A. M., & Friesen, A. (2023). Objectified and Dehumanized: Does Objectification Impact Perceptions of Women Political Candidates? *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 10(2), 174–187. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2022.15>
- Gustafson, K. L. (2015). Ethnic newspaper producers face archiving challenges. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 36(3), 314–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739532915600744>
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2001). A Peaceful Turnover in Ghana. *Journal of Democracy*, 12(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2001.0026>
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & De Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: When to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction*, 31(3), 498–501. <https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334>
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>

- Harding, S. (1987). *"Is There a Feminist Method?" Pp. 1-13 in Feminism and Methodology.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Intemann, K. (2020a). Feminist Standpoint Theory. In *SAGE Research Methods Foundations.* SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036747550>
- Intemann, K. (2020b). *Feminist standpoint theory* (P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J. W. Sakshaug, & R. A. Williams, Eds.). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Jaggar, A. M. (2015). Feminist Standpoint Theory, Social Location and Epistemic Privilege. In *Just Methods -An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader* (0 ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315636344>
- Kellam, M., & Stein, E. A. (2016). Silencing Critics: Why and How Presidents Restrict Media Freedom in Democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 49(1), 36–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015592644>
- Kosut, M. (2012). *Encyclopedia of gender in media.* SAGE Publications.
- Kwadzo, G., & Annor, G. (2013). Managing newspaper collections in public universities in Ghana. *Ghana Library Journal*, 25(1), 39–55.
- Lips, H. M. (2021). Voice and Votes: Gender, Power and Politics. In J. D. Sinnott & J. S. Rabin (Eds.), *The Psychology of Political Behavior in a Time of Change* (pp. 307–322). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38270-4_14
- Lira, C. L. (2022). The never-ending challenge of understanding how media discourse portrays women in politics. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 17(3), 220–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2022.2155657>

- Lonta, D. (2024, November 15). AWMA, UNESCO train 36 female journalists on election reporting and safety. *Citinewsroom*. <https://citinewsroom.com/2024/11/awma-and-unesco-trains-36-female-journalists-on-election-reporting-and-safety/>
- McRobbie, A. (2008). YOUNG WOMEN AND CONSUMER CULTURE: An intervention. *Cultural Studies*, 22(5), 531–550. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380802245803>
- MFWA. (2019). *Increasing Women's Participation in Governance in Ghana: - The Media Push Required*.
- Mohammed, W. F. (2023a). Interrogating Dominant Ideology in Media Representations of Witchcraft-Related Gendered Violence: The Case of Mariama Akua Denteh. *International Journal of Communication (Online)*, 17, 4778. Gale Academic OneFile.
- Mohammed, W. F. (2023b). Why we need intersectionality in Ghanaian feminist politics and discourses. *Feminist Media Studies*, 23(6), 3031–3047. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2022.2098798>
- Ninsin, K. A., Drah, F. K., & University of Ghana (Eds.). (1993). *Political parties and democracy in Ghana's fourth republic: Proceedings of a seminar organized by the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon on 2nd and 3rd July, 1992*. Woeli Publishing Services.
- Odoi-Larbi, by S. (2012, May). NDC in Disarray—Over Konadu's Umbrella Claim. *Ghanaian Chronicle*.
- Okoampa-Ahoofe, K. (2016, April 7). Is Konadu Rawlings for Real On Nugs? [Opinion]. *AllAfrica*.
- Oranga, J., & Matere, A. (2023). Qualitative Research: Essence, Types and Advantages. *OALib*, 10(12), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1111001>

- Osei-Appiah, S., Mutsvairo, B., & Orgeret, K. S. (2023). Women and digital political communication in non-Western societies. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(13), 2507–2517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2257995>
- Owusu, W. Y. (2011). *The Ghanaian Media Landscape: How unethical practices of journalists undermine progress*.
- Owusu-Ansah, D. (2014). Introduction. In *Historical Dictionary of Ghana*. ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD.
- Paxton, P., & Kunovich, S. (2003). Women's Political Representation: The Importance of Ideology. *Social Forces*, 82(1), 87–113. JSTOR Journals.
- Political Desk. (2016, December 6). Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawling-Empowering a nation. *Daily Graphic*, 13.
- Reosnner, L. A. (2012). Sexism. In *Encyclopedia of gender in media* (pp. 327–333). Sage Publications.
- Ringel, S. (2023). Digitizing the paper of record: Archiving digital newspapers at the *New York Times*. *Journalism*, 24(2), 245–261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211023849>
- Schooler, D., & Aubrey, J. S. (2024). Objectification and the Candidate: Examining the Effects of Objectification Paired with Candidate Coverage on Candidate Evaluations and Gender Bias. *Western Journal of Communication*, 88(2), 305–327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2023.2176193>
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. SAGE.
- Skinner, K., Salifu, J., & Adomako Ampofo, A. (2024). 'The most extensive reform ever made in the private law of Ghana': A political history of the 1985 Intestate Succession Law. *Women's History Review*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2024.2367801>

- Skinner, K., Salifu, J., & Ampofo, A. A. (2023). 'Edited and Approved by Women for Maximum Benefit of all Readers': Newsprint Journalism, the International Women's Year and the Remaking of a Gendered National Public in 1970s Ghana. *Gender & History*, 1468-0424.12745. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12745>
- Takyi-Boadu, C. (2015, March 13). No Deal With NDC - Konadu. *Daily Guide*.
- TV3 Ghana. (2019, March 7). *One-on-one with Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings*. One-on-One with Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFXoMtSp70>
- UN Women. (2023). *Women in Politics: 2023*.
- UNESCO, 2023. (2023). *Assessment of media development in Ghana: Based on UNESCO's media development indicators* (p. 123). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/assessment-media-development-ghana>
- Voltmer, K. (2005). *Mass Media & New Democracies*. Routledge.
- Wagner, K. M., Gainous, J., & Abbott, J. P. (2021). Gender Differences in Critical Digital Political Engagement in China: The Consequences for Protest Attitudes. *Social Science Computer Review*, 39(2), 211–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439319865907>
- WEF. (2024). *Global Gender Gap 2024* (No. ISBN-13: 978-2-940631-89-6; Insight Report June 2024). World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/gender-gap-report-2024/>.
- Wood, J. T. (2012, June 29). *Feminist Standpoint Theory* [Online Reference]. Encyclopedia of Communications Theory. https://edge.sagepub.com/system/files/77593_2.2ref.pdf
- Yeboah-Banin, A. A. (2011). Reporting women: Do female journalists have a gender agenda. *African Communication Research*, 4(No.3).

Yeboah-Banin, A. A., Fofie, I. M., & Gadzekpo, A. S. (2024). Status of women in the Ghanaian media: Are women conscious of their own inequalities? *Journal of African Media Studies*, 16(2), 197–215. https://doi.org/10.1386/jams_00109_1