

***Akosua* Cartoons in the *Daily Guide*: A Discourse Analysis**

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Abstract

This pioneering effort in using discourse analysis to describe editorial cartoons in a national daily explores the ontology of 'Akosua' cartoons in the Daily Guide. Using the interpretive approach from the epistemic standpoint, the qualitative approach is utilised to identify sampling units through strategic sampling to respond to three propositions: 1. 'Akosua' cartoons will reflect the 'ideological standpoint of the publishers'. 2. 'Akosua' cartoons will dwell more on 'political' issues than on other issues. 3. 'Akosua' cartoons will be gender blind in the portrayal of issues. The study used two theories, construction of reality and ethno-methodology to provide a context for understanding 'Akosua' cartoons. First, the particular ideological standpoint of the publisher is reflected in the content of cartoons. Second, when it comes to the type of issues covered, it was clear that there is an emphasis on political news. For this publisher the overarching ideological and strategic position is the three Ps: pro-democracy, professionalism and profits. The second issue of gender shows that there is no gender policy and the coverage of women is essentially neutral.

Introduction

Akosua cartoons have become not only an integral part of the award-winning front page design newspaper for 2008, the *Daily Guide*, but have now been institutionalised within the media turf in Ghana. Presently it is the only established political/editorial cartoon and is published daily and can be found on the top right hand side of the newspaper almost every day, and in a few instances, at the top right hand side of page three of the newspaper. For the numerous 'customers' and 'consumers' of this daily, *Akosua* is a must-see part of the newspaper, helping to provide a strong competitive edge for this mass medium. These cartoons record social and political 'reality', as it relates to present issues. *Akosua* cartoons use visual imagery, through the use of one language or a mix of English, French and local languages, to provide social explanations through caricature and humour. They use known verbal and visual 'register', easily recognised by the target audience. The cartoonist constructs her 'reality' through such visuals, stereotypes, symbols and analogies, with humour and/or ridicule as the basic vehicle. Oman FM (107.1), an Accra-based radio station, reviews *Akosua* cartoons on their programme

'National Agenda' which is aired during working days, from 7.05 a.m.-8.00 a.m. This cartoonist was interviewed on *Kwaku-One-on-One*, a weekly television programme on TV3, a private TV station, where the host interviews celebrities and other prominent local and international personalities. This paper will be examining *Akosua* cartoons featured over a period of five months in 2008 through discourse analysis. Data will be gathered through three propositions from which certain generalisations will be made about editorial cartoons in an 'emerging economy'.

Cartoons

A cartoon in this context is a 'political' or 'editorial' cartoon, which is used in newspapers, as opposed to a comic strip or animated cartoon. It is a rendition of any situation, event or person within a social, political or economic context, recording the social world and playing a critical role in political discourse and dialogue, through caricature, exaggeration and, in most cases, laughter. It pokes fun at the powerful sections of society from politicians to other social celebrities through incisive drawings encapsulating a personality or event into a memorable single caricature. DeSousa and Medhurst (1982) offer four major roles for cartoons: entertainment, aggression-reduction; agenda-setting and framing. Greenberg (2002) articulates this genre of (visual) communication as 'visual opinion discourse' with the sole objective of providing a platform for the transmission of positions in a visual format. The effectiveness of this medium can be discerned by the type of offerings articulated by Langeveld (1981), namely: selection, distortion, criticism and prediction for constructing reality. Abraham (2009) describes cartoons as complex phenomena which condense and reduce comprehensive situations into a well encapsulated memorable image filled with deeply embedded meanings.

Abraham (2009) further describes 'inventional tropes' as crucial for analysing the work of a cartoonist, namely political events, 'timely and transient situations', the physical/character attributes of actors and 'literal/cultural allusions'.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis shows the manner, aspects of reality in terms of how occurrences are constructed, through the use of 'language'. From the epistemological and ontological perspectives, discourse analysis is not 'realist' but more 'relativist' and essentially 'constructionist' in nature; with reality being captured in the frame of discourse. The 'constructionist' slice of life manufactured is only a version of reality of the social world under consideration. Discourse therefore can never be neutral when it comes to portraying meaning and because of the 'relativist' slant, an understanding of the phenomenon can only be interpretivist, calling for the use of the qualitative approach in order to provide any social explanation. Discourse analysis is essentially a path to language that can be utilized for varied types of communication, beyond conversations and encompassing text and other visuals like cartoons. The cartoon, in such circumstances, is perceived as a phenomenon more important and profound than a simple channel through which the social investigation is undertaken. Discourse Analysis has been chosen as a means of analysis as opposed to mainly Conversation analysis. Cartoons are therefore 'constructive' because they provide a certain notion of the social world, and the discourse which they engender. They are also a means to accomplishing acts, but perhaps the most prominent is how 'rhetorically organized' cartoons can be in 'manufacturing' an option of social reality within a world, offering varied competing constructions.

Background

Although *Daily Guide* has been associated with editorial cartoons, *Akosua* cartoons started in 2000. The other prominent cartoon is *Tilapia* which has been shifted to *Young Blazers*. *Daily Guide* is one of the newspapers within the Western Publications Ltd's group of newspapers. The group consists of *Daily Guide*, *Business Guide*, *Guide Young Blazers* and *News One*. *Daily Guide* started as *Sports Guide* in 1983 at a time when there were no private newspapers which dealt with political issues. The paper started as a sports paper before becoming a general newspaper dealing with general news.



After continuing as a weekly, the paper started coming out two times a week before it later became a daily. The *Daily Guide* ideological position according to the publisher, Freddy Blay, is to promote liberalism and multiparty democracy, underpinned by freedom of expression and a liberalized media environment.

The publishing house also has business objectives, amongst others, to manage the company in accordance with sound financial and commercial principles; and to strive towards being efficient and profitable. In the area of professionalism, 'to satisfy the reading public by using state-of-the-art equipment to deliver informative and professional services through our media' and also 'to be objective in information dissemination in line with journalistic code of ethics' and also 'strive towards conducting business with high moral integrity, fairness and objectivity'.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes two theories: construction of reality and ethnomethodology, to provide the broad theoretical framework for understanding the importance of cartoons as a means of covering events in a print medium. Construction of reality, first of all, is a concept that originated from the ontological perspective which states that social matters and what they mean or stand for are perpetually determined by social players. It must be noted that within the realm of philosophy, there have always been issues about truth and reality, especially the factors which examine processes within the social world which create or construct reality. Normally whatever 'construction' is produced is determined by persons and entities like the media. The construction of the media, whether 'biased' or 'distorted' wittingly or unwittingly, or the definition of happenings, provide a record of events for their receivers.

The notion of the 'construction of reality' has been looked at from various angles. Macionis (2005) had described the social construction of reality as 'the process by which people creatively shape reality through social interaction'. (p.144) This is the basis for the symbolic interaction position (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Maines, 2000). Basically any attempt to construct reality socially implies an attempt to examine the process by which people

utilize their social experiences to perceive happenings around them and to explain them from that perspective. This process is both at the personal and the group or 'social' level, especially from the lenses of social institutions like the mass media. This world clearly depicts an assumed picture of what is normal and the context within which this 'normalness' exists. The media which shapes this reality, construct a world of media reality which could be distinct from the 'factual' reality. The receivers, incidentally, are in no position to ascertain whether there is anything else like a 'factual' reality, outside the 'manufactured' reality as presented by their media. The issue here is whether there is anything like the seeming objective and technical criteria which journalists have been associated with like factors for determining news value and its placement or prominence. The basic requirements for determining what journalists are guided by in their selection decisions, like Schultz's six news attributes: 'time, proximity, status, dynamism, valence (conflict, crime, damage, success) and identification (personalisation, ethnocentrism)' (Kunczik, 1988) though useful, fail to capture comprehensively the other serious non-technical factors like ideological orientation of the media house, the mission, vision, core values, philosophy, among others. These are the underpinning factors which are responsible for the structuring of any form of reality by the media. Invariably a certain picture of 'cumulation' is created because the position is cultivated and sustained for the readers of the newspaper. The communication principle of redundancy is achieved but an added component is the effect of this constructed regime of repetition which is the eventual acceptance as factual reality.

Kirby et al. (1997) believe that 'hegemonic sociologists' who tow the line of neo-Marxism when it comes to looking at the media, state that news is generally the outcome of 'selection, interpretation and therefore bias'. The position is that news is not an 'objective' or 'neutral' reality produced by the media. The media are a 'reproducer' of a 'selective' and a manufactured or biased view of reality. In essence, the construction of reality from this perspective of the media shows that media reality cannot be equated with reality. Eventually the readers' perceptions of reality or their making any sense of social events is dictated by this final picture provided by the media through their news selection criteria. McQuail (2005) provides the postulates for 'social constructionism', which are first, that the world is a 'construct', not a 'fixed reality', the mass media offer data for 'reality construction', the media



generally 'reproduce' designated meanings on a selective basis, and finally the media do not 'objectively' offer a record of the social world.

In the case of ethnomethodology as a theory, Macionis (2005) states that Harold Garfinkel propounded this position which is essentially 'the study of the way people make sense of their everyday surroundings', explaining that our routine actions and how we behave generally are hinged on certain assumptions, which we have always taken for granted. Essentially ethnomethodology is an interpretive approach to understanding social reality. Haralambos and Holborn (1990) in discussing the nature of social reality state:

Ethnomethodologists argue that the social world consists of nothing more than the constructs, interpretations and accounts of its members. The job of the sociologist is therefore to explain the methods and accounting procedures which members employ to construct their social world. (p.813)

Alan Bryman (2008) sees ethnomethodology as a means of examining language. Social order is a phenomenon that needs a lot of effort and is achieved generally from interactions like conversation analysis and discourse analysis. Conversation analysis is a considered scrutiny of verbal interaction in normal situations and it is an intercourse which has to be transcribed after the recording has been undertaken to facilitate analysis which will entail looking at the full structures of the interaction. This method is very empirical and throws the searchlight on the in-depth examination of the processes, especially from a chronological perspective, of verbal interaction, following known conventions. Discourse analysis, on the other hand, provides an understanding of how chapters of the world and all happenings covering ordinary events to psychological worlds are exhibited in any discourse. It is basically 'constructionist' in nature since it considers the selection which takes place from the several options, in order to lead to the production of a designated construction of reality. Discourse analysis throws the searchlight on how interactions or discourses manufacture social reality, placing the emphasis on 'discursive practices' and 'subject positions' as opposed to the actions of people. This provides a fine explanation of the workings of discourses.

Literature Review

Katz (2004), in providing a historic look at political cartoons in the United States of America, traces the birth of this phenomenon to 1754, when Benjamin Franklin created the first cartoon which urged the British colonies to fight France and her Indian allies. The number of cartoonists grew after the constitution and the First Amendment had been ratified. The advent of the Civil War led to editorial cartooning further flourishing with several attacks on prominent political actors in weekly newspapers. This trend was enhanced due to the growth of literacy. Specifically, individuals like Thomas Nast started producing cartoons on a weekly basis. Cartoons became very present and influential in the public and political sphere. Some landmarks were the introduction in 1872 of cartoons in the New York *Daily Graphic* front page and in 1884, Joseph Pulitzer's *The New York World* started cartoons in his daily. Around this time, some females, Rose O'Neill and Edwina Dumm became pioneers in editorial cartooning. By 1900, cartoons had become an intrinsic part of newspapers and magazines, with Homer Davenport and John McCutcheon becoming prominent persons. There were two categories of cartoonists, one group, represented by Davenport and McCutcheon, seen as representing the position of their powerful publishers and others who supported the labour movement. During the cold war, most cartoonists became involved in politics and during the era when Senator Joseph McCarthy, the arch anti-communist attacked lots of people, Herbert Block and Walt Kelly stuck their necks out, with the term 'McCarthyism' recorded in Herblock's cartoon. From the 1960's the political establishment, especially American presidents from Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, were the most caricatured.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) used a discourse analysis of cartoons as a part of their research on Canada's refugee system. The cartoons from newspapers reflected larger social constructions of the immigrant, providing a basis for themes. One of the four objects (refugee, government, immigration system and the public), the immigration system, was reflected in seven themes (inconsistent, inadequate, too tough, too lenient, too slow, gullible and honourable) through some cartoons. Essentially this study showed the way the category of refugee is 'constructed' through 'discourse' and 'images'. The study reveals that 'thematic analysis' can be utilized for the analysis of car-



toons documents and interview transcripts, within the qualitative strategic approach.

According to Bryman (2008), one approach in examining a discourse analysis study is to look at it from the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Here the discourse is scrutinised as a power entity which has to be seen within the realism of an ideological position and how to ensure pre-determined change. CDA is more inclined to the notion of a 'pre-existing' material reality that affects individuals. CDA attempts to determine how discourses are manufactured and sustained, offering different social explanations. It can also investigate why certain meanings become elevated or accepted at the expense of others. Discourse within this context, provides a picture of what is happening and it offers a platform for creating meaning. At this juncture, it examines who uses language, how, why, and when. On the whole, a 'discursive event' can be examined from a 'three-dimensional' perspective: through the text dimension (content, structure and meaning of the text); discursive practice dimension (discursive interaction for communicating meaning and beliefs); social practice dimension (the social context the 'discursive' event is occurring in). Finally, intertextuality throws the lime-light on the historical and social environment in which the event takes place.

Teo (2000) used CDA to explain the print media coverage in two Australian papers on how racism is displayed. Using nine stories about a youthful Vietnamese 'gang' which deals in drugs, CDA is used to examine how stories offer some perspectives on how language is utilised to produce and legitimise racism in the media. The researcher shows that CDA throws the searchlight on the 'ideological basis' of a discourse that 'naturalises' and institutionalises behaviours and constructs like 'racism'. He draws attention to the various means used to draw out this reality in relation to the social construct of race and the security services' fight against narcotics. Teo (2000) cites a 'linguistic device' he calls generalisation which surfaces when some attributes of a designated group is generalised to a wider set of groups. For instance, crime is generalised to a larger group of young persons from Vietnam, South East Asia and Asians, with 'Vietnamese' and 'Asian' appearing a lot of times when it come to the reportage of this particular group. Using quotes like 'three Vietnamese men gunned down', 'the tall youth of Asian appearance' and 'five other youths of Asian appearance' provide a way of understanding the

ideological basis of racism using the CDA approach to documents.

Linus Abraham (2009) in his study on the 'Effectiveness of Cartoons as a Uniquely Visual Medium for Orienting Social Issues', situates cartoons within the theoretical framework of visual semiotics and persuasion, showing how effective cartoons are in political communication and public opinion formation. Basically, cartoons are seen as platforms for the constructing and framing of social reality, and that cartoonists are in the business of creating and manipulating public opinion. The author uses cartoons from the Clinton-Lewinsky case and the 9/11 attack and the war against 'terrorism', which had provided numerous opportunities for political and social cartooning. The examples, however, show an inclination for greater 'visual syntax' as opposed to words, thus offering the potential to scrutinise issues from both visual and semiotic angles in order to provide analytical and descriptive understanding. The cartoons which were used for the analysis, operate on an 'iconic' level in order to offer a 'representational, descriptive understanding of the cartoon'. They all use symbols for metaphorical and figurative effect, while a fourth cartoon displays a 'more complex visual syntagm', which functions as a 'visual illustration', since they cover icons, indices and symbols. Cartoons also depend on a wider cultural context which is shared among the readership to create the conducive environment for the understanding and transfer of meaning. Cartoons have the wherewithal to stimulate the 'collective consciousness' of their targets. He points at the recent global controversy which emerged from a cartoon produced by the *Jyllands-Posten* on Muhammed which led to the 'Cartoon Riots' as one of the most vivid examples of the impact of cartoons.

Methodology

Philosophy of Social Science

This discourse analysis study was undertaken within the world of the general philosophical underpinnings of epistemology and ontology which served as guideposts for the final strategy which was used. Under epistemology, relativism was used which embraces phenomenology, while under ontology, social reality was collapsed into a discourse of cartoons. Specifically for the two philosophical branches, the interpretative tradition through ethnomethodology determined the path undertaken since the strategy avoided the



hypothetico-deductive and positivist approach. Ethnomethodology, which is our concern here, deals with the fundamental argument that society is an amalgamation of several interactions guided by implicit meanings and symbols. It is the investigation of the approaches used by individuals to produce social life and interactions.

Research Approach

This context provides a framework for the use of the qualitative strategy to gather information on the cartoons. This study involved a multi-method approach which covered interviews, review of related literature and a discourse analysis of the *Akosua* cartoons. In this vein, therefore, interviews were conducted with select key persons within the Western Publications Ltd group and *Daily Guide* as a newspaper, namely, Freddy Blay, the publisher and former First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, Gina Blay, the Managing Editor; Fortune Alimi, Editor and A.R. Gomda, News Editor, Godfried Dame, Solicitor for *Daily Guide* and also Yaw Odame Gyau, a Graphic arts specialist and lecturer in advertising at the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis, a sociological approach, was undertaken through the use of techniques emanating from content analysis, semiotics, linguistics, visual ethnography and literature. Under content analysis, the following were utilised, namely: direction (favourable, unfavourable and neutral), themes (political, social, sports), prominence/placement and political parties/institutions/actors. Under semiotics, two issues were looked at, which are the basic sign system, Pierce's signs (icons, indices and symbols) and inferences (adoption, deduction and induction). Here the three major modes of articulation were used to explain cartoons. Icons look like the objects they are dealing with, while an index is related in terms of existence, cause or physical affinity to the object/event. Meanwhile, the symbol does not have any link with the object at stake. From the perspective of inferences, Pierce also provides three key ones which are deduction, induction and abduction. Deduction entails abstract concepts which can be gleaned and known symbols and what they are associated with. Induction is less abstract and is an addition of one or more known phenomena linking such phenomena in terms of space, time and number of occurrences and similarities. Abduction refers to the

resemblance of an icon to a known object, and is easy to identify. Under linguistics, this paper examined the number of languages used for each cartoon. Bryman (2008) explains that visual ethnography which has social anthropology origins, is the use of visual materials like photographs especially, but for our purposes, cartoons, for social research. Pink (2001) offers two options when it comes to materials that are visual. Although the ordinary analytical framework is generally 'realist' providing an easy to comprehend portrayal of reality, the other option is 'reflexive' which is expected to take cognisance of how the visual can be interpreted, especially in terms of its impact on the researcher, or perhaps for our purposes, its impact on the reader. The issue of the reader also involved whether it is with or without assistance from his/her 'background' and/or any interpretation by a third party or opinion leader. Finally, the analysis involved an examination of literary devices like metaphors, symbols, allusions, etc.

This discourse analysis involved the investigation of three propositions as a means of gathering information on the ontology of these cartoons:

Proposition One: Akosua cartoons will reflect the ideological stance of the publisher.

Proposition Two: Akosua cartoons will dwell more on 'political' issues than on other types of issues.

Proposition Three: Akosua cartoons will be gender-blind in the portrayal of gender issues.

Findings

Proposition One

Proposition One: Akosua cartoons will reflect the ideological stance of the publisher.

The title of the cartoon in Proposition One A, 'Bawumania', provides the appropriate context within which this cartoon was produced which was during the period before the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana. The title is a combination of the name Bawumia and 'mania', as a psychological construct. The vice presidential candidate for the then ruling



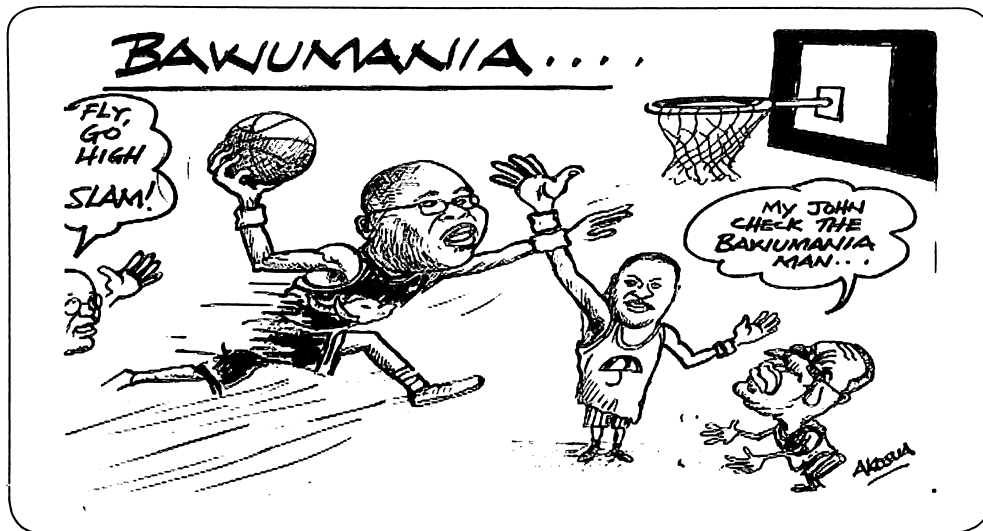
party, New Patriotic Party (NPP), had just been introduced to the electorate and so the visuals were used effectively to promote the cause of the NPP through the use of a sports context. Apart from the title, which paves the way for the subsequent positive portrayal of this party, there is a picture of the presidential candidate encouraging him to 'go high' which was a line in one of the campaign songs of that party. More significantly, size is used as a means of projecting this aspirant, the NPP and their ideological position in a favourable way. The message is also fully articulated through pictures when one scrutinises the dispositions of the four persons portrayed. The candidates for the NPP are given, not only greater space, but are more cheerful, in relative terms than to the candidates for NDC. The vice-presidential candidate for NDC is more passive, with his presidential candidate displaying a rather worried look. It is obvious that speed and determination are shown by the fact that there will be a slam for this basketball player. The two vice presidential aspirants both wear their respective party symbols namely, the elephant and the umbrella. The language used is English, with the utilisation of the slangy expression 'check', which is supposed to mean the need to examine the NPP candidate, who is portrayed in a positive manner.

The second cartoon, titled 'Boom Check (2)', provides a particular construction of the NDC in an unfavourable light. The text shows the founder of the party querying the presidential candidate of his party about his weight loss. Certain signs and symbols that 'Akosua' often associates with the founder are used for effect here. The signs are the cross, a staff with 'Antoa' on it, and then the image of a frog which are used very often to create a reality of issues within the realm of metaphysics. It is the construction of the image of a person who is steeped in traditional spiritual and ritual matters.

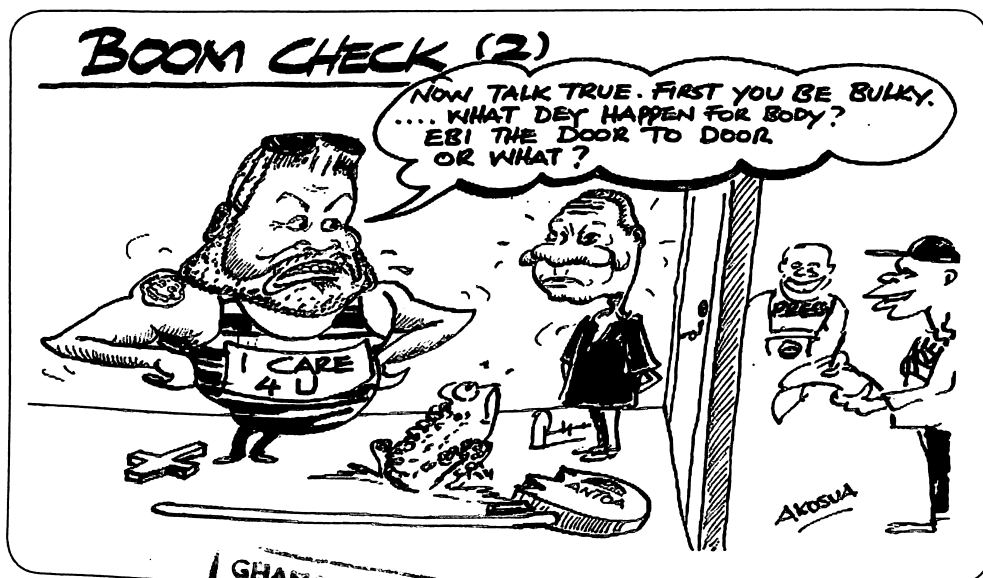
Apart from the 'realistic' portrayal of the two personalities, and the slogan 'I care 4 U', there is also a tattoo of the presidential candidate on the arm of the founder, further consolidating the fact that the cartoon is about the NDC. The title 'Boom Check (2)' further strengthens the fact that it is about the founder because the word 'boom' is associated with him as a public speaker who makes explosive comments and speeches. Here, Pidgin English is used for effect, in terms of appealing to the generality of the readers, for two reasons, the language itself has a rhetorical effect, while in terms of compre-

hension, it meets the linguistic literacy level of the average reader. It must be noted that the expression 'door to door' will resonate with the readers since at that time this was a campaign strategy of symbolic interaction of the candidate as opposed to the tactic of using rallies or the mass media for campaigning.

Proposition One A



Proposition One B



Proposition Two

Proposition Two: 'Akosua' cartoons will dwell more on political issues than on other issues.

Proposition Two A

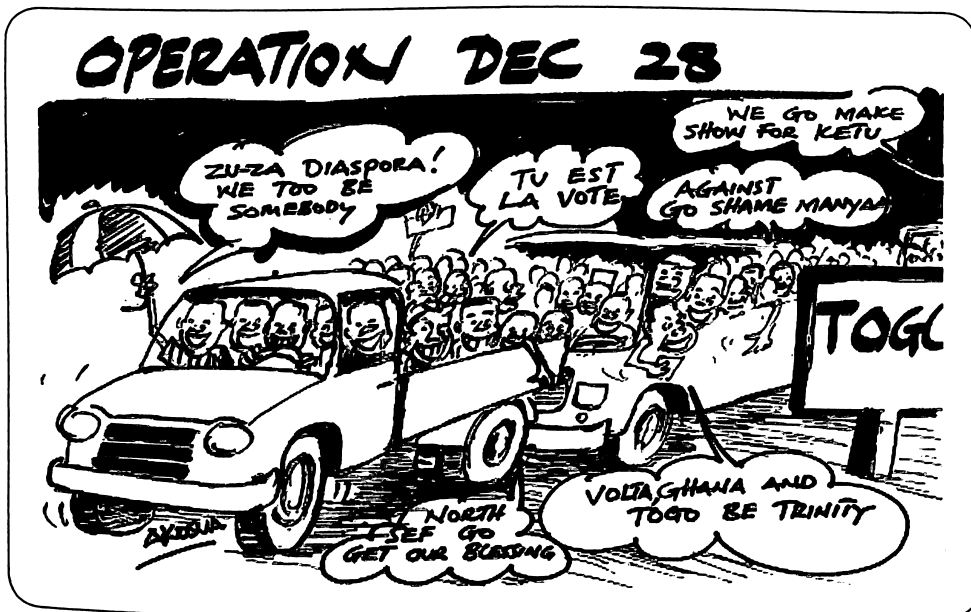


The cartoon 'Dance Palaver' is among the numerous cartoons which come under the theme of politics. The whole drama was enacted at the Elembele constituency in the Western Region when the aspirant for the parliamentary seat for the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) was accused by some members of his party of aligning himself with the then ruling party, NPP, because he had engaged in the act of dancing the 'kangaroo dance', which was associated with the political campaign of the NPP. In the cartoon, four political statements are made in the text which are first, that there is no point in annulling the earlier elections for choosing the party's parliamentary candidate. Second, unpleasant things are said about 'Paa' and third, one member of the crowd states that it is 'Elembeleblay forever and ever' and finally one person says 'jealousy go shame'. English, Pidgin English and Akan are used for ef-

fect in terms of ensuring a mass appeal of the message and to guarantee intelligibility of the message. It must be noted that sometimes, Twi a local language ('biara' or 'Akoko') are mixed with Pidgin English. Slangy expressions like 'jealousy go shame' also provide the context to explain the message.

The next cartoon undertakes a political construction of the belief among opponents of the NDC that a lot of unregistered voters enter the country to come and vote for the NDC from the eastern borders, specifically Togo. As usual, Pidgin English is used and to allude to the fact that these persons are coming from Togo, French is used in the text. NDC's complicity is shown by the use of an umbrella by one of the passengers in the vehicle and also the use of the political construct 'zu-za' which is associated with NDC's political campaign.

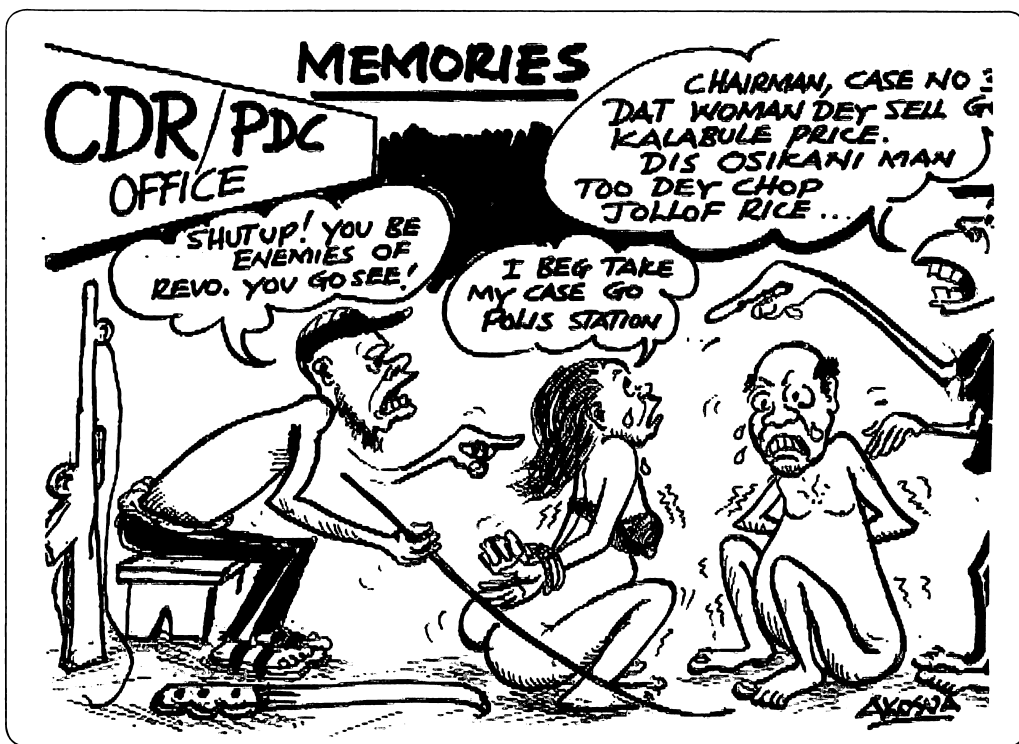
Proposition Two B



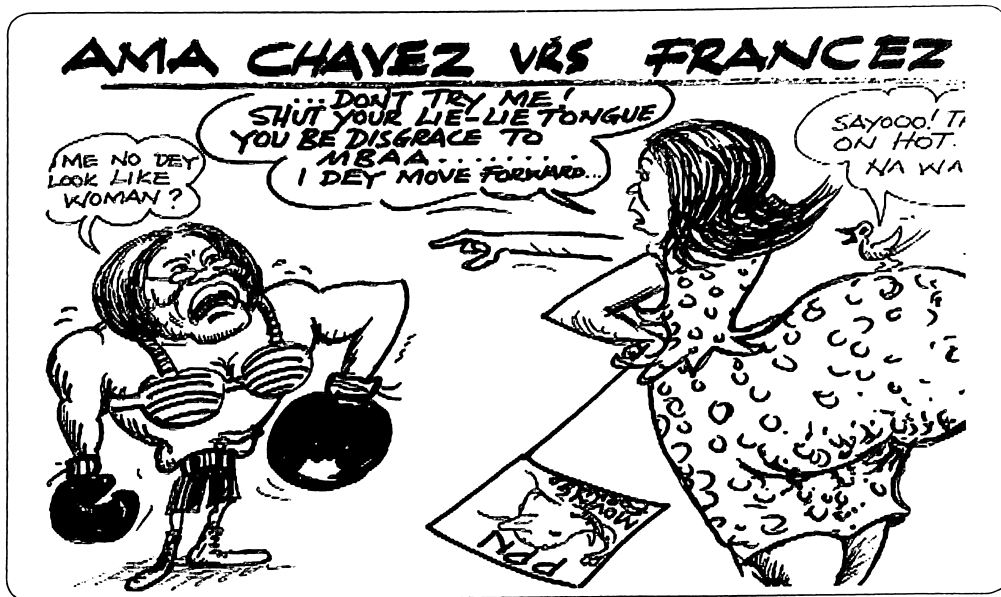
Proposition 3

Proposition Three: *Akosua* cartoons will be gender blind in the portrayal of gender issues.

Proposition Three A



Proposition Three B



The *Akosua* cartoon titled 'Memories' provides a historical rendition of certain actions which were taken by agents of the then military regime who were then in control of offices of the CDR/PDC and were reputed to have engaged in all kinds of brutalities against alleged 'enemies of the revolution'. Those who were at the receiving end were mostly traders and business people. The gender picture constructed provides a fair account of events from a gender perspective. While the general impression of this 'revolutionary' reality has been portrayed in an explicit manner, it is not obscene, and the woman to some extent is 'clothed' in a brassiere although the broader goal is to show that they have been dehumanised by being stripped 'naked'. The effect is even greater if one is to look at the charges of the 'prosecutor', that they are selling at 'kalabule' price and the man was eating 'jollof' rice. A person had been 'arrested' for eating a 'luxury' meal, like 'jollof rice'. The language as usual is Pidgin English, Twi and a Ghanaian word like 'kalabule' which simply refers to excessive profiteering. The background featuring a security person with a cane and a cutlass by his side and an AK 47 rifle

behind him provide a visual atmosphere of what the 'revolutionaries' unleashed onto males and females in the country.

The last cartoon, 'Ama Chavez vrs Francez' provides an account of a clash which occurred between two political heavyweights incidentally divided between the two major political parties, the NPP and NDC. This particular cartoon does not portray any of the main ideological positions in a negative light. It must be noted that while one of the two personalities is portrayed in a physically exaggerated manner, the other person who has Chavez attached to her name is shown as a boxer. This name was conferred on her by her political opponents, following an incident at a radio station where she was supposed to have had a serious disagreement with a male journalist who, as the story goes, was reputed to have been 'floored' by this 'political heavyweight'.

Discussions

Technical Considerations

Akosua cartoons have specific trademarks which provide a unique context for appreciating them. The particular placement which is prominent unless in special cases, gives it the appropriate visibility, within the single frame format. Indexicality plays a major role on the use of icons and symbols. Another crucial issue is that the cartoons are 'realist' which makes it possible for the reader to identify the 'actors'. From the perspective of the graphic art of cartooning, while sharing the conventional affinity of 'realist' portrayal of 'actors', when it comes to 'hatching' and 'cross hatching', some more effort needs to be put in for all cartoons. The characteristic utilisation of extensive text in cartoons is understandable because of the average level of education for the reader. Expressions which use pockets of a local context to create order and factuality are 'indexical'. These expressions assist in organising information as a means for interpreting their subsequent intercourses.

Abraham's (2009) description which stresses on the genre's complexity and 'deeply embedded meanings' may not be wholly appropriate for cartoons in an 'emerging economy' context. First, the issue of 'visual literacy' which is key to appreciating cartoons, shows that comprehension levels of the USA reader cannot be equated with that of the average reader in Ghana. Under

these circumstances, it will be pointless to communicate a message, using complex and deep symbols.

Abraham (2009) explains that, cartoons are multisensory signs which function descriptively and analytically, with the descriptive mode aiming at presenting events in an understandable manner and therefore showing traits of a low level of abductive influence making. The analytical component, however, calls for a greater level in terms of the abstract, which offers positions and messages which are more complex and abstract. On the whole, they should show political issues, 'literary/cultural allusions', individual character attributes and passing events. Eventually the cartoonist creates some physical and psycho-social characteristics which metamorphose into accepted ways of perceiving characters. Due to the constraint of space, visual metaphors are utilised in order to encapsulate the message in a clear and memorable manner, through exaggeration, embellishment and distortion for effect.

Generalisability

To avoid the criticism of interpretism as not attending to a systematic mode of measurement, therefore displaying timidity about stating theories from an inductive inference, due to the 'positivist' obsession with generalisability, we are going to offer a qualitative strategy position. We wish to move from the notion that interpretism cannot be undertaken in order to produce some generalisable positions which can become theory as such. We agree with Geertz (1993) that the goal of 'building a theory' is not to produce regularities which are abstract but to describe fully and not to offer 'generalisations across phenomena but to generalise within these. For the purpose of producing inferences, we need to place the inference within a frame which is intelligible. Here, theory becomes the means for analysing and concluding on social discourse.

Williams (2000) calls for 'moderatum' generalisation and explains that some sources on qualitative research refer to generalisation 'obliquely' within the framework of 'external validity', 'transferability' and 'confirmability' and that generalisability is inevitable in interpretivist research. He presents three types of generalisations, namely, total generalisation (where a situation is, is x identical to x in every detail, for example, the second law of thermodynamics), statistical generalisations (the probability of a situation x occurring

more widely can be estimated from cases of x samples and population hinged on probability sampling and the evidence of level of confidence, etc.) and 'moderatum' generalisation, where aspects of x can be identified in a broader set of features, associated within interpretive research. This is the foundation for 'inductive reasoning' in which the sample covers a 'relevant range of units' connected to the 'wider universe', but not representing it.

Hammersley (1992) has said that investigation can use 'empirical characteristics' to make 'theoretical claims'. He further indicates that interpretive research leads to 'theoretical inference' which means that conclusions are arrived at about the relationships among various phenomena. The grounding for moderatum generalisability is 'culture consistency' as shown in the social world of discourse analysis. This study which is more ideographic, reflecting a concrete type of reality, though empirical, uses a sample which cannot produce 'axiomatic' or 'statistical generalisation', an issue far beyond the purview of an interpretive effort. However, despite these issues raised, we wish to use some attributes of interpretive research like 'thick description', 'inductive reasoning' and 'moderatum' generalisation. These provide a basis for explaining the reality of *Akosua* cartoons, as part of the editorial content and reflecting the ideological stance of the publishers.

Social and Legal Considerations

Cartoons have always had legal and social conflict implications. Katz (2004) indicates that before the First World War, 'radicals' like Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson and John Sloan were churning out 'highly charged drawings' for 'socialist journals' as well as 'watered down' types for the mainstream press. The efforts of Art Young and his colleagues which were against the war led to the indictment for sedition of 'The Masses' in 1914 by the government. They were acquitted but the US Postal Service shut down the paper.

Cartoons as part of editorial matter have very dire ramifications in terms of risks and benefits. The *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, which led to the 'cartoon riots', published in Denmark in September 2005, portrayed Prophet Muhammed in a manner that some Muslims saw as insulting and aimed at the small Islamic sector of Denmark. This issue snowballed into an issue of 'global' implications for the Islamic world. Those who were against the theme of the cartoon saw it as a huge spiritual and religious affront

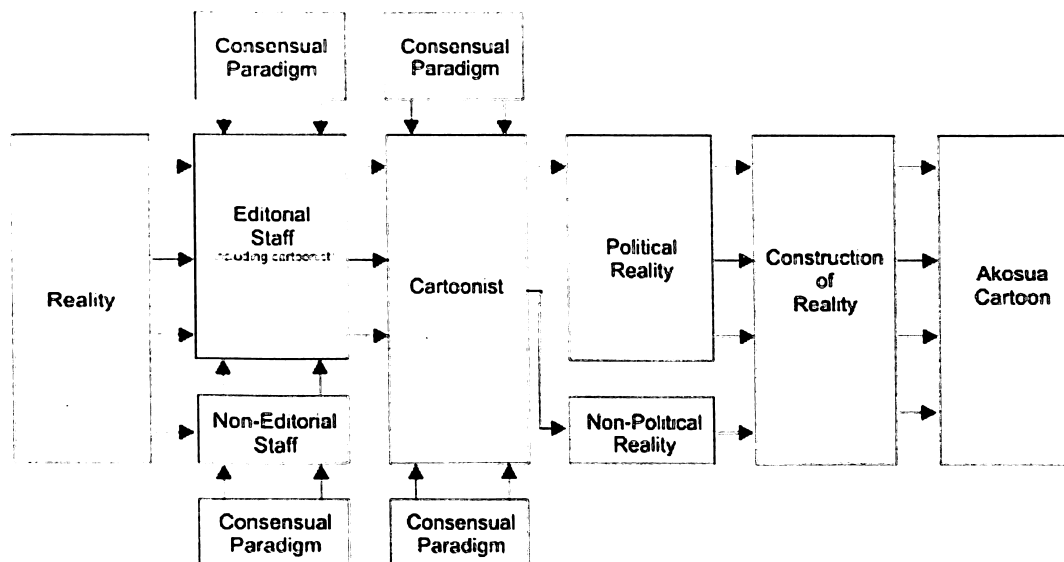
to the Muslims who live in Denmark. This matter did not just lead to a conflict with global Islamic ramifications leading to demonstrations and a threat of death against the cartoonist, but also led to the closure of a few diplomatic missions in reaction. Apart from these bilateral reactions, wider groups within the Arab world like the Organisation of Islamic Conference and Arab League demanded sanctions from the United Nations, while in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Middle East countries, huge demonstrations and boycotts took place (Abraham, 2009).

The case in Ghana, on the other hand also has legal 'risks'. In November 2005, a member of parliament issued a writ, claiming that on 30th August 2005, the *Daily Guide* published an effigy of the plaintiff grafted onto the body of a sheep. The sheep with the effigy of the plaintiff superimposed was following an image of a person who looked like the then President Kuffour. The plaintiffs claimed general damages for libel. Although the defendants won the case in 2010, the review of this case shows the risks and costs involved in publishing cartoons.

Ideological Position

This discourse analysis shows the importance of framing the ontology of 'Akosua' cartoons within the consensual paradigm of the Western Publications Ltd. The history of the *Daily Guide* as shown in its origins and the trials and tribulations of the publication, the adoption of a particular ideological position, provide a context for appreciating the particular ideological stance of the paper. Reality as exhibited by 'Akosua' cartoons shows a designated social construction of reality. The first model described as 'Construction of reality for *Akosua* cartoons' paints the process that 'reality' undergoes within the broad consensual paradigm of the paper. As was explained by some editorial staff, sometimes the public and other editorial staff provide ideas for the production of a cartoon. It must be noted that 'Akosua' cartoon themes are mostly political in nature with the rest shared between social and sports news. In fact, for this study, 76 percent of the cartoon population examined were political in nature.

Construction of Reality for Akosua Cartoons

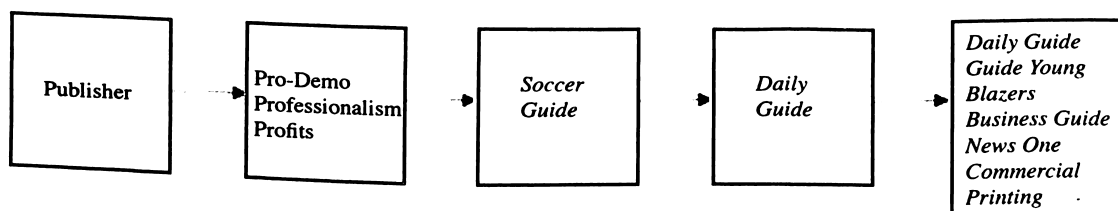


Another conclusion also arrived at is the issue of the Publisher's Driving Principles which are Pro-Democracy, Professionalism and Profits (Three Ps). The origins of *Daily Guide*, which to a large extent was under the military junta Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), is described by Brob-bey (2009) as affiliated to the NDC and ideologically as 'Socialist-Demo-crats'. Gasu (2009) also provides a picture of the PNDC rule as articulated by Kwame Karikari. Karikari had stated that Ghana under Jerry Rawlings marked the highest point in the deployment of a varied suppressive arsenal against the 'recalcitrant' media. In many ways the PNDC was archetypically authoritarian. This characterization emanated from its own intent of launch-ing a people's revolution, which was exclusive in its definition of the 'people' in whose name the revolution was launched. Gasu offers another perspective of the PNDC:

The PNDC itself was hardly an ideologically homogeneous entity, as it was soon realised that the only thing that united the early members of the government was their employment of the leftist revolutionary verbiage. The original members of the military-based government began to pull in different directions that halted progress. (p.97)

The history of the *Daily Guide* shows clearly that while the publishers were pursuing their pro-democracy ideological agenda, they were also putting in place structures that will facilitate the two other driving principles, namely, Professionalism and Profits. Some Marxist scholars have divided the media into two areas: 'Commercial laissez-faire' and the 'Mass manipulative' model using the Dominant Paradigm theory as a basis. It is our conclusion that this publishing house uses the two principles, within a framework of professionalism to prosecute its agenda of the three Ps. This is reflected in a few ways. While the *Daily Guide* has become a flagship for the three Ps, other papers in the group may concentrate on more Professionalism and Profits, without the Pro-Democracy drivers. So how does *Akosua* cartoons come in here? It is our proposition that *Akosua* cartoons are a key driver and a part of the commercial success story and of turning a single paper into a multi-paper group, with a commercial printing arm. Or perhaps more directly, to what extent is the *Akosua* cartoon a driver of sales of the paper as opposed to consumption without sales?

Publisher's Driving Principles: The Three Ps (Pro-Democracy, Professionalism, Profits)



Feminist Ethnography

The issues at stake here are the extent to which there is a social reproduction of the women's world, which does not put them at an inferior social position in relation to men. Here, are there attempts to reduce the worth of the



woman within the social world, especially within a 'masculinity' frame or does the portrayal show a comprehensive appreciation of women within the context of a non-exploitative portrayal? The supreme goal of feminist theory is the need to overturn this unequal treatment. The ontology of feminism refers to the reality that our social world is made up of differently 'manufactured' persons and this can be 'remanufactured', especially by questioning the very basic epistemic positions which sustains this social world, designed by male 'architects' like the three 'male sociologists' (Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim). The basis for these assumptions are that women are 'poorly' represented in terms of numbers and positions, unless in certain 'professions'; second, both sexes are represented in modes which reflect and perpetuate stereotypical views of gender especially in terms of patriarchy in society; women are shallow and finally in terms of male-female relationships, there is a picture of traditional sex role, like violence in all forms against women, dependence on men; women always playing second fiddle, etc.

Due to the seeming 'critical' approach that has been adopted by some feminists, feminism has been projected as a platform for the 'political' and 'cultural' struggle. There has emerged the 'female logic' as an inevitable outcome, due to its 'oppressed' position from the perspective of history. For some, the situation goes beyond ontology into the world of epistemology and specifically how this bias has affected the method of science in normal enquiry (Potter, 2000) or mainstream scientific practice. Social science has been accused of perpetrating the reality of the public and private spheres, exhibiting the actual assumption of a gendered hierarchy and the social stratification in terms of activities. Here the attempt is to dismember the 'malestream' reality, a 'masculinity' which has been 'reified and then naturalised' or 'commonised' to become commonsense. Does the *Akosua* cartoon portray a sexist construction of reality or reality determined by patriarchal ideology? Epistemological privileging has occurred in the use of metaphors, constructs and portrayal of males in areas like law, theology and the process of socialisation as far as the primary social institution, family is concerned. Our analysis is not going to stretch to the construction of 'womanhood' to represent an all involving ontology of females which will then hide certain fundamental differences and interests among women.

Fragmentation has surfaced due to strands like: radical, Marxist, socialist, conservative, liberal, black and perhaps African. The last group can claim existence if the African female middle class can theorise with an all-round position. Universal 'sisterhood' becomes impossible because there is no united front from the perspectives of 'politics, race, class, ethnicity and even sexuality'. Self identity becomes socially constructed and not universal for the 'sisters'. Perhaps, we are analysing 'feminism' more from postmodernism's approach where there is a more careful scrutiny of the differences than the similarities.

This study was interested in the extent to which there was 'stereotyping', 'underrepresentation' and sex-role 'socialisation' which are associated with media content (McQuail, 2005, p.121). Another set of principles is the 'patriarchal ideology' which is about the role of men and women in society. Zoonen (2002) raises issues about how gender discourses are encoded, how receivers use and interpret such texts, and how such 'reception' adds to the construction of gender at the individual level. This is key, since gender underpins the media-culture link, especially gender definition. The concern has always been the 'invisibility' of women on news platforms and their 'ghettoization' to certain topics. There is also the 'trivialisation, personalisation and sensationalism', which are associated with the prevailing 'stereotypes' and 'feminisation' (McQuail, 2005, p. 122).

The reality of males and females in the Proposition Three A who were victims of the 'excesses' of the 'revolution' shows a comprehensive depiction of events. Here, women were not spared, and though the 'violence' was undertaken by men, the inclusion of a female stripped to the brassiere shows a fair coverage of both males and females during the period. For the purposes of discussion, one can conclude that ironically the second cartoon deals with a reality which will be regarded as scandalising by 'radical Marxist feminists' who will find the theme obnoxious, because the emphasis was on physical and aesthetic attributes of one of the women ('me no dey look like woman?'). The positive side of this portrayal is the fact that the women are given prominence because of their stature as leading politicians in their own right. However, their portrayal is in no way enhanced with the theme treated which is essentially 'feminine' (how attractive one of them is).

Conclusions

The discourse analysis of *Akosua* cartoons has strived to discover the 'universe' of the editorial content, by utilising principles, (logic, ontology, epistemology, ethnography, literature, semiotics, law) to provide some social explanations of the political sphere in 2008. Cartoons in an 'emerging economy' like ours are challenged by readability and analytical factors which are hinged on the level of education of the average reader and the individual's ability to translate this into 'visual literacy'. The implications then mean more description and enumeration of issues than a high level analysis of social reality. There is always a keen objective of avoiding complex symbols or images, with an emphasis on a lot of text in order to meet the literary appreciation level of the general readership. The use of Pidgin English is also noteworthy since it is a vehicle for ensuring meaning for the average reader.

The basic distinction between European/American cartoons and the Ghanaian cartoon is very obvious. The issue of 'visual literacy' is related to general literacy, so that if the cartoon is to have mass appeal there must be a greater use of icons and indices. Symbols are used sparingly and in such cases they must be very obvious to the reader in order to achieve its effect. Abduction is more common, while induction is far less utilised (unless in extreme cases like the use of the frog or Antoa to construct one key political character). On the whole, from the perspective of art, we are talking more about 'realist' constructions, with less reflexivity in terms of the interpretation of the reader. On the whole, 'Akosua' cartoons are a record of our history, even if to a large extent they portray a specific reality as 'manufactured' by the perspective of *Daily Guide*.

There are issues which need to be considered. While cartoons are an integral part of the *Daily Guide*, cartooning is still not well developed and mainstreamed. A relatively nascent sub-sector means that not many graphic artists are being motivated to become cartoonists. Also even for the *Daily Guide*, the cartoonist only works part-time, while maintaining a full time job. If this sub-sector is going to grow then there should be greater opportunities for cartoonists in the print media landscape.

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