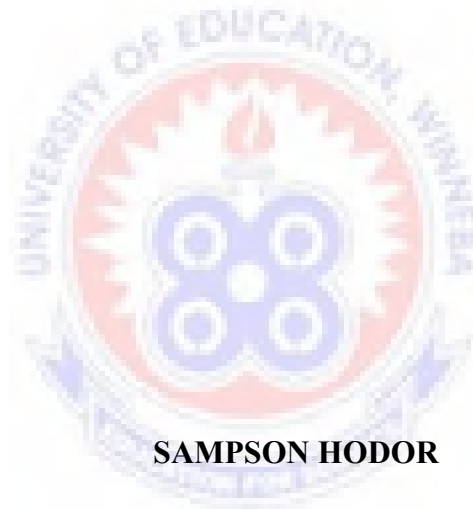


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**FRAMES OF POVERTY: A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF  
SELECTED NEWSPAPERS IN GHANA**

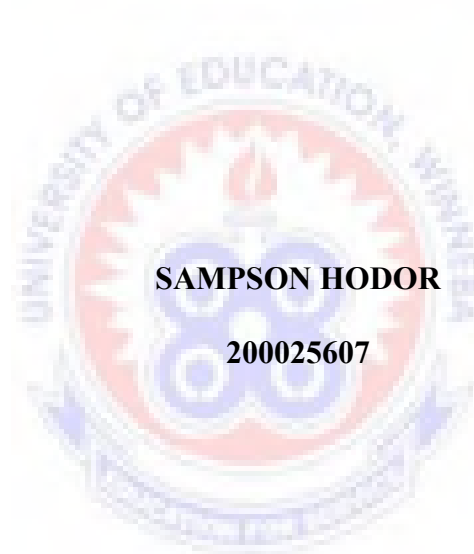


**SAMPSON HODOR**

**2021**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**FRAMES OF POVERTY: A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF  
SELECTED NEWSPAPERS IN GHANA**



**A Thesis in the Department of Communication and Media Studies, Faculty of  
Foreign Languages Education and Communication, Submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment**

**of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Business Communication)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**MARCH, 2021**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Sampson Hodor, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **Michael Yao Wodui Sewornoo (PhD)**

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

## **DEDICATION**

To my father and mother and to my new family, soon to be constituted



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A part of the period of undertaking this study was a time of the COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions and adjustments in all spheres of life, but God kept faith with me and I express my profound gratitude for His continued protection over my life. I have always maintained that I cannot take His love for granted.

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acknowledged. Reverend W.K. Hodor, my senior brother, and all my siblings, you all deserve a heart of gratitude.

I end here with this quote by John Mason, “No one is alone. Have a grateful heart and be quick to acknowledge those who help you ... there is no such thing as a ‘self-made man’; we’re all made up of thousands of others.” George Adams maintained, “Everyone who has ever done a kind deed for us, or spoken one word of encouragement to us, has entered into the makeup of our character and of our thoughts, as well as our success.”

God bless you all.



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## ABSTRACT

Poverty has remained a cancer that plague many developing countries and the media have a role to play in eradicating poverty. This study examines the prominence the media give to issues of poverty, the frames used by the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers to report issues of poverty and the reasons for using these frames from the perspective of journalists. Newspaper content analyses and interview are the methods used to collect data for the study. Premised on the agenda-setting and framing theories, contents of the two state-owned newspapers, published from January to December, 2019 were analysed, and 263 poverty-related stories were identified. The analyses of these stories revealed that the media in Ghana give little prominence to issues of poverty in comparison with the frequency and placement of poverty-related stories in the newspapers. Four frames – poverty redress, poverty advocacy, plight of the poor, the poor as nuisance – emerged from the data analysed. Thus, the newspapers dominantly frame poverty as a phenomenon that is being addressed, and advocate for its address. Journalists argued that the sources of poverty news, economic reasons, personal values of journalists and media as mirror of society are the dominant reasons these frames are used to report issues of poverty. The study recommends, therefore, that the media pay more attention to and report issues of poverty, especially when poverty remains a plague that hangs on the neck of the majority of Ghanaians.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a general overview of the study. It focuses on the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, and research questions that guided the study. The significance of the study, delimitation of the research, and the organization of the thesis are also encapsulated in this chapter.

#### **1.0 Background to the Study**

Since poverty assumed a globalized dimension in the 1970s, a caustic debate has arisen over its meaning (Debrah, 2013). Debrah (2013) explained that many explanations of the term poverty have reflected ideological and personal values, as scholars have struggled to articulate the concept by using their terms, ultimately to influence public policymakers.

As history demonstrates, definitions and approaches to poverty are bound up with the dominant social, political, and economic ideas and practices of a time (Redden, 2011). History also demonstrates that definitions of poverty have far more influence on whether or not poverty is addressed or ignored than its depth and severity (Edelman, 1993). Newspapers are central to this construction, and despite the long-term decline in fortunes of print journalism globally, the national press still plays a key role in setting the news and subsequent political agenda (McCombs, 2004). In the view of Redden (2011), how poverty is understood influences what is done about it, for example whether or not there is a redistribution of resources to create greater equality. It is for this reason, as Lister (2004) argues, that the meaning of poverty is continually contested.

This study seeks to examine more closely the prominence given to issues of poverty in the print media in Ghana and frames used in reporting these issues through a qualitative content analysis of selected newspapers.

### **1.1 Poverty: an Overview**

Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon (United Nations, 2009). The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social, and cultural life. Thus, while the economic dimension remains central, other factors such as lack of opportunities, vulnerabilities, and social exclusion are recognized as important in defining poverty (United Nations, 2009).

Mollie Orhansky who is accredited with the development of poverty measures in the United States by the government also denotes that poverty is the deprivation of those necessities as well as pleasures that are taken for granted by other people (Schwartz, 2005). According to Schwartz (2005), a state of poverty is to be deprived of those goods, services, and pleasures which others around us take for granted. From this argument, it can be deduced that what would be considered as poverty varies from person to person, from one community to another community and these variations confirm the argument that the meaning of poverty remains contested (Lister, 2004).

Poverty is the oldest and the most resistant virus that brings about a devastating disease in the third world or developing countries (Tazoacha, 2001). Its rate of killing cannot be compared to any disease from the genesis of mankind (Addae-Korankye, 2014). It is worse than malaria and HIV/AIDS which are claimed to be the highest killer diseases (Tazoacha, 2001), and even worse than EBOLA (Addae-Korankye, 2014). Poverty is hunger, a lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see a doctor (World Bank, 2005). Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation, and freedom (World Bank, 2005). According to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (2005), the poor often lack access to finance and income-earning opportunities.

Poverty in Africa, according to Addae-Korankye (2014), is caused by corruption and poor governance, poor land utilization and land tenure system, civil wars and unending political conflicts, poor infrastructure, diseases, and poor health facilities, the World Bank and IMF policies, among others. To the author, poverty can only be fought with strong institutions, and equitable distribution of resources. This requires a non-corrupt government. However, in Africa, programs designed to fight poverty are not fully implemented because the funds end up in the hands of corrupt individuals, who pocket the majority.

The substantially higher levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas, where food, shelter, clothing, potable water, and other necessities of life are lacking, require stakeholders' intervention (Debrah, 2013). Ghana is not left out when one attempts to define urban and rural poverty. In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to



end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. The 2030 Agenda is universal and applies to all countries of the world, seeking to bring about transformative change to achieve inclusive, people-centered sustainable development with no one left behind. It recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development (UNDP, 2017).

## **1.2 Poverty in Ghana**

McKay, Pirttila, and Tarp (2015) analyzed trends in consumption and non-monetary poverty outcomes in Ghana since the early 1990s. They find an improvement in the majority of monetary and non-monetary indicators. For instance, non-monetary indicators such as infant and under-five mortality rates have declined over the period. Secondary school attendance rates and access to other services has improved. One measure that has not shown significant improvement over the period is the weight-for-height indicator for children. The issue of rising inequality is highlighted in the paper. They find an increase in spatial inequality in both monetary and non-monetary outcomes. A conclusion from the analysis is that inequality is one of the key reasons that growth occurring in the economy has not led to faster poverty reduction.

The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights of the Human Rights Council (HRC) visited Ghana in April 2018, following the Human Rights Council resolution 35/19. The purpose of the visit was to report to the Council on the extent to which the Ghana government's policies and programs relating to extreme poverty are consistent with its human rights obligations. The report indicated that the benefits of

record levels of economic growth experienced over the past decade have gone overwhelmingly to the wealthy. Inequality is higher than it has ever been in Ghana, while almost one person in four lives in poverty and one in twelve lives in extreme poverty (HRC Report, 2018).

The Special Rapporteur reported further that spending on social protection is very low by the standards of peer African countries, and remarkably little is spent on social assistance. Ghana has some admirable social programs, but few convincing plans for funding many of them adequately. As a result, a large number of Ghanaians do not enjoy their basic economic and social human rights and the prospects that Ghana will meet many of the Sustainable Development Goals are not encouraging. That notwithstanding, the report indicated, many Ghanaians, especially in rural areas such as those in the Northern part of the country, live in extreme poverty. Features of extreme poverty in rural areas in Ghana include low income, social exclusion, and high vulnerability to disasters and diseases. In urban areas, extreme poverty is evident in inequalities of access to social infrastructure including education and healthcare (HRC Report, 2018).

The World Poverty Clock (2018) reported that more than 2.8 million Ghanaians, representing about 10 percent of the population, are living in extreme poverty. The vast numbers are said to be living below the global poverty line of \$1.9 spending a day. According to the report by the World Poverty Clock, real-time data projections show that about 28 Ghanaians escape extreme poverty every hour, giving the country a fairly positive rank on the continent and in the world. Contrary to the observations of the Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur, the World Poverty Clock report shows that despite the significant number of persons identified to be living below the poverty line in

Ghana, the country is on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 1 of ending poverty in all forms by 2030.

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) presented the latest analysis of the living conditions of Ghanaian households and the poverty profile based on the seventh round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS7) conducted in 2016/17. It concluded that Ghana's economic performance has improved significantly over the years. The country registered a record high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 14.0 percent in 2012. The Ghanaian economy expanded by 8.5 percent in 2017 (GSS, 2018). Over the four-years (2013 to 2017), inflation assumed a downward trend. All these positive improvements in the performance of the economy are expected to translate into poverty reduction and the general well-being of the citizenry. Despite these recent improvements in the performance of the economy, the report indicated, poverty levels declined only marginally and inequality also appears to have worsened marginally (GSS, 2018).

The devastating consequences poverty brings to individuals and households require that particular attention is paid to its nature, causes, and prevention in Ghana and the world in general. Admittedly, how poverty should be confronted and addressed, have somewhat, remained a relevant topic to a lot of governments and international organizations such as the UN and World Bank.

### **1.3 Media Reportage of Poverty**

With the 2030 Agenda, reducing poverty has been transformed from a 'worthy cause' to a challenge in the public eye. This is where the media in all its forms is expected to come in handy. Reducing poverty, in the 2030 agenda, is much more

newsworthy for journalists and all media from the press to TV or radio, from social media to mobile phones and the use of ICT in general (UNDP, 2017). It is a significant opportunity for the media to play a strategic role in eradicating poverty by extensively reporting it in a manner that will call attention to it.

The media, the news, in particular, is a prime arena where the meaning of poverty is constructed, reinforced, and contested (Gamson, 2004). In the view of Burke (2014) when the lower class is depicted in the media, it is generally as a statistic, portrayed as a result of their own life choices, or twisted to fit into the social issue frame of the media's story. This may not be a sustained argument everywhere in the world but it is true that when the truth is left out of the media, people in our society bear the consequence (Burke, 2014). How poverty is being defined in the news and how both content and processes of news gathering influence political actors according to Lister, have important political and social consequences as dominant definitions of poverty are bound up with value judgments that influence which solutions are deemed necessary (Lister, 2004).

It can be argued that poverty is more likely to be acknowledged when it is described or presented through the mass media (McKendrick et al. 2008). Newspapers, television, films, blogs, and radio all present poverty to their respective audiences. The media might focus directly on poverty (such as when the incidence of poverty is reported in the news) or attention might be drawn to poverty as a significant context (such as when commentators speculate on the impact of an economic downturn). In either case, according to McKendrick et al. (2008), the media has the potential to be an important source of information about poverty and a forum for debate on poverty. It is this potential

that suggests that the media might play a key role in shaping people's understanding of poverty.

Research has established the powerful role of the media in informing the public about global, national, and local events. It is a powerful medium for shaping opinion and policy (Sikanku, 2008; Chauhan & Foster, 2013). Changes in national policies often come about after a sustained media campaign, raising public awareness and causing national debates. High-quality public service and public service journalism in particular should be supported as public goods (Wood & Barnes, 2007). 'Public goods' they explained, is an economic term referring to goods which, once produced (or existing), benefit all members of a society – for instance, peace, clean air, education or judicial systems. Public interest journalism involves media content that provides citizens with access to information on key aspects of public life significantly affecting their well-being and involvement (UNDP, 2017). Those wishing to encourage the media to strengthen its coverage of poverty reduction should recognize and support the ability of relevant parts of the media, in principle, to play such critically independent roles.

The mass media provide their audience with different interpretations of reality, including the reality of people suffering from poverty and exclusion (Kanasz, 2017). The media representation of poverty can be easily distorted or simplified, for example as a result of missing out a broader context or the lack of reflection on the causes and consequences of the problem. Other factors at play are various interests of media producers. Since some of them display a distinctly profit-oriented attitude, it is difficult to expect them to avoid stereotypical images of poverty (Kanasz, 2017).

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Poverty has many dimensions and is characterised by low income, malnutrition, ill-health, illiteracy, and insecurity, among others (GSS, 2018). The impact of the different factors could combine to keep households, and sometimes whole communities, in abject poverty. To address these, reliable information is required to develop and implement policies that would have an impact on the lives of the poor and vulnerable. The media is the single and most effective tool in gathering and sharing the necessary information that will call for discussions and subsequent actions towards issues of poverty such as poor health, illiteracy, hunger, and survival (UNDP, 2017). The prominence the media give to issues of poverty in Ghana and the frames used to report poverty issues are the concerns of this study.

Scholarship is available on the causes and effects of poverty. For instance, Addae-Korankye (2014) analyzed the causes of poverty in Africa and concluded that poverty can only be fought in the presence of strong institutions, and equitable distribution of resources. Cooke, Hague and McKay (2016) in the Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report, assessed the relationships between growth, poverty reduction and inequality among others and found that Ghana has not achieved inclusive growth as the wealthiest have benefited the most.

Research on media attention to, and reportage, about poverty is equally available globally. Bullock, Wyche, and Williams (2001) who worked on 'Media images of the poor' indicated that direct references to poverty in televised news programs are particularly uncommon. Consistent with the relative lack of open public discourse about social class in the United States, only 36 stories of the 197 news programs analyzed by

Entman (1995) made overt references to “poverty” or “the poor,” and few stories documented poverty in terms of wealth and income distribution. Frustrated by the lack of poverty-related reporting, Entman (1995) suggests that viewers unfamiliar with U.S. culture might fail to realize that poverty is caused by a lack of money. Instead, they might infer that “inexplicably, some people choose to live in deteriorated neighborhoods where they frequently either commit or become victims of crime or have trouble receiving health care or finding adequate schools” (Entman, 1995 p. 144).

Chauhan and Foster (2014) worked on the representation of poverty in British newspapers and found that in the domestic context, media represents poverty as a problem limited to vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. The representations of poverty outside the UK are vivid and elaborate, and the news reports hold the socio-political inefficiency of countries responsible for poverty. They indicated further that there is a lack of discussion on the socio-economic causes and contributing factors of poverty and that media representations distance general society from poverty, representing it as a problem of the ‘other’.

Parkyn (2018) researched on how media coverage of poverty impacts our ability to solve it. The stereotyping and demonization of people living in poverty was a key theme of the literature he reviewed but was not visible in the content or discourse analysis of data he did. He found out that current levels of coverage of poverty are low but not as stigmatizing as they have been historically. Afridi (2011), McKendrick et al. (2008), Redden (2011), UNDP (2017) are among research works that focus attention on media reportage on the issues of poverty.

Despite the numerous researches available on media reportage of poverty, only a few researches focused on the frames used to report issues of poverty (Bullock, Wyche & Williams, 2001; Rose & Baumgartner, 2013). Rose and Baumgartner (2013), for example, worked on framing the poor by analyzing media coverage of the US Poverty Policy from 1960 to 2008. They found out that public policy toward the poor has shifted from an initial optimism during the War on Poverty to an ever-increasing pessimism. Media discussion of poverty has shifted from arguments that focus on the structural causes of poverty or the social costs of having large numbers of poor to portrayals of the poor as cheaters and chiselers and of welfare programs doing more harm than good. They then compared the newspaper frames to the US government's welfare policies and concluded that as the frames have shifted, policies have also shifted. However, their work falls short of finding the reasons behind the frames from the perspectives of journalists. The present study will fill this vacuum.

It is evident that media coverage of issues of poverty has received research attention globally, but not in Ghana specifically. Studies on media portrayals of issues of poverty have received little scholarly attention in Ghana. The available studies related to poverty in Ghana are reports of international bodies such as the UNDP, WHO, World Bank among others. This gap in the literature concerning poverty reportage in the Ghanaian media is what this study seeks to fill.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the prominence given to issues of poverty by the Ghanaian newspapers; study the frames used to report poverty issues by selected newspapers, and investigate the reasons for the frames from the perspectives of journalists. These will be done through a qualitative content analysis of the selected 2019



editions of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers, and grounded using social representation theories.

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The following objectives guided the study;

1. To examine the prominence newspapers give to issues of poverty in Ghana
2. To identify the frames newspapers used to report issues of poverty in Ghana
3. To investigate the reasons behind these frames from the perspectives of the journalists

### **1.6 Research questions**

The study sought to provide answers to the following questions;

1. What prominence do newspapers give to poverty issues in Ghana?
2. What are the frames newspapers use to report issues of poverty in Ghana?
3. What are the reasons behind the frames of poverty from the perspectives of the journalists?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Considering the role the media play in drawing attention to issues of national and global concern, it is important to investigate the prominence the media give to issues of poverty. This is because poverty remains a canker that seems to defy cure. It has rendered many powerless, hungry, and sick. This study will uncover the kinds of representations

given to issues of poverty in the media in Ghana and trace the reasons for such representations.

Frames used to report issues of poverty have largely influenced the amount of attention given to poverty (Rose & Baumgartner, 2013) and as the frames shifted, government policies regarding poverty have also shifted (ibid, 2013). This study will help direct the attention of the powers that be to the issues of poverty. This will prompt actions to be taken and policies formulated to alleviate poverty in Ghana.

This work will also help draw further empirical and scholarly attention to poverty issues and stoke the debate concerning the media's role in fostering development and improvement in the lives of Ghanaians further. This work will corroborate the many efforts being made by such international bodies as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Health Organization (WHO).

### **1.8 Delimitation**

The study focused on the frames used by selected newspapers to report issues of poverty and the reasons for such frames from the perspectives of journalists. However, the study was limited to poverty situations in Ghana and how the media in Ghana framed such issues in their reportage.

The study was also limited to the print media, specifically, two newspapers: *The Daily Graphic* and *The Ghanaian Times*. These newspapers were selected for the study because they are state-owned and have the mandate to report on national issues free of ethical, political, and social biases. They have also been identified as Ghanaian newspapers with the largest daily circulation in the country. The influence of the state-

owned media in setting the media's agenda in most African countries, including Ghana, is usually powerful (Sikanku, 2008; Nunoo, 2016). This study will, therefore, identify if the state-owned newspapers indeed give prominence to issues of poverty.

Again, in selecting respondents for the study, only four journalists were selected to establish the reasons for the frames used to report issues of poverty in the newspapers in Ghana. The study focused on journalists who report for newspapers and excluded those who report for broadcast media (radio and television). This helped collate data from the very reporters of the news items that constituted the data set for the study.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides a background of the study, statement of the problem, the research objectives, research questions, and the relevance or significance of the study. The delimitations of the study and how the entire study is organized equally concerns the first chapter of the study.

Chapter two of this study discussed the views of other researchers concerning the issue of poverty and how the media reports it. It interrogates the positions of scholars in the field, the proposals they made in their studies, and how these propositions feed into the present study. It also discussed the theoretical frameworks within which the present study is situated. The third chapter of the study, captioned 'Methodology', encompassed the research approach, the design, subjects of the study, sample and sampling procedures, and data collection methods. Data collection procedures and methods of data analysis are also discussed in chapter three.

The fourth chapter of the study is dedicated to the findings and discussion of the study. Chapter five contains the summary of the findings of the study, the conclusions drawn, and recommendations made for further studies.

### **1.10 Summary**

The phenomenon of poverty has remained a concern for many governments in Africa and the world over including global organizations. How poverty should be addressed has continued to lead discussions across the world, making reducing poverty in all its forms the number one global goal of the United Nations SDG. The media's role in this global agenda remains crucial. This study examines how the media have done this over the years in the world and how it is being done now in Ghana. Specifically, the study set out to analyze the frames used to report poverty-related news in two state-owned newspapers in Ghana.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the views of scholars in the area of poverty and media research. It touches on the definitions and descriptions of the phenomenon of poverty, poverty in Africa, and the poverty trends in Ghana. It examines the literature on media reportage of poverty and the frames used to report issues of poverty by the media. The chapter also touched on the important role the media can play in reducing poverty. The theories that ground the study are also discussed in this chapter.

#### 2.1 Defining Poverty

Definitions of poverty matter in an attempt to understand the phenomenon. They set the standards by which we determine whether the incomes and living conditions of the poorest in society are acceptable or not. Definitions of poverty are also important, as they influence the way interventions and policies addressing poverty are shaped. Despite these, there is ambiguity as to how the term 'poverty' is used and as a result, a range of definitions exist, influenced by different disciplinary approaches, world views, and ideologies (Handley, Higgins, Sharma, Bird & Cammack, 2009).

Conceptualising poverty is an elusive task (Chauhan & Foster, 2014). It has been conceived as the lack of monetary resources (for example, the international poverty line in Ravallion, Chen, & Sangraula, 2009), as capability deprivation (Sen, 1985, 1993) and as social exclusion (Jones, 2002). These paradigms are remarkably different from one another, yet they provide equally valid notions of poverty. In the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) report (2004) on the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), it is indicated that poverty is now recognized as multi-dimensional with complex interactive and causal relationships between the dimensions. This means that regardless of the differences in the definition of poverty, there are connections and or commonalities in the causes and effects of poverty in such definitions.

In attempting to summarize the definition of poverty, Englama and Bamidele (1997) asserted that:

Poverty, in both relative and absolute terms, refers to a circumstance where a person is not able to fend or provide sufficiently for his or her necessities or fundamental human requirements such as clothing and decent accommodation, food, the fulfillment of social and economic responsibilities, non-access to productive employment, lack of skills, resources and confidence; and has restricted admission to economic and social infrastructure. These include access to health, education, potable water, sanitation, and roads. These preclude the person from advancing in welfare which is limited by the scarce availability of economic and social infrastructure (Englama & Bamidele, 1997).

They concluded by calling this situation as being subject to a “lack of capabilities” (Addae-Korankye, 2014). But a lack of capability may vary from person to person and from situation to situation. For instance, a person may be incapable of paying for the renewal of the National Health Insurance (NHIS) card; another may lack the capability to rent a three-bedroom apartment. Would both persons be described as poor because they both have a form of lack per Englama and Bamidele’s (1997) term for a situation of

poverty? Definitely not. It is imperative that we delimit or narrow the definitions and/or descriptions of poverty as a phenomenon.

Poverty is hunger. Poverty is a lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor (World Bank, 2005). Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom (World Bank, 2005), and the poor often lack access to finance and income-earning opportunities.

Narrow definitions of poverty focus on its economic aspects with emphasis on wealth creation, with little account taken of the social context (Sweetman 2002). However, the wider notion of poverty relates to economic and socio-political exclusion (Sweetman 2002). From an economic point of view, poverty refers to constraints in accessing money, few assets, high unemployment, reduced savings, minimal income, and low productivity. In 2001, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published its Guidelines for Poverty Reduction (OECD, 2001) and adopted a multi-dimensional poverty definition:

Poverty encompasses different dimensions of deprivation that relate to human capabilities including consumption and food security, health, education, rights, voice, security, dignity, and decent work. Poverty must be reduced in the context of environmental sustainability. Reducing gender inequality is key to all dimensions of poverty (OECD, 2001).

Poverty is described as “when a person’s resources (mainly material resources) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs (including social participation)” (Armstrong, 2017, p.6). Lansley and Mack (2015), who conducted four poverty exclusion

surveys between 1983 and 2012, consulted with the British public to create a list of essential household items necessary to meet those basic needs. This basket changed over time. For example, the Internet might once have been a luxury, where daily access to broadband might now be required by job centers.

From the social viewpoint, poverty delineates difficulties, such as the struggle to be independent, vulnerability, futility in life, attitudinal passivity, and duress (Kingsbury et al. 2004 p.204). To summarize:

Poverty means going short materially, socially, and emotionally. It means spending less on food, on heating and clothing than someone on an average income.... Above all, poverty takes away the tools to build the blocks of the future - your “life chances”. It steals away the opportunity to have a life unmarked by sickness, a decent education, a secure home, and a long retirement (Oppenheim & Harker, 1996 p.4-5).

Poverty is the oldest and the most resistant virus that brings about a devastating disease in the third world or developing countries (Tazoacha, 2001). Its rate of killing cannot be compared to any disease from the genesis of mankind (Addae-Korankye, 2014). It is worse than malaria and HIV/AIDS which are claimed to be the highest killer diseases (Tazoacha, 2001), and even worse than EBOLA (Addae-Korankye, 2014). Poverty in Africa, according to Addae-Korankye (2014), is caused by corruption and poor governance, poor land utilization and land tenure system, civil wars and unending political conflicts, poor infrastructure, diseases, and poor health facilities, the World Bank and IMF policies, among others. To the author, poverty can only be fought in the presence of strong institutions, and equitable distribution of resources. This requires a



non-corrupt government. However, in Africa, programs designed to fight poverty are not fully implemented because the funds end up in the hands of corrupt individuals, who pocket the majority.

The poor were seen as victims of an economic system that had no place for them, trapped in dysfunctional schools, plagued by racial barriers to progress, and a potential threat to social stability and peace if their needs were not addressed (Rose & Baumgartner, 2013). The authors' point gave an understanding that the poor lack access to decent food, clean water, decent clothing, and decent housing to say the least. They are people who cannot support their children in school and are compelled to involve them in what critics termed as 'child labor'. They suffer diseases that are curable and, in some cases die as a result of their inability or failure to access quality healthcare. They have no means to respond to emergencies, they do not have a voice in their communities and have been subjects of exploitation by the few wealthy people. Statistics show that the precarious situations of the poor have improved over the years as a result of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of governments of low-income countries, approved and supported by the World Bank (Wood & Barnes, 2007).

Shah, (2014) explained that development discourses routinely conceptualize poverty in terms of different forms of lacking – for instance, lack of health, income, resources, well-being, education, or capabilities. Such discourses also widely employ mechanical, spatial, and hydraulic metaphors such as up/down, below/above, center/periphery, inside/outside, inclusion/exclusion to quantify or qualify the phenomena of poverty which is largely described in negative connotations. She further argues that methodologically speaking, the development discourses and theories represent the

“researching subject” (the researcher or policymaker) rather than the “researched subject” (the poor person) and have a kind of muting quality about the life situations of poor people. These discourses rarely consider poverty in relational terms, as inter-subjective experience, or as an affective (emotional) response (Shah, 2014).

Poverty has joined that league of emotive words with slippery meanings—like “freedom,” “liberty,” “justice,” “democracy,” and “dependency”; words that refer to powerful concepts, yet that are capable of being used or misused in fundamentally different ways; words that convey diverse and complex associations, yet that can become so valorized or debased in ordinary discourse as to become meaningless or misleading (Dean, 1992). Spicker (2007) classifies various definitions of poverty into three broad categories according to *material needs*, *economic position*, and *social relationships*. Each of these categories of definitions present different causal relationships for poverty. Material needs definitions identify patterns of deprivation and low standards of living that create need due to the lack of food, shelter, education, health care, and security. Since people do not meet minimum standards of living in these areas, their deprivation is defined as poverty. Economic position sees poverty as a description of people’s economic circumstances that put them in a situation of ‘need’. These circumstances are lack of resources, economic distance, and economic class (Spicker, 2007). The third category of definition of poverty according to Spicker is social relationships. Under this category, Spicker identified social class, dependency, social exclusion, and lack of entitlement as components for defining poverty (2007).

## 2.2 Poverty in Africa

Reports on global poverty before 2011 revealed that 22,000 children died each day and that about 72 million children of school-going age in developing countries, of whom 57 percent were girls, did not enter school, largely because of poverty (Debrah, 2013). In Africa, the rates of child and maternal mortality were extremely high compared with South Asia, and the proportion of undernourished hovered around 29 percent in 2008 (United Nations Children's Fund, 2010).

Oduro and Aryee (2003) investigated chronic poverty in West Africa. Their review sought to examine the dimensions of poverty in general and chronic poverty in particular in West African countries. They established that the preparation of poverty reduction strategy papers by several countries in the sub-region as part of the HIPC initiative has created an incentive for the collection of nationally representative data on living conditions. Thus, several countries have nationally representative household surveys. Very few, however, have large longitudinal or panel data sets on living standards. Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire appear to be the only exceptions in the sub-region (Addae-Korankye, 2014). The use of socio-economic indicators like per capita income, life expectancy at birth (years), access to health care services, access to safe water, access to education and access to sanitation facilities also depicts the extent of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (Addae-Korankye, 2014).

Oduro and Aryee (2003) explained that extreme poverty is not the same as chronic poverty because the fact that a household has low consumption expenditure at a point in time does not mean that it has been or will remain poor for an extended period. Analyses on poverty dynamics using panel data from Uganda (Okidi & Mugambe, 2002)

and Cote d'Ivoire (Grootaert & Kanbur, 1995) show that households in extreme poverty can move out of poverty although they have a lower likelihood of doing so compared to households with consumption expenditures nearer to the poverty line. The high incidence of extreme poverty in West Africa (ranging between 15.1% and 81.7%) is suggestive of a high incidence of chronic poverty. If the likelihood of a household in extreme poverty to move out of poverty is in the region of 10-30%, then, the implication is that a not insignificant proportion of the extreme poor in West Africa have been below the poverty line for extended periods (Oduro & Aryee, 2003).

### **2.3 Poverty in Ghana**

In Ghana, the analysis of poverty has focused on consumption poverty, which classifies the poor as those who lack command over basic consumption needs, including food and non-food components. Glewwe and Twum-Baah (1991) provide a thorough analysis of the third Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS3). Their findings include: (1) rural residents have a higher incidence of poverty compared to urban residents; (2) residents of the rural savannah tend to be the poorest while the residents of Accra tend to have the highest welfare; (3) household heads with no education tend to be poorer whereas those with education tend to be better off; (4) the incidence of poverty varies across employment categories with agricultural workers being among the poorest; and (5) wage earners in the public and private sectors tend to be better-off. The seventh round of Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS7) was carried out by Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) in 2018 which presented the latest analysis of the living conditions of Ghanaian households and the poverty profile. The GLSS is a multipurpose household survey that

collects information on many different dimensions of living conditions, including education, health, employment, and household expenditure on food and non-food items.

Poverty in Ghana is predominantly a rural phenomenon (GSS, 2018). The poverty patterns show that irrespective of the ecological zone, the incidence of poverty is higher among the rural than the urban population. Apart from the coastal belt which exhibited a similar pattern of poverty within rural and urban areas, the patterns of the savannah and forest areas are quite distinct. Oduro and Aryee (2003) found out that the pattern of poverty in Ghana shows marked differences across regions and that vulnerability to poverty in the northern communities is predicated upon food security. This part of the country tends to have a single rainy season. The dual rainy season in the south of the country reduces somewhat the food security constraint.

To identify who is poor and who is non-poor, the expenditure on a minimum consumption basket required by an individual to fulfill his or her basic food and non-food needs is calculated. This expenditure is referred to as the poverty line. Different poverty lines can be developed. In Ghana, the practice is to develop two poverty lines: the upper poverty line (which is referred to as the poverty line) and the lower poverty line (which is referred to as the extreme poverty line) (GSS, 2018).

In the past two decades, several social intervention programs, including the livelihood empowerment against poverty (LEAP), capitation grant, school feeding program, free distribution of school uniforms, exercise books and textbooks, elimination of schools under trees, and the latest free Senior High School education, have been implemented to alleviate poverty among the vulnerable population in Ghana. Other projects aimed at improving health care delivery have also been implemented. These

include the establishment of community-based health planning services (CHPS), national immunization against polio, indoor residual spraying against malaria-carrying mosquitoes, and universal health care program (GSS, 2018). These interventions remain to be seen whether they have benefitted all sections of society, including the very poor.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) sent a Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights to Ghana in April 2018. This is following the Human Rights Council resolution 35/19. A key function of the Special Rapporteur in any country is to seek to understand the problems of extreme poverty by talking with those living in such conditions. Thus, in Accra, he met with many male and female head porters and others who, at night, sleep completely unprotected in the capital city's main markets and transport stations and the nearby streets. These people are drawn to the big cities because there are no jobs for them in rural areas, but what they find is nowhere to shelter, little if any affordable toilet access, and the grimmest of conditions for any accompanying children (HRC Report, 2018). In Old Fadama, a huge informal settlement in Accra, for example, the Special Rapporteur was shown the cramped, polluted, and often diseased conditions in which over 100,000 people live (Old Fadama Development Association, May 2010). He also saw pride and resilience, despite the lack of basic government services, and the immense challenges presented by daily life in such circumstances (HRC Report, 2018).

According to the HRC Report (2018), the Special Rapporteur also met elderly people and people with disabilities in rural areas outside Bolgatanga in the Upper East region of Ghana, who indicated that government assistance from the livelihood empowerment against poverty (LEAP) covered them for at best two weeks out of an

eight-week pay cycle. They also described how others in their villages had been distressed to be excluded from the cash assistance program despite being just as poor as they were. He met with rural women, some of whom recounted that they had to withdraw their children from primary school because of hidden charges that they couldn't afford to pay, while others explained how they felt they would be able to make a living if even minimal training was provided in basket-weaving and other low-cost skills, or improved credit access was provided (HRC Report, 2018).

A snapshot of the situation in the Northern Region, which covers almost one-third of the territory of Ghana, provides an illustration of the extent of poverty in one of the country's poorest regions. 70% of the residents are in the bottom 20% income group nationally. 47% of men have no education, only 27% of women are literate, almost a quarter of students do not complete primary school, 111 of every 1,000 children born die before the age of five, 82% of children are anemic, one-third are stunted, and one-fifth are underweight (GSS, 2016).

According to Ghana's figures from GSS (2016), one person in five lives in poverty and one in eight lives in extreme poverty. A person is deemed to be "poor" in Ghana if their income is less than 1,314 GHC per adult per year (which was US\$1.83 per day in 2013 when the relevant survey was undertaken but was only 80 cents in April 2018), while the "extreme poor" live on less than 792 GHC per adult per year (US\$1.10 per day, in 2013, and 48 cents in April 2018). According to the UNDP, the poverty line is only 27.1% of the mean consumption level in 2012/13, while the extreme poverty line is 44.9%. At the national level, official estimates of income poverty show a reduction from between 51% and 56.5% in 1991-92, to 24% in 2012-13.

The use of the poverty line of \$1.00 a day has long come under attack for the calculation of the baseline (Debrah, 2013), which critics have said was not grounded on high-quality data, leading the factors that informed the determination of the figure to underestimate the situation. Later revisions saw a shift from daily thresholds of \$1.00 to \$1.25 and recently to \$2.50. These changes have been hailed because poverty-line thresholds represent typical poverty levels in many developing countries (Debrah, 2013). Despite these shifts in the poverty line, some scholars have argued that the \$2.50 baseline does not correspond well to poverty in developed and middle-income countries; hence a baseline of \$10 a day has been proposed as approximating the poverty line in the United States (Shah 2010).

#### **2.4 Media Reportage of Poverty**

Poverty needs not necessarily be mentioned explicitly or discussed directly for ideas about it to be implied or inferred (Moore, Lloyd, Payson, Whittaker, Hicks, Jackson, Harrington, & Davies, 2018). For example, cues and connotations may also be taken from references to place, such as ‘the inner city’, ‘the suburbs’ or specific areas associated with industrial decline, and these too can invoke powerful ideas and images associated with poverty and other social inequalities because they are deeply embedded in cultural norms and expectations (Crossley, 2017; Wacquant, 2008). It is, therefore, all the more important that the news media’s role in (re)producing, sustaining, or challenging those norms is better understood (Moore et al. 2018).

In a seminal mixed-method research study supported and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2008 entitled ‘The media, poverty and public opinion in the UK’



some important observations were made concerning reporting about poverty in the UK and overseas during that period. It concluded that poverty was not particularly visible in the media and did not feature as an issue worthy of dedicated news coverage, but was instead presented with other issues deemed more significant. Also, people experiencing poverty were rarely heard from, and the existence of poverty was not contextualized with wider social processes but rather as an “abstract occurrence” illustrated by “individualized images” (McKendrick, Sinclair, Irwin, Scott, & Dobbie, 2008, pp. 31 – 32).

The findings of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s funded study are reinforced by Chauhan and Foster’s (2014) study, which applied Social Representation Theory to the analysis of 271 newspaper articles published in 2001 and 2011. They opined that with a lack of discussion on the wider socioeconomic causes and contributing factors, poverty within the UK appears as an orphan phenomenon with an unknown genesis (Chauhan & Foster, 2014). They further indicated in their work that there is a lack of discussion on the socio-economic causes and contributing factors of poverty and that media representations distance general society from poverty, representing it as a problem of the ‘other’ (Chauhan & Foster, 2014).

Poverty is under-reported in the media and, when it is reported, those facing poverty are often not given the space to explain what it means (United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development, 2017). Their assertion equally corroborates Chauhan and Foster’s (2014) finding of media reportage of issues of poverty. How people living in poverty situations can engage with the media to get seen and valued, was a central

hypothesis in the DSPD high-level panel discussion on the role media could play to eradicate poverty, held in United Nations Headquarters, New York, in 2017.

News constructions are also important because coverage of social issues such as poverty is often taken by policymakers to reflect public opinion (Hodgetts, Masters, & Robertson, 2004). As a result, policies are more likely to be developed and implemented if policymakers consider there is to be sufficient public support expressed through news coverage (Barnett et al., 2007). This assertion feeds into Parkyn's (2018) work on poverty and media.

Parkyn's (2018) work explored the potential for media and communication approaches to contribute to reducing poverty in the UK in her work 'Prioritizing Poverty: How does media coverage of poverty impact on our ability to solve it?' The study found ample potential to communicate about - and report on - poverty more effectively, particularly given that current levels of coverage are low but not as negative or stigmatizing as they have been historically. Parkyn (2018) tentatively concluded that we may be experiencing a shift in discourse around welfare and poverty issues in the UK that may provide an opportunity to infuse new narratives which accord people living in poverty visibility and respect, build public consensus that poverty is an issue which must and should be solved, and expand the range of solutions under discussion.

Bullock, Wyche, and Williams (2001) who worked on 'Media images of the poor' indicated that direct references to poverty in televised news programs are particularly uncommon. Consistent with the relative lack of open public discourse about social class in the United States, only 36 stories of the 197 news programs analyzed by Entman (1995) made overt references to 'poverty' or 'the poor', and few stories documented

poverty in terms of wealth and income distribution. Frustrated by the lack of poverty-related reporting, Entman (1995) suggests that viewers unfamiliar with U.S. culture might fail to realize that poverty is caused by a lack of money. Instead, they might infer that “inexplicably, some people choose to live in deteriorated neighborhoods where they frequently either commit or become victims of crime or have trouble receiving health care or finding adequate schools” (Entman, 1995 p. 144).

Moore et al. (2018) explored the news media narrative on poverty in Wales. The study found out that the Welsh media coverage of poverty was thematically focused on news about the economy and/or politics, and only a third of coverage featuring poverty focused on it as the main story – more often poverty appears as an incidental, contextualizing or background subject in reports on politics or discussions of macro-economic policy. Connections were seldom explicitly made between nationally significant stories about politics or the economy and their possible impacts on livelihoods and experiences of poverty in Wales at the personal or community level. Contemporary political discourses on poverty will, almost inevitably, be woven through news media narratives as they report on political agendas, speeches, decisions and policies (Moore et al., 2018). The language choices politicians or journalists use in their narratives can be (and often are) ‘loaded’ in ways that encourage certain conditions of poverty to be taken as natural, questioned or judged. For example, since 2010, a strategy focusing on ‘troubled families’ and poor parenting has arguably cast poverty more as an outcome of behavioral shortcomings (Lansley & Mack, 2015).

Poverty may have structural causes endemic to the larger economic system, but underclass films in these years generally did not dwell on these factors but instead spent

time on the cluster of attitudes (like fatalism) and behaviors (like seeking immediate gratification) that constituted a rational accommodation to the situation, but also discouraged and impeded efforts to improve the situation (Halper & Mussio, 2013). Movie characters finding themselves in an underclass community learned underclass attitudes and behaviors, conforming to these sets of standards as they rejected those of society at large (Halper & Mussio, 2013).

## **2.5 Media Frames of Poverty**

“Knowledge and insight on the lives of poor people are [often] derived from mediated experience; what we read in newspapers, what we hear on the radio, what we see on television” (Power, 1999, p. 79). This quote highlights the centrality of news media in the public imaging of ‘the poor’ and, by extension, the framing of pressing social concerns such as poverty (Barnett et al., 2007).

Although the present work is among the first to examine the portrayal or frames of poverty in newspapers in Ghana, several other studies have examined the portrayal of poverty in the media. The majority of these studies note the deficiency in the coverage of poverty within the news (Chauhan & Foster, 2014; McKendrick et al., 2008; Parkyn, 2018). A particularly pervasive trend in the literature suggests stereotyping of the poor in the news media. Several studies have reported stereotypical media descriptions of the poor as criminals, alcoholics, and drug addicts (Gans, 1979), sexually irresponsible, avoiding work, and being lazy (Parisi, 1998) and lacking in socially desirable qualities (Golding & Middleton, 1982; Martindale, 1996). The media has demonized poor single

mothers in particular, who are depicted as immoral, neglectful, and responsible for their plight (de Goede, 1996; Thomas, 1998).

In an extreme example, the media has popularized the image of ‘welfare queens’ who take advantage of the welfare system and live extravagantly (Coughlin, 1989). Similarly, the portrayal of any larger-than-average family sizes in images that accompany newspaper stories has been linked to the popular belief that poor mothers have additional children to maximize their welfare support (Clawson & Trice, 2000). It is perhaps through such stereotypical news coverage that the poor and welfare recipients have become one of the most unpopular groups in modern society (Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999).

Manstios (1995) asserted that the media facilitate the perception that the United States is a classless society or that most Americans are “middle class”. The media do this by (1) presenting the interests of the well-off (e.g., stock, financial portfolios, and leisure time) as general concerns, (2) downplaying structural economic concerns (e.g., job security, income) of the working class and poor, and (3) emphasizing shared interclass concerns (e.g., safety, crime). By downplaying economic insecurity and representing “the middle” as a “state of mind,” the media encourage working-class individuals to identify with a politically neutralized “universal middle class” (Mantsios, 1995, p. 414). This practice is well illustrated by the considerable amount of media attention given to the “booming” economy and wealth associated with the technology industry. Such stories present a vision of widespread prosperity when, in reality, wealth has not trickled down to the working class (Bullock et al., 2001).

According to Bullock et al. (2001) by dedicating very little broadcast time or print space to stories that openly discuss class privilege, class-based power differences, and inequalities, the poor are either rendered invisible or portrayed in terms of characterological deficiencies and moral failings (e.g., substance abuse, crime, sexual availability, violence). In their work, Bullock et al. (2001) emphasized that reality-based police dramas reinforce the stereotype that low-income men, particularly poor men of color, are involved with drugs. Although such programs may accurately represent disproportionately high arrest rates among poor men of color, they also reinforce stereotypes about drug-related crimes among poor minorities (Bullock et al. 2001).

News items often employ two contrasting frames for poor people (Devereux, 1998). First, the more prominent conservative frame individualizes poor people as the cause of their situations by choosing to not participate economically. Such negative characterisation can be linked to traditional notions of the 'undeserving' poor. Second, the liberal frame portrays poor people as 'needy victims' of inequitable social structures and relative deprivation. This characterization is often restricted to 'innocent' children (Tester, 2001), while their parents are held accountable as 'irresponsible' adults. The use of these frames reflects wider tensions in social policy and public consciousness between notions of the 'undeserving' and 'deserving' poor' (Barnett et al. 2007).

Moore et al. (2018) further found out that the main issues associated with poverty were unemployment and job insecurity. Social deprivation more generally also featured large in poverty narratives across media they studied. They found no significant evidence of blaming the vulnerable and those suffering hardship for their experiences of poverty, economic inequality, or social disadvantage as was the case in the work of Gans, (1979).

This indicates a shift in the reportage over the years. People affected by poverty, the study maintained, were more likely to be identified in broad terms (as communities or the public in general) than specific demographic groups. Workers were a key focus, however, located in a variety of areas of Wales. The possible causes and consequences of poverty, the study indicated, were often left unmentioned in the coverage. As such, reporting did not offer a contextualizing framework for understanding the reason why poverty arises and why it matters as an issue.

McKendrick et al. (2008) analyzing media, poverty, and public opinion in the UK maintained that changes in the context of media production reported by interviewees might suggest the possibility of more rounded and consensual coverage. This, however, was not seen to be the case by any of the respondents. News about poverty was seen by respondents to be characterized by several features. These included: criticism of government inefficiencies concerning their targets; largely negative reporting of people experiencing poverty; a lack of interest in analysis; differences between broadsheet and tabloid national and regional frameworks of interest.

Speak and Tipple (2006) examine how homeless [poor] people are portrayed in various countries. Using content analysis of media, their study examined how homeless people are treated in each country and how the public views them. The article concludes that homeless people are associated with very few positive attributes across nations. Speak and Tipple (2006) find that homeless people are viewed as detrimental to business competition, unworthy, dirty or repulsive, and helpless. While other factors come in to play, the authors argue that it is the language used in media that impacts how these people are viewed and discussed. The authors suggest that negativity toward the

homeless and impoverished is a reflection of the way these people are portrayed in the media.

Through the media, people learn to associate certain traits and behaviors with individuals and groups that may not accurately represent who they are (Speak & Tipple, 2013). Poverty and lower-class individuals are a group that is greatly affected by this form of media supported stereotyping (Burke, 2014). Research shows that the depiction of the homeless and the impoverished is not only unrealistic but also vastly negative (Burke, 2014). Studies find that people in poverty are portrayed as villains, beggars, helpless, and immoral loners (Speak & Tipple, 2013). Speak and Tipple (2013) find that even philanthropic agencies aiming to help the homeless unintentionally frame them as helpless in hopes of “extracting sympathy...rather than empowering them to improve their self-image and recognizing their contribution to society” (p. 177).

Gorski (2013) found that media depictions have caused us to form 5 basic stereotypes regarding the poor. Through a meta-analysis of various studies and findings, Gorski (2013) found that stereotypes have been developed that portray poor people as lazy, substance-abusing, linguistically deficient poor communicators, who do not value education within effective and inattentive parents. This story told throughout the media creates a world in which people in poverty are at fault for their situation (Burke, 2014).

Clawson and Trice (2013) conducted a study and looked at photographs in the media that portrayed impoverished people and compared the implications of those photos to reality. Clawson and Trice (2013) revealed that the magazine photos (a total of 149 pictures depicting 357 poor people) do not depict reality, but rather closely follow the stereotypical traits and behaviors of lower-class individuals. The article focused on the



overrepresentation of blacks and women along with the exploitation of welfare. The traits of loose morals, drunkenness, and criminality were all overly portrayed in the photos, and blacks and women were disproportionately portrayed as poor people that adhere to the stereotypical traits. In their evaluations of beliefs about the poor, the survey showed that people were indeed influenced by the photographs, and based their beliefs around what they observed.

Halper and Muzzio (2013) in their article ‘Menace II Society? Urban poverty and underclass narratives in American movies’, explained that movies during that period almost without exception subscribed to what later came to be known as the culture of poverty thesis. Halper and Muzzio (2013) referenced Rousseau (1985) as having originated this thesis when, in ‘A discourse on the origin of inequality’, Rousseau described the poor as driven by their destitution to thievery, prostitution, and other immoral conduct, which in turn corrupted them and induced them to corrupt their children.

## **2. 6 Agenda for Poverty Discourse**

Strong, independent media coverage of social issues such as poverty could help create a more propitious environment for wider efforts to tackle poverty. Wood and Barnes (2007) postulated that the media can play potential roles like communicating with and informing a wide range of audiences on poverty reduction issues, providing an open forum to reflect and bring in different public views – particularly those that are under-represented in the public sphere and providing an inclusive platform for public debate. In addition to these, the media can help reduce poverty by scrutinizing and holding

governments, state bodies, politicians, donors, businesses and CSOs to account for their actions on poverty reduction, thus acting as a force to increase the transparency and accountability of decision-making (Wood & Barnes, 2007).

Afridi (2011) worked on ‘Social networks: their role in addressing poverty’ and indicated that there are three main ways that social networks can address poverty. First, they can enable the sharing of resources (time, expertise, support et cetera) and information (job opportunities, benefits advice, influence et cetera). Second, they can provide mutual support and opportunities to learn or develop skills (for example support to start a business). Third, they can create strength in numbers and enable collective action or voluntary effort (improving a local area, for example, or social campaigning, or ensuring a voice in local affairs). A virtue of social networks often covered in the research is that creating the right kinds of ‘weak ties’ can help people gain access to work and other mainstream opportunities. The potential of social networks to provide access to employment opportunities will become an increasingly important issue as the current austerity measures begin to impact on the wider economy and result in mounting redundancies (Afridi, 2011).

The United Nations Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) (2017) indicated that some 1 billion people live in extreme poverty and more than 800 million endure hunger and malnutrition in the world. The SDG1 calls for an end to poverty in all its manifestations by 2030. It also aims to ensure social protection for the poor and vulnerable, increase access to basic services, and support people harmed by climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters. It recognizes the crucial role of the media and information and communication

technology in creating activities that will expand access to information, contribute to achieving the SDGs, and enable us to eventually bridge the ‘digital divide’, which is far more than a technological issue.

In its high-level panel discussion on the topic ‘The Role of the Media in Promoting Strategies for Poverty Eradication’, the DSPD intimated that the time has come for all policy actors to recognize and support the vital contribution of the media to help identify innovative strategies to fight poverty, particularly in developing countries. The media can play a major role in developing public understanding of economic, social, and environmental issues - the three pillars of sustainable development. The media can provide significant opportunities for people who have experienced poverty to have a voice and share their views. These include informing a wide range of audiences on poverty reduction issues and providing an inclusive platform and an open forum to share the views and concerns of people living in vulnerable situations.

### **2.7.0 Theoretical Framework**

As an important prerequisite for many qualitative inquiries and media research, this study will make use of two related but relevant theories – agenda-setting theory and framing theory – to study the issues of poverty as reported by newspapers in Ghana. These choices are informed by the objectives underpinning this study.

In recent decades, media scholars have identified two ways that the media influence public opinion and even policymaking (Dreier & Martin, 2010) — agenda-setting and framing. Together, media agenda-setting and the way media frame stories and issues play an important role in shaping public opinion and influencing the political

debate. In this study, the agenda-setting theory will help examine the prominence given to poverty-related news, i.e. number of newspaper editions that published poverty-related stories, the frequency of poverty-related news, and placement of the news item in the newspapers. The framing theory will help analyze the second and third objectives of the study. This theory will help analyze the news articles and identify the frames used to report poverty issues in the newspapers.

### **2.7.1 Agenda-setting Theory**

On a daily bases, the media organizations receive many news stories from several national and international sources. But it was noticed that there were certain news stories which got prominence in media. Media determined the salience of issues by giving more importance to certain issues at the expense of others. According to Dreier and Martin (2010) agenda-setting effects proposed that news media could decide what should be in the news and so it sets the agenda. When news media treated some issues prominently, it made those issues more noticeable for the public (Manzoor, Safdar & Khan, 2019).

Agenda-setting theory describes the ability (of the news media) to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda (McCombs& Reynolds, 2002) Agenda-setting theory originally examined what topics trend in the news (McCombs, 2004). The theory, which was initially documented by media researchers at the University of North Carolina in 1972, suggests that the news media, by their ability to determine what will be in the news, create an agenda (Dreier & Martin, 2010). According to a popular summary of the agenda-setting effect, the media do not tell people what to think, but what to think about (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). The first level of agenda-setting

asserts that the frequency in which news media mention and cover objects (e.g. issues and public figures) largely dictate what objects audiences think are important to society (Vargo, Guo & Amazeen, 2017). This is not to say that audiences blindly believe the news. Instead, the news media sets the public agenda for objects or attributes. When substantial news coverage is dedicated to an issue, e.g. economy, people consider the economy an important issue (Vargo et al., 2017).

Agenda-setting is theorised on the notion that strong relationship exists between the prominence that media assigns to some subjects dictated by the degree of placement and coverage and the significance ascribed to these subjects by the consuming public (Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, Nyarko, 2016). The media's agenda-setting role cannot be overemphasized. Any analysis of media content with regards to social issues such as poverty, calls for this theory especially when the literature reviewed suggests that poverty issues are scantily reported. Whether the media in Ghana set the agenda for public discourse on issues of poverty is a concern of this study.

Agenda-setting theory will serve as a framework for this study just as other notable researchers (e.g. Nyarko, 2016; Dreier & Martin, 2010) have used it in their works. The theory will help examine the prominence given to issues of poverty in the state-owned newspapers in Ghana. Littlejohn and Foss (2011) opined that agenda-setting occurs because the media must be selective in reporting the news and that what the public knows about the state of affairs at any given time is largely a product of media gate-keeping. To determine the media agenda setting of issues of poverty in Ghana, the study will look at the frequency of poverty-related news as they appear in the two newspapers. Further, an analysis of the placement of poverty-related news in the newspapers with a

focus on the front pages, editorial pages, and back pages will help to determine the news prominence of issues of poverty.

### **2.7.2 Agenda-setting for Poverty Discourse**

Milner (2012) gave a global historical account of the poverty discourse and how the agenda panned out. In 2005, global poverty, though hardly a new issue, emerged as a key concern for citizens, corporate leaders, and politicians around the world. A Gallup poll of 68 countries conducted in May and June of 2005 named poverty and the gap between rich and poor as the top concern of 26 percent of world citizens, clearly overtaking other newsworthy issues such as terrorism (12 percent), unemployment (9 percent), or war and conflicts (8 percent) (Leger Marketing 2006). This emerging consensus about the importance of global poverty had been building through various policy objectives in the late 1990s culminating in the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000, which named 'eradicating extreme poverty and hunger' as the first of eight Millennium Development Goals and gave the year 2015 as a specific target (Milner, 2012). When these goals were not met in the 2015 review, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 17 goals were adopted to replace the MDGs. The United Nations now sets 2030 as the target year to achieve these goals. In this 2030 agenda, 'eradicating poverty in all its forms' remained the first goal for the United Nations. Some policy critiques questioned the United Nations' ability to achieve these 17 goals when they could not achieve 8 MDGs.

In 2005, the Davos Economic Forum also placed global poverty at the top of its agenda as Western leaders looked for new approaches to address an old problem. Also,

that year, the *Global Call to Action against Poverty* was formed in Port Alegre, where 12,000 people from various organizations including NGOs and business associations came together to discuss the issue of fighting poverty. In the same year, global poverty was also re-injected into popular culture with the Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign (Milner, 2012). Started by a Christian Aid Funding Coalition, its name proclaimed an ambitious goal for the year 2005. The campaign included many high-profile media events to generate funds and attention, such as the *LiveAid* concert in London and peaceful protest near the G8 summit in Scotland. The MPH campaign was also actively taken up by Tony Blair, as part of his agenda for the G8 summit, and by the creation of the Commission on Africa to support fair trade practices, debt relief, and aid.

All of this attention on the importance of the problem of global poverty began to shape a different discourse about the issue, both in the public and with policymakers, but as Noel (2006) asks,

Was a more important transformation beginning to take place, one that could change global discourses and debates about social justice, raise new political issues, and lead to significant institutional innovations? ... A transformed social global agenda does not determine specific or unique policy orientations, but it changes the terms of the debate between left and right and, in doing so, it redefines the world of policy possibilities (p. 306).

It has also been documented that political communications have placed discourses around poverty in the media and have set the agenda for poverty discussions. To explore this argument, Lugo-Ocando (2019) looks at a sample of Brazilian news media outlets,

which covered Jair Bolsonaro's presidential campaign. It focuses on key issues relating to what this presidential candidate said concerning poverty and the type of messages about poverty that was prevalent during the most recent elections around anti-globalization, nationalism, and poverty. The findings and discussion suggest that by linking themes of social exclusion with nationalism, Bolsonaro developed a media narrative in which poverty is explained utilizing increasing globalization and corruption, allowing him to set a news agenda that advance the banners of anti-globalisation and nationalism in particular terms. This effort of political communication was underpinned by the fact that a vast section of the news media outlets supported his campaign and was mostly uncritical towards this stance (Lugo-Ocando, 2019).

In analysing how news sources set the agenda for poverty discussions in the media, Manning-Miller (1994) using the Source diversity models suggested that by using non-conventional, non-official sources for news content, the prevailing perceptions about poor people and their needs would be undermined in news coverage. The study found that major newspapers are making efforts to diversify the sources quoted in their coverage of poverty issues. However, the portrayals of poor people have not changed, particularly for women and people of color. The results of this study suggest that source diversity research must go further to explore how sources are used to address the problems of the poor and how media influence public perceptions of public policy related to welfare and welfare reform. Manning-Miller (1994) maintained that in mass communications research, source diversity studies demonstrate that elite sources are favored by reporters because they provide regular credible (to reporters) information. Elites have special interest to make people behave in certain ways so they care a lot about



what people think and make every effort to influence them. Politicians presented content in ways that affect agendas, and issues about which people think (Entman, 2007). As a result, these sources tend to dominate news content, and consequently skew the balance of sources in the debate about poverty issues and media discourse. It could be said that this assertion has not changed significantly as news sources deemed credible remained the elites and public figures who would usually present issues of poverty as issues of concern and their attempts to address them. Thus, the agenda for poverty discourses in the media is always set by elites rather than the poor themselves.

### **2.7.3 Framing**

Closely related to the agenda-setting theory is the framing theory. McCombs and Shaw (1993) see agenda-setting and framing as parallel functions. As an effect of the media's agenda-setting of an issue, framing refers to how a news story is put together, including how a story is organized and structured. The organization of a story sends out cues about how to understand the content being covered (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). The basic idea of framing theory argues that media tell us how to think about an issue (Smith, 2011).

Goffman (1974) theorized the idea of framing. His findings indicate that how a story is told influences how an audience will understand or evaluate the given information. Goffman (1974) assumed that it is very difficult for human beings to understand the world directly so they try to understand the world around them according to their own life experiences by continuously interpreting and classifying their own life. The frames developing this way are either natural frames or societal frames. Natural

frames are the ones that are occurring naturally without any environmental intrusion. On the contrary societal frames are used “to identify, perceive, locate and label” (Goffman, 1974, p. 21) those events which are developed due to some deliberate human activity. The effect of this approaching the news media is that there are numerous ways of presenting events in the news media and it depends on the journalists which framework do they employ. In sum, this theory suggests that the story portrayed in the media influence what we believe to be important and how we interpret the issue.

Frames can be understood as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (Reese, 2001, p. 11). They are schemes of interpretation that guide people – journalists and audiences alike – in making sense of their experiences by categorising, organising, and interpreting incoming information (Dan & Raupp, 2018). In her attempt to define frames, Azanu (2011) considers a frame as how media and media gatekeepers organise and present events and issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided. Frames are abstract ideas that serve to organize or structure social meanings. Frames in the news may affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events (Azanu, 2011).

This theoretical position becomes very important in this study for the reason that framing allows for issues at stake to be defined and determined and allow for links between media coverage of events or issues, and individual views to be explored (Valeda, 2002). Framing theory explains how the issues reported in the selected newspapers are understood and interpreted by the audiences. Media framing theories further emphasize the power of media in shaping perceptions of poverty. Again, framing theory is applied in

this study because, it is clear that framing is a powerful mechanism applied by the media, designed to influence the perceptions that news consumers have of current events (Andrade, 2013). Entman (1993) argued that frames typically “diagnose [and] evaluate” problems, and then “prescribe” solutions for them (p. 52).

#### **2.7.4 Framing Poverty**

Perhaps even more important than the frequency of poverty stories in the media are the ways the messages are conveyed. Embedded within news stories are important messages about the prevalence and scope of poverty as well as the causes of poverty and the validity of anti-poverty programs (Bullock et al. 2001). Analyzing how news stories are “framed” is particularly valuable. Entman (1995) identified two distinct categories [frames] used by local and national television to tell stories about poverty: stories that depicted poverty as behaviors that threaten community well-being (e.g., crime, drugs, and gangs) and stories that focused on the suffering of the poor. Of the 239 stories analyzed, Entman (1995) found that 39% depicted poverty as a source of threat (e.g., crime, drugs, and gangs) whereas 61% portrayed poverty in terms of suffering (e.g., racial discrimination, poor health, and inadequate medical care).

The representations of poverty within the UK (Chauhan & Foster, 2014) for example, were developed around three major themes—child poverty, the inability of households to pay for winter heating, and the issue of aid and welfare. Child poverty emerged as the most elaborate aspect of poverty reports in the UK. All four newspapers substantiated their sympathetic coverage on child poverty with statistical data and

particularly emphasized on sustained education as a key to improving the lives of poor children.

The researcher employed the framing theory in this study considering that these notable researchers (Bullock et al., 2001; Chauhan & Foster, 2014; Parkyn, 2018; Redden, 2011; Rose & Baumgartner, 2013) have used the theory in their works relating to media reportage of poverty outside Ghana. Ofori-Birikorang (2009) also used the framing theory to analyze media reportage of a new health policy in Ghana, Azanu (2011) used the framing theory to analyze newspaper frames of women leaders in Ghana and de-Graft Aikins et al. (2015) used framing theory to analyze media constructions of ‘socio-psychological epidemics’ in 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, taking genital shrinking as a case. This theory will help examine the types of frames the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* use to report issues of poverty in Ghana. Frame analysis also provides a conceptual tool useful for considering how particular idea frames persist across time (Redden, 2011). Identifying dominant idea packages or frames provides an efficient way to quantify patterns and to quickly identify similarities and differences.

Identifying the frames that dominate coverage is significant because how an issue or event is framed will often tacitly suggest what should be done about it (Redden, 2011). Edelman (1993) mentions that the character, causes, and consequences of any phenomenon become radically different as changes are made in what is prominently displayed, what is repressed, and especially in how observations are classified. Because alternative categorizations win support for specific political beliefs and policies, classification schemes are central to political maneuver and persuasion (p. 232). Using the framing theory helps to establish how the two newspapers – *Daily Graphic* and

*Ghanaian Times* want their audience to understand the issues of poverty and the reasons for the use of such frames from the perspective of journalists.

Agenda setting and framing are related theories of mass communication and public opinion. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, authors of the seminal research article on agenda-setting, view framing and agenda-setting as overlapping functions: “both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of frames for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda-setting roles” (McCombs & Shaw, 1993, p. 62). Likewise, Entman sees agenda setting as part of framing. “Agenda setting can thus be seen as another name for successfully performing the first function of framing: defining problems worthy of public and government attention” (Entman 2007, p.164). McCombs notes that the accumulated evidence of nearly four decades of research on agenda setting and framing is “that journalists do significantly influence their audience’s picture of the world” (McCombs 2004, p. 19). Below is a pictorial framework of the agenda-setting and framing theories and their application to the study.

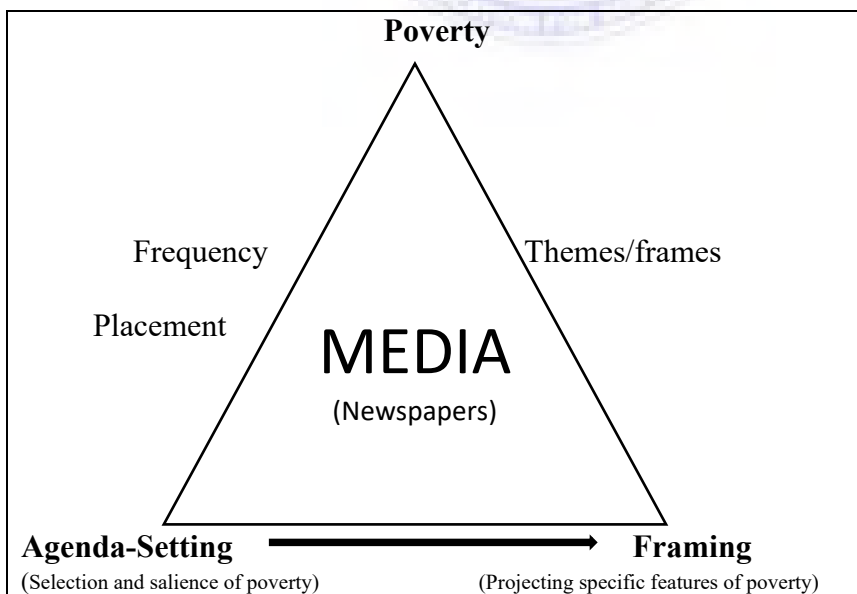


Fig. 1. Conceptual Frameworks

The framework simplifies how the researcher used the agenda-setting and framing theories as basis for the study. It explains how the media sets the agenda and frame issues of poverty. The agenda-setting theory helped explained the frequency and placement of poverty-related news stories in the newspapers. In essence, the number of poverty-related issues appearing in the newspapers and the part of the newspaper the news is placed are indications of the prominence the newspapers give to poverty stories. Once this prominence is established by the journalists, they proceed to present the news using specific themes or frames. The framing theory is used to analyze the content of poverty-related news stories to identify dominant themes/frames that the newspapers used to report the poverty stories and the specific features of poverty that are projected in the news. In a nutshell, the framework presents the media theories (agenda-setting and framing) and how they are used to report issues of poverty.

#### **2.7.5 Relevance of Theories to the Study**

Any analysis of media content with regards to social issues such as poverty, calls for these theories especially when the literature reviewed suggest that poverty issues are scantily reported. Agenda-setting theory will help examine the prominence given to issues of poverty in the state-owned newspapers in Ghana, bearing in mind what Littlejohn and Foss (2011) opined that agenda-setting occurs because, the media must be selective in reporting the news and that what the public knows about the state of affairs at any given time is largely a product of media gate-keeping. Since this study seeks to analyze the prominence the two newspapers give to issues of poverty, the agenda-setting theory will help the researcher to analyze the content of Ghanaian newspapers on poverty reportage.

The framing theory on the other hand will help examine the types of frames the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* use to report issues of poverty in Ghana. Frame analysis will also provide a conceptual tool useful for considering how particular idea frames persist across time (Redden, 2011). Using the framing theory in this study will help to establish how the two newspapers – *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*– want their audience or consumers to understand poverty issues. The theory will further guide the analysis of the interview data to establish the reasons for the use of such frames to report issues of poverty from the perspective of journalists.

## 2.8 Summary

Chapter two sets out to review the literature on the definitions and descriptions of poverty, media reports about issues of poverty, and the frames media use to report issues of poverty. Many of the studies on the media frames of poverty were done outside Ghana. Very little scholarship attention is given to issues of poverty and available studies were carried out by national and international organizations like the GLSS, UN, WHO, and World Bank. It is established from the review that the media does not give enough prominence to issues of poverty in their reports. When poverty issues feature in the media, they are stereotypically framed thereby creating a general aversion towards the poor and their conditions.

It is established from the review that the media, in all its forms, has the potential to influence the way we perceive the world around us. It can help reduce the extreme poverty situations we have in Ghana and Africa generally by setting the agenda for discussions on the phenomenon and critiquing government actions and inactions towards

reducing poverty. The media can equally give voice to the poor and report on their plight with the view to drawing attention to their lot.

Two theories – agenda-setting theory and framing theory – underpin this study and their relevance to the study is established in this chapter.





## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

A methodology provides a piece of research with its philosophy, the values, and assumptions that drive the rationale for the investigation as well as the standards that will be utilized for the interpretation of information and the drawing of conclusions (Almalki, 2016). It provides the focus and approach for the study and it is the process through which researchers pinpoint the methods that will be used to address their specific question (Crotty, 1998). The purpose of this study is to establish the prominence given to issues of poverty and the frames used to report such news. This chapter is dedicated to the research approach chosen for the study, the research design, the sample, and sampling procedures used for the study. Data collection methods employed for the study and how data was collected are equally found in this chapter. This chapter also contains procedures for data analysis and ethical considerations at various stages of the study.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted the qualitative research approach to analyze media portrayals of issues of poverty in Ghana. Qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative methods are usually described as inductive, with the underlying assumptions being that reality is a social construct, that variables are difficult to measure, complex and interwoven, that

there is a primacy of subject matter and that the data collected will consist of an insider's viewpoint (Rovai, Barker & Ponton, 2014). They make the point that this approach towards research values individuality, culture, and social justice which provides content and context-rich breadth of information.

Qualitative research tends to become the dominant methodology in communication (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) and could be considered a feature of the epistemology of communication (Fernández-Ardèvol, Buzoianu & Ivan, 2016). This approach has been used by many media researchers like Chauhan and Foster (2014) who examined the representation of poverty in British newspapers, Nyarko (2016) who studied newspaper review show on the broadcast media space in Ghana, Ofori-Birikorang (2009) who studied the promotion of a new health policy in the Ghanaian media using a framing analysis and Parkyn (2018) who worked on prioritizing poverty and how media coverage of poverty impact on our ability to solve it.

Based on the foregoing argument and the objectives of this study, the researcher employed the qualitative research approach in studying how newspapers in Ghana consider and portray issues of poverty. This approach will allow an in-depth examination of the newspaper contents and available literature on media representations of issues of poverty. It will also help to conduct and analyze interviews with journalists to establish the reasons behind the frames of poverty in the Ghanaian media.

## **3.2 Research Design**

### **3.2.1 Case Study**

To choose the appropriate tools for data gathering and data analysis in poverty reportage in newspapers in Ghana, the researcher adopted the case study research design for the study. A case study is a research design in which one or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in-depth (Given 2008). The case study method “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information... and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).

Qualitative case study researchers advocate in-depth strategies such as ‘thick description’ and ‘process tracing’, and they opt for a ‘case-centered’ approach rather than the ‘variable-centered’ one (Given, 2008) and this is congruent with the objectives of this research on the frames newspapers in Ghana use to report issues of poverty. The case study design allowed the researcher to collect different forms of qualitative data (i.e. newspaper documents and interviews), since relying on one source of data is typically not enough to develop this in-depth understanding of the issue. Also, case study design enabled the researcher to identify themes or issues or specific situations of poverty to analyze in each case (Creswell, 2013). An in-depth description of the cases and themes of issues of poverty that the researcher has uncovered in studying the cases is then provided in the findings chapter.

### 3.2.2 Multiple Case Study

Two cases (newspapers) were selected for the study of frames newspapers use to report issues of poverty in Ghana. The *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers were studied through an analysis of the news articles identified to relate to poverty. These cases allowed for a comparison of the prominence given to the issues of poverty by the two newspapers and the frames dominant in their reportage of issues of poverty.

Some advantages of using the multiple-case design are that the evidence created from a multiple case study is measured valid and reliable (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and enables wider exploration of research questions and theoretical evolution (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). In this research, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* were cases studied to find out the prominence the newspapers gave to issues of poverty and the frames used to report such issues in their 2019 publications.

### 3.2.3 Subjects of Study

The choice of newspapers for this study is informed by many considerations. First, the print media, such as newspapers, are an effective medium for influencing the general public as well as opinion leaders (Evans & Ulasevich, 2005). Second, in a developing country like Ghana where television is a luxurious commodity, radio, and newspapers are the major sources of news information for the public (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). Third, newspapers have been found to be a strong source of influence in shaping the opinions of society; they are one of the most accessible and affordable sources of information, are widely used and accepted by researchers (Wasserman, 1999).

Fourth, newspapers are practical and of substantive value to research in framing (Valeda, 2002). In Ghana, newspapers command a central role in the social discourse of ordinary people (Hasty, 2005) and the general public's interest in newspapers has been enhanced by radio stations (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009) because many morning shows on television and radio in Ghana discuss headlines and other topical issues in the newspapers. In essence, one can conclude that the newspapers set the news agenda – the second level of agenda-setting – and public discourse in Ghana. These days, apart from morning shows, many other broadcast programs such as afternoon drive time shows and late-night talk shows discuss issues that are published in the newspapers.

Many media and poverty researchers, (Bullock et al. 2001; Chauhan & Foster 2014; Moore et al. 2017, etc.) used newspapers as cases for their studies. Since the current study looks at how media reports issues of poverty, newspapers come in handy as the appropriate media type to be used for the study.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

An intelligent sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communicative phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The data for this study were newspaper articles in two Ghanaian newspapers. These are the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* — two state-owned newspapers. Altogether, 307 issues of the *Daily Graphic* and 304 issues of the *Ghanaian Times* were identified and sampled for the study.

The selection of the newspapers was done purposively. This is because many researchers undertaking most interpretive and qualitative content analyses use purposive

samples (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Given, 2008). Purposive sampling method allowed that texts (i.e. newspaper contents) or participants (i.e. journalists) are selected to provide plentiful relevant information for the study. Apart from selecting the two newspapers on purpose, the consecutive day sampling strategy (Riffe et al., 1993; Song & Chang, 2012) was used to include the newspaper publications. This is because the objectives of the study concerned the issue of poverty: a specific phenomenon (Song & Chang, 2012). In this strategy, every issue of the newspapers that meet the criteria of been published in the time boundary of January to December, 2019 was included. The two cases selected for the study both span the same period and allowed comparisons to be made.

Through a carefully coordinated data census of every issue of the selected newspapers, the researcher, reading the articles over and again, selected articles whose subject matter related to issues of poverty, to serve as data for the study. Each of the relevant news articles selected was recorded on a data collation sheet. Relevant memos were written down on each of the news articles sampled to help in the process of coding and analysis of the data.

#### **3.4.0 Choice of Newspapers**

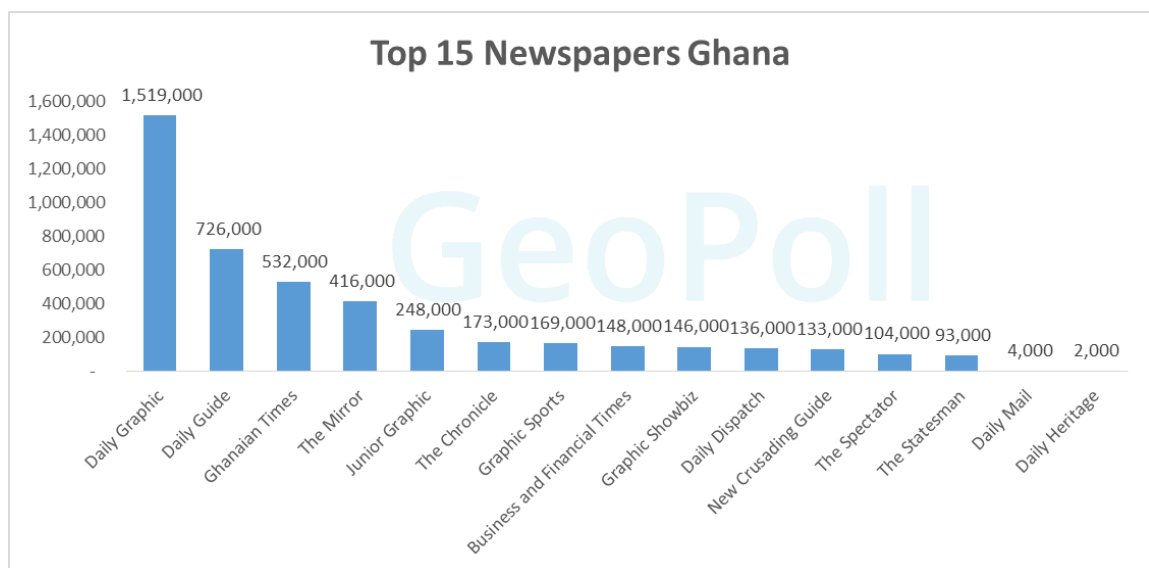
The *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* are chosen based on circulation, credibility, and funding. According to Pratt, Ha and Pratt (2002), newspapers can also be selected based on their longstanding popularity in the publishing history of a country and the two newspapers - the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* - since independence, have consistently published and become useful for research and longitudinal analyses.

These newspapers have also been identified as Ghanaian newspapers with the largest daily circulation in the country (GeoPoll Survey, 2017). The *Daily Graphic* for example, is the oldest newspaper that enjoys the widest circulation in Ghana and as such has a readership that spans the entire country (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009) and the most common newspaper encountered outside Accra (Laar, 2010). The *Ghanaian Times*, another state-owned newspaper enjoys a market share of 30% (The New Times Corporate Profile).

Because of their national orientation, these two newspapers are more likely to cover stories that originate from various parts of the country, especially when the stories are relevant to the local and national agenda (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). Because these newspapers selected are state-owned, they have the mandate to afford fair opportunities for presentation of dissenting opinion (1992 Constitution of Ghana) and report on divergent national issues free of ethical, political, and social biases. The influence of the state-owned media in setting the media's agenda in most African countries, including Ghana, is usually powerful (Sikanku, 2008). Some state media in Ghana such as the *Daily Graphic* and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation would be expected to have a large media agenda-setting role, due to government support and their wide-reaching nature (Safo, 2008).

The choice of these two newspapers out of the about 40 newspapers published in Ghana currently, was also informed by GeoPoll's measure of average newspaper readership each day in 2017. GeoPoll found that *Daily Graphic* was the most popular daily newspaper, at 1.5 million readers per day, followed by the *Daily Guide* at 726,000,

and the *Ghanaian Times* in third at 532,000. The GeoPoll data is shown in the graph below.



**Fig. 2: GeoPoll Media Measurement Service (2017): Top 15 most read Newspapers in Ghana**

### 3.4.1 Daily Graphic

*Daily Graphic* is the Graphic Communication Group’s flagship newspaper, established in 1950. It is an influential newspaper, setting the agenda for national discourse. It has a rich content covering politics, business, education, gender, personality profiles, and international politics, among other things. *Daily Graphic*’s readership profile includes politicians, chief executives, diplomats, researchers, traditional authorities among others.

The newspaper currently enjoys the highest coverage in Ghana with a daily circulation of about 200,000 representing 45% of daily newspaper circulation (Azanu, 2011) and is published six days a week from Monday to Saturday. Distribution is mainly within regional capitals and urban centers of the country. The *Daily Graphic* has over the years attained a reputation for asserting its independence through editorial policies. The



paper has continued to maintain its editorial independence and has remained economically viable.

### **3.4.2 Ghanaian Times**

*Ghanaian Times* newspaper is one of the state-owned newspapers apart from *Daily Graphic*. The circulation of the newspaper is nationwide. Issues reported in the newspaper are often the subject of daily newspaper reviews and discussions on most media outlets and social media. Based on GeoPoll's audience research for the first quarter in 2017, the *Ghanaian Times* is the third popular newspaper. The mobile survey platform pegs its audience share at 13.8%, with a readership of 872,000. The *Ghanaian Times* covers politics, business, education, gender, personality profiles, international politics, sports, environment among others. Its readership profile is like the *Daily Graphic*'s; it includes politicians, chief executives, diplomats, researchers, traditional authorities.

The paper has regional offices countrywide staffed with regional editors and journalists who submit news from their specific regions. Even though the New Times Corporation also publishes *The Spectator* (weekly), *The Sporting Times*, and *The Evening News* (published daily in the afternoon) *The Ghanaian Times* has become representative of the company and its publications. The *Ghanaian Times* is run by the publisher, The New Times Corporation (NTC), which is registered as a state-owned enterprise.

### **3.4.3 Unit of Analysis**

To appropriately examine the frames newspapers used to report issues of poverty, each poverty-related news article found in the newspapers and included in the data set constituted the unit of analysis. A news article here is defined to include any news story

or opinion piece including editorials of the newspapers, that reported issues of poverty overtly or covertly or whose subject matter has issues of poverty as its concern. News articles that were published within January 2019 and December 2019 were sampled and content analysed to establish their inclusion. In all, 263 articles (units of data) were analyzed. They were distributed as follows: *Daily Graphic* – 194 and the *Ghanaian Times* – 69.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Two major data collection methods were used to gather the relevant data for this study. These are qualitative content analysis of newspapers and interviews. Qualitative content analysis of newspapers helped to collect needed data that will provide answers to the first two research questions of the study. The interview was used to collect the needed data that will help answer the third research question of the study. Thus, the researcher, in choosing the methods for data collection bore in mind the objectives for the study and chose the most appropriate method to gather needed data.

#### **3.5.1 Newspapers Content Analysis**

As indicated, qualitative contents analysis of newspaper stories served as data for this study. The researcher manually went through hard copies of newspaper archives in the Awudome Senior High School library located in the Volta Region, where the researcher works. The researcher designed a data collation sheet that was used to identify and select all the newspaper publications under consideration. The data collation sheet helped to ensure that none of the issues of the newspapers was left out. Those issues of

newspapers that were not found in Awudome Senior High School library were traced to the Volta Regional Library in Ho. All issues by the two newspapers from January, 2019 to December, 2019 were considered for the study. Considering that the selected newspapers do not publish on Sundays and some other special days in the year such as the Yuletides and New Year Day, 307 issues of the *Daily Graphic* and 304 issues of the *Ghanaian Times*, totaling 611 issues of newspapers were included in the study.

The data for the study were gathered through a careful and detailed data census process by which the researcher flipped through every page of the selected newspapers and read the news articles captured in the 2019 issues of the two newspapers. With the help of research assistants, the researcher collected the needed data by reading the news stories in the newspapers, analyzed and interpreted them as stories that captured issues of poverty as their subject matter.

Every news story that appeared in the selected newspapers was investigated and stories that were relevant, directly or indirectly to poverty (broadly defined) were sampled. The researcher searched through all the articles to identify general and diagnostic terms that alluded to issues of poverty. Examples of general terms identified included the following ones: *poverty, poor, impoverish, lower class, slum, low economic status, poor standard of living, inaccessible healthcare, deprived, deprivation, beggars, needy, orphan, urban poverty, pauper, and lack of money*. Examples of diagnostic terms included the following ones: *hunger, mortality, disease, welfare, suffering, and survival*. These terms and the general themes of the news stories were used to inform the subsequent phase of the data analysis, in which the articles were sorted into poverty relevant and irrelevant articles. Criteria for inclusion were that the article's subject matter

was explicitly or implicitly about poverty as deemed by the rater and/or informed by existing literature.

After this initial process of establishing the parameters for data gathering, the researcher, together with two research assistants, who were well trained, engaged in a carefully organized data census process – reading of the news items published in the selected newspapers in Ghana, one story after another. First, the heading of each news item was read and analyzed. If the careful analysis of the heading showed that the news article’s content had nothing to do with issues of poverty, it was abandoned. Thus, in the analysis of the data, the researcher “winnowed” the data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012), a process of focusing on some of the data and disregarding other parts of it.

Next, news headlines that were analyzed and found to relate to issues of poverty were probed further or read carefully and intensively. In this second stage of analysis, the researcher focused on discovering underlying meanings of the words or the content of the news article that relates to issues of poverty. Several reasons necessitated this next step. First, the extensive reading helped to establish whether the news article’s subject matter is related (directly or indirectly) to poverty issues since qualitative content analysis allows for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Second, this step also helped to find the themes the news stories address. Third, further engagement with the text helped the researcher identify the prominence or significance given to the particular story in the newspaper.

These processes were carefully followed to analyze the content of each news article in the two newspapers. In all, two hundred and sixty-three (263) news stories

formed part of the data. These stories overtly or covertly reported on issues of poverty. A particular advantage of the content-analytical procedure undertaken in this study, as compared with other approaches to text analysis, is the fact that it has a firm basis in the communicative sciences (Mayring, 2014). The newspaper materials were read and understood as relating to a particular context of communication (i.e. framing of issues of poverty). In any study on news stories, content analysis enables the researcher to code for definitions to identify particular frames (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). After going through all the 2019 issues of the two newspapers, the researcher took the time to conduct a data audit of the stories identified and included in the data set. This was to ensure that irrelevant data is avoided and only the required news articles are included. Again, because of the assistance given by the research assistants, it was required that the researcher conducted this audit to establish the qualitative validity and reliability of the data.

Stories in the newspapers that were relevant for this study were recorded on a data collation sheet, designed by the researcher. This is to ensure that no relevant data is omitted. Before any news article, considered relevant, was recorded, it was intensively read. In one breath, some keywords and phrases were looked out for and underlined in the text. In another breath, the researcher interpreted the stories' subject matter to relate to poverty even if particular words and phrases were absent in the text. The use of this method was informed by the fact that content analysis is an important tool in framing theory (Valeda, 2002) and framing is presentational and interpretative (Entman, 1993). This process was laborious and took the researcher many days to complete.

### 3.5.2 Coding Instrument

The data for the study was prepared and the unit of analysis defined. The researcher initially developed and validated a coding scheme early in the process. According to Zhang and Wildermuth (2009), the best test of the clarity and consistency of a category definition is to code a sample of your data. Based on this assertion, the researcher read and content analyzed samples of the data to develop a coding scheme. This coding scheme was tentative, bearing in mind that other themes may emerge from the larger data.

The researcher, from the beginning of the content analysis process, categorized the news articles related to poverty. This analysis was to establish whether the placing of the news item is conspicuous enough to attract readers' attention. Questions such as the following were asked: which part of the newspaper is the story placed? How bold is the heading? Is the news article headline news, editorial or straight news story? These questions guided the categorizing of the news articles. The researcher categorized each poverty-related story into four (4) groups – *front page*, *editorial news*, *other pages*, and *back page*. This particular step in the data gathering process is to help provide answers to the first objective of the study; to find out the prominence given to issues of poverty in the newspapers. The importance placed on a news story may be determined by the positioning of the article, the amount of information given, and the way the information is presented (Azanu, 2011). Stories that had only headlines on the front page and the actual story appearing on another page were coded the same as those with the entire story on the front page. Placement of stories is important as it suggests that among the other stories in the newspapers the front-page stories are ranked first in terms of

importance by the newspaper company (Azanu, 2011). Placement also plays a role in establishing a platform to illustrate, discuss, or even debate social issues a paper wants to focus on, creating a mass of public discussion.

Stories found in the newspapers and included in the data for the study were coded with the issue date, the page number of the story, the subject matter of the story, the location of the story in the newspaper issue (placement), and the writer of the news article. The researcher made sure to check the coding consistency of the data. This is because, human coders are subject to fatigue and are likely to make more mistakes as the coding proceeds and new codes may have been added since the original consistency check (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2009).

Tankard (2001) provided detailed techniques for identifying frames from the text such as headlines of the story, selected visuals, photo titles, lead of the story, sources, selection of the statements, logos, and statistics and concluding remarks. Further, Entman (1993) stated that there were certain places from where the frames could be identified such as keywords, symbols, graphics, sources, and story structure. Overall, these were the elements that facilitated the researcher to identify the frames from the story. Using frame analysis, the researcher inductively coded the data gathered into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories and identifying consistent patterns and relationships between themes in the news stories. This helped create a reasonable and logical chain of evidence in the news articles about issues of poverty as captured in the newspapers. After general codes were generated, the researcher continued to condense the data. To achieve this, the researcher continued to read the text to establish patterns between and among themes and merged similar themes.

Four dominant frames emerged from the analysis of data. The frames and code categories or sub-themes that were merged to get the dominant themes are;

1. Poverty Redress – *scholarship awards for needy students, support for persons living with a disability (PLWD), Health provisions for the vulnerable, pro-poor policies, success stories of the fight against poverty, NGO funded supports for the needy, government's establishment of the needy fund, etc.*
2. Poverty Advocacy – *appeals for support to pay healthcare bills, political speeches that call for fighting the poverty menace, concerns of NGOs, and CSOs about deepening inequality gaps, complaints from international partners, etc.*
3. Plights of the Poor – *poverty profiles, children's vulnerability, disasters and disease outbreaks in poor communities, PLWHIV/PLWD, poverty experiences, anti-poor policies, etc.*
4. The Poor as Nuisance – *illegal settlement demolishing, robbery and drug use by slum dwellers, the poor committing crime, etc.*

Frame analysis was used to provide answers to research question two — what are the frames newspapers used to report issues of poverty. Thematic (frame) analysis was used because, according to Marks and Yardley (2004), thematic analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover concepts and ideas and describe human behavior using interpretations. It provides a systematic element to data analysis and allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole contents.

To give pictorial descriptions of the data gathered from the newspaper content analysis and present a simplified understanding of the data, percentage tables were used.



These tables were used to present categories of the data into the *front page, back page, other pages, and editorial stories*. This representation helped to present and analyze data and provide answers to the first research question for the study. Percentage tables were also used to present the frame categories inductively established from the data and the number of news stories that fell under each category.

### **3.5.3 Interview**

After the analysis of newspaper documents, the researcher conducted interviews with journalists to establish the reasons why issues of poverty were framed the way they were framed in the newspapers. The interview involved posing questions to respondents for answers in a face-to-face situation or by phone. It also presented a direct attempt by the researcher to obtain reliable and valid measures of characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes in the form of verbal responses from respondents.

In-depth interviews were conducted with journalists. Here, the participants were encouraged and prompted to talk in-depth about the topic under investigation without the researcher's use of predetermined, focused, short-answer questions (Given, 2008). The researcher, through careful and extensive analysis of the data was aware of the major domains of experience likely to be discussed by the participant and was able to probe how these issues relate to the topic under investigation (Given, 2008). That way, the respondents were allowed to give their extensive opinion on the reasons for the frames used to report issues of poverty with little interruption from the researcher.

This part of the study was very important for several reasons. Sole reliance on the inductive and interpretive analysis of the news stories might lead to a degree of

subjectivity on the part of the researcher (Lindlof & Talyor, 2002). Indeed, with particular reference to Ghanaian journalists, this research must not rely solely on the newspaper stories to give a subjective interpretive analysis of the data (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). Interviews help us “to understand the social actor's experience and perspective” (Lidlof & Taylor, 2002 p. 173). In this study of media frames of poverty issues, the social actors are the journalists who report on the issues of poverty in the newspapers. Their perspectives on the frames they used to report on issues of poverty in Ghana gave an understanding of the general attitude of the media and to a large extent the public, towards the issues of poverty. As another method of data collection for the study apart from newspaper contents, interviews helped to provide validity and reliability to the study.

Azanu (2011), Ofori-Birikorang (2009), and Redden (2011) in analyzing newspaper frames used interviews to triangulate their data sources. Since this study also seeks to establish the frames used to report issues of poverty in the newspapers, an in-depth interview is chosen to gather data. These interviews are important since they helped establish the ideas and reasons behind the frames used to report issues of poverty in the newspapers. Again, the interviews allowed for varying voices and perspectives to be included in the study. This way, the researcher’s interpretation of newspaper articles is supported by the meanings the journalists give to the news stories and their reasons for telling the stories the way they have been told. This, as indicated earlier, helped collate data from the very reporters of the news items that constituted the data set for the study.

The researcher contacted the journalists through e-mail, explained the rationale for the research and the need for their participation, and requested them to participate. All

the journalists were available for a face-to-face interview while phone calls served as a medium for follow-up interviews after rapport was established with respondents (Given, 2008) and to clarify ambiguities during the process of data transcription. The interviews were recorded on audiotapes and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed interviews were sent to the journalist to review and validate. The necessary inputs were made by the journalists and the documents returned to the researcher. The responses of a journalist (operationally defined) served as the unit of analysis. Each sentence made by respondents was analyzed to determine the reasons why the frames of poverty redress, poverty advocacy, poverty plight, and the poor as nuisance were used to report issues of poverty.

#### **3.5.4 Sampling of Journalists**

To establish the reasons behind the frames the newspapers used to report issues of poverty, as an answer to the third research question of this research, four (4) journalists have been sampled using the convenient sampling technique. The choice of the journalists stemmed from some considerations. First, the journalists are print journalists and report for the newspapers selected for the study. Broadcast journalists and journalists who report for other newspapers in Ghana were excluded from the sample. This helped collate data from the very reporters of the news stories/articles that constituted the data set for the study.

Second, the journalists selected for the study were those who reported poverty-related news as captured in the data set. The identities and contacts of these journalists were gotten from the *by-line* of the news articles related to poverty. Newspaper reporters

who did not report on issues of poverty are excluded. Third, the journalists chosen were those willing and gave their consent to serve as respondents for the study.

Fourth, the sample size for collecting the interview data was justified by the fact that sample sizes are not material in qualitative studies (Mashud & Ofori-Birikorang, 2018) since they do not allow generalization to be made (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). It also follows from the fact that qualitative studies focus on the social practices in a specific historical or cultural setting and that the question of whether they are normally distributed in a population is immaterial (Given, 2008).

### **3.6.0 Data Analysis**

#### **3.6.1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

The data for the study was prepared and the unit of analysis defined. The researcher initially developed and validated a coding scheme early in the process. According to Zhang and Wildermuth (2009) the best test of the clarity and consistency of a category definition is to code a sample of your data. Based on this assertion, the researcher read and content analyzed samples of the data to develop a coding scheme. This coding scheme was tentative, bearing in mind that other themes may emerge from the larger data. After this initial process, the researcher, together with two research assistants, who were well trained, engaged in a carefully organized data census process – reading of the news items published in the selected newspapers in Ghana, one story after another. First, the heading of each news item was read and analyzed. If the careful analysis of the heading showed that the news article's content had nothing to do with issues of poverty, it was abandoned. Thus, in the analysis of the data, the researcher

“winnowed” the data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012), a process of focusing on some of the data and disregarding other parts of it.

Next, news headlines that were analyzed and found to relate to issues of poverty were probed further or read carefully and intensively. In this second stage of analysis, the researcher focused on discovering underlying meanings of the words or the content of the news article that relates to issues of poverty. Several reasons necessitated this next step. First, the extensive reading helped to establish whether the news article’s subject matter is related (directly or indirectly) to poverty issues since qualitative content analysis allows for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Second, this step also helped to find the themes the news stories address. Third, further engagement with the text helped the researcher to identify the prominence or significance given to the particular story in the newspaper. This analysis is to establish whether the placing of the news item is conspicuous enough to attract readers’ attention. Which part of the newspaper is the story placed? How bold is the heading? Is the news article a headline news, editorial, or straight news story? These questions guided the categorizing of the news articles. The researcher categorized each poverty-related story into four (4) groups – front page, editorial, straight news, and back page. This particular step in the data gathering process is to help provide answers to the first objective of the study; to find out the prominence given to issues of poverty in the newspapers.

These processes were carefully followed to analyze the content of each news article in the two newspapers. Stories found in the newspapers and included in the data for the study were coded with the issue date, the page number of the story, the subject

matter of the story, the location of the story in the newspaper issue, and the writer of the news article. The researcher made sure to check the coding consistency of the data. This is because, human coders are subject to fatigue and are likely to make more mistakes as the coding proceeds and new codes may have been added since the original consistency check (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2009). After going through all the 2019 issues of the two newspapers, the researcher took the time to conduct a data audit of the stories identified and included in the data set. This was to ensure that irrelevant data is avoided and only the required news articles are included. Again, because of the assistance given by the research assistants, it was required that the researcher conducted this audit to establish the qualitative validity and reliability of the data.

### **3.6.2 Thematic/Frame Analysis**

The data collected through the newspaper content analysis and the interview conducted with journalists and transcribed were analyzed using framing analysis. This was done by inductively coding the data gathered into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories and identifying consistent patterns and relationships between themes in the news stories. This helped create a reasonable and logical chain of evidence in the news articles about issues of poverty as captured in the newspapers. After general codes were generated, the researcher continued to condense the data. To achieve this, the researcher continued to read the text to establish patterns between and among themes and merged similar themes.

Frame analysis was used to provide answers to research question two — what are the frames newspapers used to report issues of poverty — and research question three;

what are the reasons for the frames from the perspective of journalists? Frames generated from the newspaper content analysis and the transcripts of the interview were then discussed. Thematic (frame) analysis was used because, according to Marks and Yardley (2004), thematic analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover concepts and ideas and describe human behavior using interpretations. It provides a systematic element to data analysis. It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole contents.

### **3.6.3 Table**

To give pictorial descriptions of the data gathered from the newspaper content analysis and present a simplified understanding of the data, percentage tables were used. These tables were used to present categories of the data into the front page, back page, straight news, or editorial stories. This representation helped to present and analyze data and provide answers to the first research question for the study. Percentage tables were also used to present the frame categories inductively established from the data and the number of news stories that fell under each category.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness of Data**

Following these recommendations of Creswell and Creswell (2018) on procedures through which trustworthiness could be ensured in qualitative studies, the researcher first used multiple sources to collect data for the study. These are newspaper document analysis and interviews. The recorded interviews were played back to the respondents and the transcripts of the interview were given to the respondents. The themes generated

from the analysis of the interview data were also checked by participants, what Creswell and Creswell (2018) termed as ‘member checking’. Through this, necessary mistakes were corrected to ensure valid data. The researcher also took time to give rich, thick descriptions of the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Due to the position that transcribing is a complicated process and can hardly be free from inaccuracies (Sandelowski, 1994) and the fact that issues of ethics may be flouted (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007) especially when assigned to transcriptionist(s), the researcher personally transcribed the recorded interview to forestall any possible errors.

To ensure trustworthiness further, hard copies of the transcribed interview were given to the respondents to confirm their comments. The researcher read the data over and again to ensure that the coding process was not compromised and the codes misinterpreted. The researcher decided against using assistant coders to assist in the coding process to forestall any errors in the process. The researcher also made sure to persistently cross-check persons who helped during the data gathering process to ensure that relevant data is not excluded and irrelevant data is not included.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

With regards to informed and voluntary consent, the researcher duly informed participants of the purpose of the study. This was done by first sending introductory Email messages to the journalist chosen to serve as participants for the study. They were made to understand the purely academic objectives of the research and to seek their consent to help as interviewees. Those who responded to the email and gave their consent to be part of the study were the people interviewed. Before the interview, the participants’



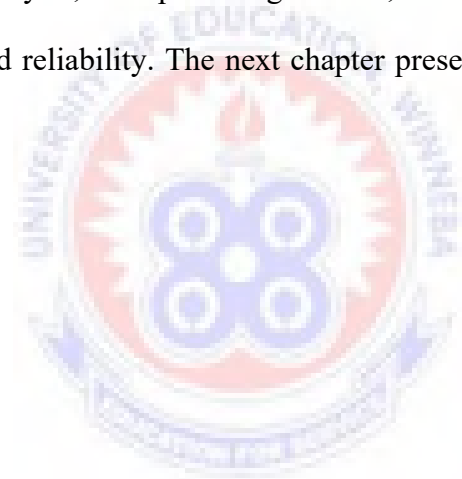
consent again were sought to record their voices on a tape. This was done only after the required consent was given. The recorded voices were played to the participants and the transcriptions were given to participants.

Participants were assured of the confidentiality of information they shared and the anonymity of research participants. The study treated the information shared by participants with utmost privacy especially during the data analysis stage of the research where participants' comments were quoted. Names of participants were not mentioned. Instead, specified codes such as R1DG (Respondent One: Daily Graphic) or R1GT (Respondent One: Ghanaian Times) were used to protect the identities of the participants.

Also, to prevent or minimize any harm to participants of the research, the researcher duly informed participants of the possible harms that may arise in the course of the research. These include possible long periods of interview and follow-up interviews as a result of technology failures with regards to the tape recorder used to record the interview failing to record the voice. Consequently, these delays may take participants' time and attention from equally important tasks. In addition to this, the journalists may not be available for a scheduled interview since they are busy professionals. This information helped them to adjust their schedules to ensure that the researcher's work plan is not unduly distorted. The supply of this information to participants helped to prevent any predetermined harm the study might pose to participants. Beyond these ethical considerations, the researcher ensured that all authorities that were sourced or quoted in the study were duly acknowledged and referenced using in-text citations and a list of references. The study adhered strictly to relevant plagiarism rules for the conduct of research.

### 3.9 Summary

This chapter presented details of the processes and procedures of the research. Using a qualitative approach and case study as a design, the data for the study was collected using newspaper document analysis and interviews. Two state-owned newspaper, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* were purposively sampled and served as cases for the study. News articles published within January and December 2019 in these newspapers were content analyzed and four (4) journalists were sampled and interviewed for the study. Data analysis procedures used qualitative content analysis, thematic or frame analysis, and percentage tables, while steps were taken to ensure qualitative validity and reliability. The next chapter presents the analysis and discussion of findings.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The analysis draws on the objectives of the study, the relevant literature, and the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. Qualitative content analysis, frame analysis, and tables were used as data analytical tools for the presentation and discussion of the findings. To ensure ethical conduct and protect participants' identity, the researcher used specific codes to represent the participants.

Although it may appear repetitive, it is appropriate to restate the purpose of the study. The purpose of this research is to study the frames used by newspapers to report issues of poverty in Ghana. This is important because the media have been identified as powerful tools that can be employed in reducing endemic poverty in Africa (Moore et al. 2017). Using multiple cases, the researcher purposively selected the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers for the study. In this chapter, the researcher first presented the findings of the study after which discussion of the findings was done.

#### **RQ1. What prominence do newspapers give to poverty issues in Ghana?**

To answer this research question, the researcher qualitatively analyzed the content of poverty-related stories published by the newspapers in 2019.

#### **4.1 Prominence of Issues of Poverty in Newspapers**

To determine the prominence of poverty stories in the selected Ghanaian newspapers, the researcher relied on three parameters. First, the number of editions of the

newspapers that published poverty-related stories was analysed. Second, the frequency of poverty stories was equally analysed. This is a process of identifying the number of poverty-related stories the newspapers published from January, 2019 to December, 2019. The third parameter is the placement of the poverty stories identified. This process identified the parts of the newspapers where poverty-related news were placed.

#### 4.1.1 Editions Containing Poverty News

The study found the *Daily Graphic* publishing five more editions than the *Ghanaian Times*. Table 1 presents the number of editions of newspapers analysed.

Table 1: *Number of Editions of Newspapers Analysed*

Newspapers	No. of Edition	Percentage
Daily Graphic	309	50.6
Ghanaian Times	304	49.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>100</b>

The study analysed a total of 611 issues (editions) of the two newspapers as presented in Table 1. The *Daily Graphic* published 309 editions in 2019, representing 50.6 percent while the *Ghanaian Times* published 304 editions in 2019 representing 49.4 percent of the total cases (editions). The two newspapers, the study revealed share almost equal percentages of the cases analysed and provides a basis to compare the different cases selected for the study. Table 2 presents the number of the editions that contained poverty-related stories.

Table 2: *Number of Editions with Poverty-related Stories*

<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>No. of Edition</b>	<b>Editions with Poverty-related story</b>
Daily Graphic	309	147 (48%)
Ghanaian Times	304	52 (17%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>199 (33%)</b>

Evidence from Table 2 suggests that only 147 editions of the *Daily Graphic* representing 48% of its 2019 editions carried poverty-related stories. The *Ghanaian Times* on the other hand has only 52 editions publish poverty-related stories representing 17% of its total editions published in 2019. Together, the two newspapers reported issues related to poverty in 2019 in only 199 editions representing 33% of the total 611 editions of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers in 2019.

Clearly, poverty-related issues are not a concern of the newspapers and that a majority of the editions of the newspapers failed to capture issues of poverty.

#### 4.1.2 Frequency of Poverty News

The current study found only a few poverty-related stories in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*. This is the number of poverty-related stories published by the two newspapers in 2019.

Table 3 presents the number of poverty-related stories captured in the newspapers.

Table 3: *Number of Poverty-related Stories in Newspapers*

<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>No. of Poverty Stories</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daily Graphic	194	73.8
Ghanaian Times	69	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 3, it can be seen that only 194 poverty-related stories appeared in the *Daily Graphic* in 2019, and only 69 poverty-related news stories appeared in the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers in 2019, making a total of 263 poverty stories from the selected newspapers. The analysis of this data indicated that the state-owned newspapers in Ghana play scant agenda-setting role regarding the issues of poverty. It is evident from the study of the newspapers as presented in Table 3 that the *Daily Graphic* contained more poverty-related stories (73.8%) than the *Ghanaian Times* (26.2%). This can be explained since the *Daily Graphic* has a higher number of pages (an average of 74 pages) hence has more space compared to the *Ghanaian Times* that has an average of 42 pages.

Research question one sought to identify the prominence given to issues of poverty in two state-owned newspapers in Ghana. Using the theory of agenda-setting, the study found ample evidence to establish that very minimal attention is given to issues of poverty in Ghana. The newspapers' agenda-setting role regarding the issues of poverty is scant considering the frequency of poverty-related news stories in the newspapers and the placement of these stories as they appear in the newspapers analyzed. The *Daily Graphic* reported only 194 poverty stories over 307 days of publication while the *Ghanaian Times* reported only 69 poverty-related stories over 304 days of publication. These findings are

in sync with earlier studies. For instance, McKendrick et al. (2008), conducted an extensive analysis of over 150 newspapers, television programs, and radio broadcasts and revealed that poverty receives little attention from the media in terms of the number of stories and only a quarter of those stories that do mention poverty take it as the focal theme. Roth (2014) for instance, observes that issues of poverty constitute less than 0.02% of lead media coverage and outlined some reasons for limited media interest in poverty-related issues. Firstly, journalists prefer to present action and change, which is hardly possible in the case of poverty, since changes in this area are not rapid enough; journalists like happy endings and there is no simple solution to the problem of systemic poverty in the world. Secondly, advertisers do not like it when poverty features next to their promotional materials. Thirdly, there is also the issue of censorship, as governments of impoverished countries might not be willing to disclose certain information to the public. It seems that most of these observations can apply also to the Ghanaian media as evidence in the findings of this study. Although the reasons Roth gave for the media's limited interest concerning issues of poverty may not be exactly the case in Ghana, this study also confirms that the media in Ghana scarcely set the agenda for discussions about the issues of poverty considering the number of poverty-related stories the newspapers publish. In a country where poverty and its related issues are endemic, one would expect the media to make poverty their stories.

#### **4.1.3 Poverty News Placement**

The prominence of a news item is partly determined by where the news item is placed in the newspaper i.e. front page, inside pages, or the back page. Regarding the

placement of poverty-related news stories in the two newspapers, the researcher identified four parts of the newspapers: front page, editorial page, back page, and inside pages. Stories that began on the front page but continued on other pages are considered as front-page stories. Table 4 presents the placement of poverty-related stories in the newspapers under study.

Table 4: *Placement of news in the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times newspapers*

<b>Placement</b>	<b>Daily Graphic</b>	<b>Ghanaian Times</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Front-page	9	5	14 (5.3%)
Editorials	7	3	10 (3.8%)
Other Inside Pages	172	56	228 (86.7)
Back page	6	5	11 (4.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>194 (74%)</b>	<b>69 (26%)</b>	<b>263 (100%)</b>

Another important finding that illustrates the lack of prominence given to issues of poverty in the newspapers from the study is the placement of poverty-related news in the newspapers. It is observed from Table 4 that the majority of the news items were buried in the inside pages of the newspapers. Only nine (9) poverty-related stories appeared on the front page of the *Daily Graphic* in 2019 and only five (5) poverty-related stories were placed on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times* in 2019. In all, poverty-related news placed on the front pages of the two newspapers studied is 14, representing a puny 5.3 percent of the data set. Seven poverty-related stories and three (3) poverty-related stories appeared on the editorial pages of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* respectively and the back pages of the two newspapers together captured only 11



poverty-related stories. Interestingly, a whopping 86.7% (228 stories) appeared in the obscure parts of the inside pages of the two newspapers. These findings are a clear testament to the little prominence given to issues of poverty in the two national newspapers. The *Daily Graphic* again represented a greater number of stories on the different parts of the newspapers under consideration.

As Kim and Chung (2017) indicated, the most important news of any newspaper is placed on the front page. Notwithstanding the limited number of poverty-related news getting published in the newspapers, this study further found only 14 stories, representing 5.3% of the entire data set (9 stories in the *Daily Graphic* and 5 stories in the *Ghanaian Times*) placed on the front page of the newspapers. The topical issues for discussion on other media platforms like television and radio emanate from what the newspapers considered topical and placed at vantage parts of their publication. In Ghana, the public agenda is mostly set by the stories that appear on the front pages of the newspapers every morning. If in an entire year, only 14 stories relating to poverty appear on the front pages of the two state-owned newspapers, it is safe to conclude that the newspapers do not give prominence to the issues of poverty although a good percentage of Ghanaians suffer the consequences of the phenomenon (GSS, 2018).

The editorial page, which contains the most important issue worth attention by the newspaper editors, also featured a very slight number of poverty stories compared to the other inside pages. The question that should be asked is whether the editors have too many issues that compete for space with poverty-related stories or it is the case that issues of poverty are not of interest to them. The majority of the stories about issues of poverty are found in the inside pages apart from the editorial pages. In all, the *Daily*

*Graphic* placed 172 poverty-related stories on the inside pages while the *Ghanaian Times* published 56 stories relating to issues of poverty on the inside pages. This makes a cumulative total of 228 stories relating to poverty, representing 86.7% of the data set placed on the inside pages where readers rarely focus attention. Although the reasons for this outcome are not a concern of this study, the researcher observed that the *Daily Graphic*, for example, dedicated a page (page 13) for gender-related news. A number of the poverty-related news is found on this page. Another page observed to have contained poverty-related stories in the *Daily Graphic* is page 23, dubbed *Regional* where reports from different regions of the country are published. This goes to corroborate the assertion that poverty in Ghana is predominantly a rural phenomenon (GSS, 2018) and that the poverty patterns show that irrespective of the ecological zone, the incidence of poverty is higher among the rural than the urban population. The back pages of the two cases studied equally record very little stories about poverty.

**RQ2. What are the frames newspapers used to report issues of poverty in Ghana?**

The second research question of the study is intended to establish the frames Newspapers in Ghana used to report issues of poverty in their publications. Premised on the theory of framing analysis, the researcher conducted a manual coding of the data to establish patterns in reportage in the newspapers. Through a carefully organized coding process, patterns of reportage of issues of poverty are categorized into frames or themes. The dominant frames are presented and discussed in this chapter.

## 4.2 Frames used to Report Issues of Poverty in Newspapers

Four dominant frames emerged from the content analysis of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper stories that touch on issues of poverty. It should be pointed out that these frames are not mutually exclusive of one another, and that the four frames are interrelated and intertwined. The excerpts of the news stories are not exclusive to the frames under which they are placed. Table 5 presents the dominant frames and their percentage representation of each of the frames.

Table 5: *Newspaper Frames of Poverty in Ghana*

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Daily Graphic</b>	<b>Ghanaian Times</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Poverty Redress	106 (40.3)	26 (9.9)	132 (50.2)
Poverty Advocacy	46 (17.5)	20 (7.6)	66 (25.1)
Plight of the Poor	36 (13.7)	16 (6.1)	52 (19.8)
The Poor as Nuisance	6 (2.3)	7 (2.6)	13 (4.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>194 (74)</b>	<b>69 (26)</b>	<b>263 (100)</b>

### 4.2.1 Poverty Redress

News stories that fall under the frame of poverty redress are reports of attempts to solve issues of poverty or provisions made for the poor and the vulnerable in the communities in Ghana. These include stories of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sponsoring students' education, government or individuals giving educational scholarships to brilliant but needy students, NGOs providing free health care to poor community members, government disbursing funds to persons living with disabilities (PLWDs) among others. Out of the 263 poverty news stories that were analyzed, 106

(40.3%) stories in the *Daily Graphic* and 26 (9.9%) stories in the *Ghanaian Times*, totaling 132 (50.2%) stories of the data set concerned provisions made for the poor. Simply put, a good majority of the poverty-related stories found in the two newspapers dwell on remedies to poverty in the country and beyond. This is illustrated in the following excerpts from the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*:

...Several social intervention programmes, including Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), the Capitation Grant and the School Feeding Programme, and now the free senior high school...have been implemented with the aim of alleviating poverty among the vulnerable population. ... Extreme poverty (people unable to meet their basic food needs) declined from 8.4 per cent in 2012/13 to 8.2 per cent in 2016/17. In absolute terms, more Ghanaians are living in extreme poverty (2019, October 18). *Daily Graphic*, p. 16.

COMPLETE You Foundation, a non-governmental organization last Friday donated assorted items worth about GHc.6,000 and a cash of GHc.2,000 to the Royal Seed Orphanage at Bawjiase... Rev. Benjamin Effah explained that the donation formed part of its outreach project to support the needy, the deprived and the vulnerable in the society

(2019, December 10). *Ghanaian Times*, p. 23

The redress frame is observed to be used by the newspaper to report poverty-related stories from two dominant sources – the government officials and non-governmental organizations. The reason for the use of the redress frame and its relationship with these sources are discussed under the third research question. The redress frame is also used to

report stories about government's pro-poor policies that have been implemented or about to be rolled out to better the lots of the poor. Successes chalked up in the fight to eradicate poverty in communities were also reported using the redress frame.

Dominant among the four major frames that emerged from the analysis of the content of the newspapers is the poverty redress frame. About 50 percent of the stories are reported using the redress frame. Analysis indicates that the dominant sources of these news items are from government officials and non-governmental organizations. Safo (2008) submits that though the mass media in Ghana wield an enormous agenda-setting role to the extent that they are almost authoritative, the real agenda setters, however, are the politicians whose views always find space in newspapers. This is evident in this study since many poverty-related stories have something to do with politicians, especially those that fall under the redress frame and which constitutes 50 percent of the data. This implies that the newspapers generally will rarely give attention to and report on these issues had they not been connected to politicians. Safo continued that civil society groups and non-governmental organizations are also prominent news sources for the media. Sikanku (2008) also maintained that state journalists enjoy overwhelming access to public information and sources. Many government officials will only talk to state journalists because they are less likely to criticize the government. In effect, the state media such as the *Daily Graphic* have access to press releases and speeches by the state departments and consequently almost always set the media agenda.

#### **4.2.2 Poverty Advocacy**

The frame of poverty advocacy are news articles that make calls to address urgent needs of community members, appeals for support for the vulnerable, editorials on the

need to pay attention to issues of poverty by government, appeals for support to pay medical bills, addresses or speeches on the need to curb poverty among the population, etc. Many of these calls were made in political addresses by politicians and sometimes from NGOs and CSOs in health, social justice, human rights among others. From Table 3, 46 (17.5%) stories in the *Daily Graphic* and 20 (7.6%) stories in the *Ghanaian Times*, making a total of 66 (25.1%) stories of the data set were categorized under this frame. This frame represents about a quarter of the data set – the second largest percentage of the data. The newspapers used the poverty advocacy frames in the following instances;

The vulnerable and poor people in this country continue to suffer while policymakers and people in authority who should have helped streamline things sit back unconcerned. ... The government must, therefore, do everything within its power to defend the poor voiceless citizens...

(2019, May 13). *Daily Graphic*, p. 61

A four-year-old hole-in-heart patient at the Cardio Centre at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra is in need of 9,000 US Dollars for an immediate surgical procedure.... Sympathizers and benevolent organizations who want to help, should direct payments to the Times Needy Fund at UBA.

(2019, July 25). *Ghanaian Times*, p. 7

The Shai Osudoku District Chief Executive...has urged the citizenry to support government's effort in bridging the poverty and inequality gap in the area. He regretted that Shai Osudoku, which has the largest land size in the Greater Accra region and naturally endowed, continued to face poverty

hence the need for the people in the area to support the assembly's effort to implement its programmes.

(2019, February 21). *Ghanaian Times*, p. 25

The media have the potential of advocating for addressing issues of poverty. The sources of news stories that are reported using the advocacy frames remain NGOs, CSOs, and International bodies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, among others. Some of these organizations are reported in the news to have carried out researches that reveal that many people in Ghana go to bed hungry at night, many children are undernourished, ill-housed and shabbily clothed, and many more use the sidewalks of the cities and the dusty roads of the villages as their beds at night. Based on these researches, these organizations invite the media to their press briefings and make calls for immediate attention to be given to these issues. The advocacy frame is the appropriate frame the journalists use to report such calls.

Many non-governmental organizations serve as news sources for the media. The Center for Policy Analysis (CEPA), for instance, uses the media to solicit public support for their macro-economic policy for poverty reduction. This assertion is also corroborated in the findings of this study. About 25% of the data on poverty-related stories are reported using advocacy frame. These calls are made, most of the time, by Civil Society Groups and NGOs in the area of health, human rights, and poverty alleviation. The advocacy frame represents calls made by individuals, institutions, and groups for support to address a poverty situation. They range from appeals for support to pay for medical bills for a surgery in or out of the country to advocacies for persons living with disabilities

(PLWDs). As Wood and Barnes (2007) argued, high-quality public service and public interest journalism, in particular, should be supported as public goods in their own right, and those wishing to encourage the media to strengthen its coverage of poverty reduction should recognize and support the ability of relevant parts of the media, in principle, to play such critically independent roles. Attention towards poverty and its related issues could be realized through continued and consistent advocacy hence this frame as identified in this analysis becomes very important.

#### **4.2.3 Plight of the Poor**

This frame entails news articles that highlight poor people, the conditions in which they find themselves, and the consequences of their poor state. It gives profiles of poverty in Ghana and for that matter Africa. It captures child vulnerabilities, disasters that plunge poor communities into deplorable and pitiable situations, and reports about outbreaks of fatal diseases that ravage poor people especially, and leave indelible and damaging consequences on livelihood and survival. From Table 3, 36 (13.7%) stories in the *Daily Graphic* and 16 (6.1%) stories in the *Ghanaian Times*, making a total of 52 (19.8%) poverty-related stories were categorized under the frame of poverty plight. This frame is exemplified in these extracts;

The rains fell in torrents...it was a long night for a group of young women struggling to put plastic sheets on themselves...this is the ordeal of head potters or 'kayayei' as they are commonly known. Their suffering is further compounded because people take advantage of them due to inhumane shelters they reside in and sexually molest them. These spaces



include the frontage of shops, under bridges, and any open space which makes them vulnerable to illnesses and rapists...Their date with poverty might just be endless.

(2019, August 1). *Daily Graphic*, p. 10

... “It’s not easy at all. It’s pretty difficult, senior. We’re surviving only by the grace of God,” he told this writer... In the latter part of 2018, Bortey needed just GHc.200 to clear up the remainder of his mother’s medical bills and he had to virtually go cup-in-hand to friends and philanthropists to bail him out of the dire situation.

(2019, March 13). *Ghanaian Times*, p. 29

The experiences and hardships of marginalized groups such as women and children, persons living with HIV (PLWHIV), and persons living with disabilities (PLWDs) and anti-poor policies and their impact of lives of the poor and needy are all reported using the plight of the poor frame. Child poverty reports in the newspapers have also been categorized under this frame.

Further, the plight of the poor frame are stories that give profiles of the poverty situation in the country, reports about individuals’ experiences with poverty, natural and man-made disasters and their harrowing implications on the vulnerable, weaknesses in our social policy implementations and anti-poor policies such as increased utility charges for domestic consumers and its effect. It must be pointed out, however, that this theme represents 19.8% of the data. While the *Daily Graphic* reported 36 poverty-related news using the ‘plight of the poor’ frame, the *Ghanaian Times* reported 16 poverty-related stories using this frame. The content analysis shows that stories that fall under this frame

quoted the very people the story is about although some draw statistics from government institutions and NGOs.

#### 4.2.4 The Poor as a Nuisance

The poor-as-nuisance frame encompasses news articles about the mess slum dwellers create, drug trading and drug use in slums, the poor involved in criminal acts, and the dangers their presence at some places pose to the whole community. Illegal settlements and their demolishing, robbery cases involving persons whose descriptions portray a situation of hunger and desperation to survive and reprisal actions from poor communities that pose a threat to national safety and security are publications found and categorized under the frame of the poor as a nuisance. As indicated in Table 3, the *Daily Graphic* is identified to have published only six (2.3%) stories that are categorized under this frame while the *Ghanaian Times* published seven (2.6%) stories. Altogether, the two newspapers contained only 13 stories, representing 4.9 percent of the data under study. As little as this frame may appear in terms of number compared to other frames, framing analysis allows for dominant themes not only in terms of their frequency or number of occurrence but also based on their significance and prominence. Some extracts from the newspapers that depict this frame are presented here:

Several illegal structures and shacks that have sprung up around vital oil installations near the Tema Oil Refinery enclave have been demolished. ...Aside from the danger posed to the installations through the setting of fire for cooking purposes, the shacks also served as hot spots for anti-social activities by the illegal occupants.

(2019, February 26). *Daily Graphic*, p. 23

About 50 structures at the Ritz Junction ...were pulled down yesterday during a demolishing exercise...The area which houses scores of people, including some foreign nationals, is alleged to be a hub of suspicious criminal activities such as illicit drugs, theft and prostitution. The source further explained that their activities were a threat to residents of the surrounding communities and beyond, and that the action was necessary to check the situation

(2019, April 25). *Daily Graphic*, p. 41

Prosecuting detective ... said, Kwame Ampofo, the driver and Osei Tsumasi, his mate, threatened their victim with a locally-manufactured pistol and a pinch bar and took his mobile phones, cash of GHc.40.00 and other valuables.

(2019, July 27). *Ghanaian Times*, p. 3

Persons who rob a victim of GHc.40.00 cannot flee the description of the poor. Some of these reports placed the vulnerable and poor beggars as obscene and deprave. For example, a story published on page 21 of the *Ghanaian Times* on the 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 and captioned, “This is an eyesore” gave very disparaging descriptions of individuals who, for the lack of descent housing, sleep in stones erected beneath the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange in Accra. The story described such people as ‘recalcitrant’ and described the practice as leading to the ‘littering of the place’ and that affects ‘the beauty of the edifice’. Ordinarily, one will think that the media will be empathetic to conditions of these homeless people but they instead frame them negatively and make

calls for law enforcers to ensure that those who trespass these restricted areas like the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange ‘are dealt with ruthlessly to serve as deterrent to others.’

Although very few stories fall under this frame in the two cases of newspapers, this frame in poverty reportage in the newspapers has its roots in literature. Bullock, Wyche, and Williams (2001) find that media frames reinforce stereotypes and neglect structural issues that affect the lower class such as the poor. The authors said that the poor are either rendered invisible or portrayed in terms of characterological deficiencies and moral failings” (Bullock et al., 2001). Rose and Baumgartner (2013) see the poor as a potential threat to social stability and peace if their needs are not met. A particularly pervasive trend in the literature suggests stereotyping of the poor in the news media. Several studies have reported stereotypical media descriptions of the poor as criminals, alcoholics, and drug addicts (Gans, 1979), sexually irresponsible, avoiding work, and being lazy (Parisi, 1998) and lacking in socially desirable qualities (Golding & Middleton, 1982; Martindale, 1996). The current study found stories that portray the poor as socially irresponsible and whose existence is a threat to social order. The researcher came across reports of the demolition of slums suspected to be hubs of criminal activities such as armed robbery, drug trade, and prostitution. Journalists take interest in reporting and framing these stories for the newspapers and editors find space for these stories about the poor and vulnerable. This makes this frame stand out in the frame analysis conducted. This frame of poverty represented in this study also agrees with Chauhan and Foster’s (2014) conclusion that the media coverage of poverty creates the poor as the ‘problematic other’. This frame also agrees with what Speak and Tipple’s (2006) said that homeless people are viewed as detrimental to business competition, unworthy, dirty or repulsive,

and helpless. While other factors come in to play, the authors argue that it is the language used in media that impacts how these people are viewed and discussed.

#### **4.3 Reasons for Poverty Frames in Newspaper Stories**

Having established these four frames from the data gathered on the poverty stories in the newspapers, it was imperative to find the reasons why journalists use these frames in reporting issues of poverty. Indeed, there are reasons why journalists report poverty stories using these frames and finding these reasons provides answers to the third question of this study.

#### **RQ3. What are the reasons behind the frames of poverty from the perspectives of the journalists?**

The third research question for the study sought to establish why the newspapers used these frames to report issues of poverty from the perspectives of journalists. Interviews were conducted with four journalists; journalists who report for the newspapers selected for the study. Frame analysis was used to analyze the data gathered from the interview. This was a careful process where the researcher immersed himself in reading the transcripts of the interview and making interpretations from the responses the journalists gave. The researcher sought clarifications from the journalists when the need arose to avoid wrong interpretations that may eventually affect the findings. The data is then coded into themes of similar categories. The themes/reasons that emerged from the analysis of the data are;

1. *news sources,*
2. *economic purposes,*
3. *media as a mirror of society, and*
4. *personal values of the journalist.*

### 4.3.1 News Sources

Analysis of the interview data revealed that in the journalists' quest to report issues of poverty, they are greatly influenced by the sources from which the news emanates. According to the data, it is convenient for a journalist to report stories that come from officialdom, i.e. government agencies, public institutions, and NGOs. Coincidentally, the categories of stories that may come from such sources are largely about how they dealt with or are dealing with poverty-related issues in the country (redress frame) and calls for poverty to be tackled especially among vulnerable groups (advocacy frames). A respondent had this to say in response to reasons why journalists report issues of poverty in the poverty redress frame;

...Maybe because it's a sort of a state institution or a state newspaper, we tend to take things from officialdom more than ordinary people...You know if you look at the way this newspaper is structured, ...every day they have to create space for parliament. Every day they have to create space for the Jubilee House. Every time they have to create space for the ministries and departments and we are not in a truly decentralized institution. So, everything will have to come from officialdom in Accra.

(Respondent Two; *Daily Graphic*)

...Let's look at it from the first frame you were relating to. You see, normally, why we report on those issues is, first of all, we have to look at it from the duty-bearers perspective. The duty-bearers means the government who we pay taxes to. So, they are supposed to use part of the taxes to develop or to deal with issues concerning poverty. So now, the

media is the fourth estate of the realm. It's the watchdog. So the media will have to look at or find out or first, draw the attention of government or duty-bearers to poverty-related issues, particularly addressing them as you are talking about. Secondly too, as a watchdog role, we need to find out whether the resources are equally distributed.

(Respondent One; *Ghanaian Times*)

These respondents hold the view that the sources from which they get their news about issues of poverty is a determinant of the frame they use to report on poverty-related issues. To these journalists, in their attempts to report what the government sources say about poverty, particular frames become readily convenient and suitable to be used. This is because, as a respondent puts it, the government rarely talks against itself when it comes to issues of poverty. What journalists get is what government has done or has been doing to fight poverty. When the officialdom remains the sole source of poverty-related news for journalists, the voices of the vulnerable and the poor are omitted.

#### **4.3.2 Economic Purposes**

Another reason established by the journalists for reporting poverty issues in the frames discussed under research question two is economic reasons. These include constraints regarding funds or resources for the discharge of their duties, attractiveness of the stories to the consuming public and the discretions exercised by editors. Due to inadequate resources, journalists hardly could travel over distances to the rural areas where poverty is endemic. It becomes convenient to draft news reports from addresses given by government officials at political and/or public functions or by NGOs at their various programs. Themes contained in speeches given by government officials when it

comes to the issue of poverty are largely on what they have done to address poverty or what they intend to do. For this reason, poverty redress remains the dominant theme or frame reported in the newspapers since they culled most of the news stories regarding poverty from such speeches from officialdom. In response to why journalists report and frame poverty-related stories using the frame of redress, some participants have these to say;

...it takes a journalist who is very development-oriented, sacrificial, and patriotic to go back to do those stories. First, it could be logistics...logistics could be a factor...Logistics and resources. Because you need to travel...you need to do an independent investigation, travels... so logistics is one...resources and time constraints is also another.

(Respondent Two; *Ghanaian Times*)

Yes ...because sometimes...what should happen is that the reporters can be empowered enough in terms of resources to be able to reach the real people (the poor). For example, in this COVID19, I need to be provided with those PPEs to be able to reach the real people. But to be frank with you, I will say, even Graphic of all places is found wanting when it comes to that. So, it will be easier when you are called to sit in a car and cover a story from officialdom.

(Respondent One: *Daily Graphic*)

These excerpts explain the difficulties respondents face as a result of inadequate resources as a reason for the use of particular frames in their reportage, and especially in poverty reports. Based on this reason, the journalists are unable to contact the very



characters in their news stories. The poor and their predicament will be rarely featured when journalists rely on third-party reports from government officials or other media outlets about the poor. To the journalists, as long as their activities remain underfunded, their reports, especially on issues of poverty will remain scant.

A journalist needs time and financial resources to cover news about poverty and the poor. Because of these resource constraints, journalists find it convenient to pick stories from government officials and other humanitarian organizations because, according to the journalists, the cost involved in covering such stories is borne by the news sources that invite them. For example, when a government agency or an NGOs invites journalists to cover a story during a launch of a fund to support poor women acquire vocational skills or to a sod-cutting ceremony to construct a health center in a rural community, they provide means of transport to the journalists, sometimes provide them with food, and at the end of the day provide monetary incentives to ensure that the event is featured in the media outlet. This being the situation, it is certain the journalist will report the issue in the frame the source will want it done. “Generally speaking,” said a respondent, “these sources would want us to capture what government has done about poverty (poverty redress frame) or what they want the government to do about it (advocacy frame)” (R2: GT).

From the perspectives of journalists, editors play a major role in determining the stories that get published in the newspapers and those that do not. Largely, stories that sell the newspapers are considered highly over others. The audience’ interest is very vital. The data gathered suggest that poverty stories generally do not appeal to readers in general and advertisers in particular. This makes editors to ‘shoot down’ poverty-related

stories that indict a person or group of persons, especially duty-bearers. A respondent said:

...Let me put it this way. A donation story in Accra is even almost always given more weight than a donation story from the hinterland... because the reporter is closer to the editors, immediately he sends the story to the desk, it goes. The advantage the Accra reporters have is that because it's the seat of government and they are nearer to the editors; they already have an advantage over you in the rural areas. So that one, plus the officialdom.... stories from officialdom have already taken a big chunk of the paper. So when the same AMACOHAN Int. is organizing a program here with the same quantum or amount of money, and the same category of people are served, ... if the reporter on the ground here doesn't spend enough unit, doesn't become very aggressive - sometimes his aggression is seen in some light that this story too who will be interested... if the reporter doesn't do that the story will be spite and will not feature. Even they can tell you that they used a similar story about AMACOHAN in Accra and why should they use mine. So, these are some of the little, little things that slow down the progress of our highlighting the issues of the poor. That is why you realize that a lot of our stories, we pick them from officialdom.

(Respondent Two; *Daily Graphic*)

This respondent laments the discretionary powers editors wield in the newsroom. They determine the stories that get published. Having worked with these editors over the years,

journalists become accustomed to the stories that will pass the litmus test of editors, hence use frames that editors will pass with little or no reluctance, the respondents say. On the other hand, a story that a journalist considers worth publishing may be discarded. If the journalist pushes for the poverty story to get published, he/she may be tagged as having collected a payment from a person or group of persons to get the story published. To avoid these tags, journalists choose the convenient themes that easily meet the expectations of editors.

Editors give priority to stories that will interest the reading public, thereby increasing the number of issues sold out. For this reason, editors are careful publishing stories that in their discretion may not interest the reading public. Since advertisers do not like it when poverty features next to their promotional materials (Roth, 2014), editors discard poverty stories entirely or ‘squeeze’ them in some obscure part of the newspapers. To the respondents, since government-sourced news stories are largely incontrovertible, editors hardly have issues with such stories and get them published. Stories that profile the existence of poverty among individuals and communities may be rejected by some editors. Roth (2014) again said as governments of the impoverished countries might not be willing to disclose certain information to the public, the issue of censorship sets in, and editors become cautious to publish poverty-related stories which they deemed ‘unbalanced’ (R2: DG).

The twist to the editor’s discretion in getting stories published is that it allowed some poverty-related stories to get published. Some news stories, journalists have asserted help to sell the newspapers since such stories attract a good number of readers to patronize the newspapers. They call it ‘bad stories.’ Some respondents maintained that

bad stories sell and that apart from attracting readers to purchase the newspapers, they equally draw a lot of traffic to the online portals of the newspapers, thereby increasing the revenue of the newspaper publishers. According to the journalists, these news reports about criminal activities such as drug use in slums, armed robbery, and prostitution are stories that attract a lot of readers. They maintained that many editors would create space for such stories. For this reason, reporters who write stories related to poverty may frame some of the stories using the nuisance or crime frame. This is exemplified in these comments;

...Because, you know in recent times, if you watch the media landscape, now even the print media is forced to toe the line of private media. There is competition. We are facing competition from the private sector...Joy News, Citi FM,.. and they thrive on bad news. They thrive on stories that attract a lot of readers. It draws a lot of traffic. Even some online portals like Graphic online, if I should write such stories, Graphic online will pick it fast in order to draw traffic to the site. We are in competition...as for those stories they don't joke with it...

(Respondent One; *Daily Graphic*)

...You know those stories are human-interest stories and human-interest stories sell. It sells the paper. Most of the newspapers survive on finance. Somebody would want to buy the paper, especially the weekend where they normally will want to relax and read human-interest stories and discuss...

(Respondent Two; *Ghanaian Times*)

The need to get stories that will interest readers also inform the frames that are used to report issues of poverty in the newspapers. This could be termed as revenue-targeted reportage. The poor-as -nuisance frame, for example, is used to attract readers who buy the newspapers, thereby increasing the revenue base of the newspapers. As incredible as this may appear, the respondents asserted that some editors become extremely excited when such attractive stories are forwarded to them for publication.

Journalists are minded to frame the stories such that the stories attract the reading public. The heading (caption) and introductory paragraphs of the news stories should be crafted such that they can attract and sustain the interest of readers. The respondents say human-interest stories sell and that editors sometimes request such stories from them especially when other news portals reported such stories because, according to the respondents, ‘bad stories’ sell (R1: DG).

#### **4.3.3 Media as Mirror of Society**

The researcher inquired from the journalists the reasons for reporting poverty stories using nuisance frames. Analysis of the responses indicated that in the journalists attempt to cover certain stories that relate to poverty, the media reflects the images the society in general holds about the poor and vulnerable. The respondents are of the view that society generally spite and discriminate against the vulnerable and that what the media do is the exact mirroring of society’s perception of the poor. The point is made stronger when a respondent said;

Sometimes society also plays a role. The way the society perceives the poor, the media tries to replicate the same perception but as a professional

journalist, you are not supposed to do so. You should not allow those society perceptions to influence or dictate your reporting.

(Respondent One; *Ghanaian Times*)

...It is the mirror of the society. So, when it happens like that.....it was one of our managing directors who tried so that, that thing should cut. If all media people can have the balls to do that then we will be changing the narrative.

(Respondent One; *Daily Graphic*)

These frames the journalists use to report issues of poverty, according to the journalists are the very frames/lenses through which the members of society see issues of poverty and that the journalists do not do anything out of the ordinary when they use these particular frames to report issues of poverty.

This means that the citizens' views about issues influence how the journalists frame and report the issues. The public holds views that the slums are places where immorality is perpetuated and the journalists only report just that. The city authorities see the structures and activities in slums as a danger to public order and safety and journalists report that position using the frame of a nuisance. An NGO identifies poor healthcare delivery in a community and calls on government or private individuals to help resolve it and the journalists report it in the frame of advocacy. Hence, the media mirror the views of society about issues of poverty in the frames the journalists report issues of poverty. However, a respondent cautions that good journalists are expected to analyze the stories and not serve as mere purveyors of societal opinion.

#### 4.3.4 Personal Values of Journalist

Sometimes, journalists frame poverty-related stories based on their personal values. The worldview of a journalist shapes the kind of stories they do and the frames they use to report such stories. Analysis of the responses pointed out that independent researches or investigations conducted by journalists on issues of poverty are framed using the 'plight of the poor' frame. The stories profile individuals and communities who are identified to be poor or who find themselves in deplorable and helpless conditions and report their situations. This frame of the plight of the poor is scant in the newspaper stories analyzed because, according to the journalists, it requires more resources to do such stories. Another motivation mentioned by respondents for using these frames to report issues of poverty is the recognition one gets from the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) during its annual awards celebration and other media organizations, NGOs, CSOs, and International partners in media advancement. A respondent has this to say;

...Apart from that what normally motivates a journalist to do such stories is such stories come with awards. If you write a very good story like that you are able to tell the story as it is...and then the other one is the motivation that comes from such stories is the support the subject of the story gets. You feel good as a journalist that it is your independent work that has brought some help to the person. It drives some kind of joy in you. Apart from that you also get these kinds of rewards... somebody can award you for such work. For example, the GJA has a category for

disability stories so if you write a good story, you may get an award for it.

Yet, your passion for human interest too can drive you to do such stories.

(Respondent One; *Ghanaian Times*)

Writing stories that may win awards for a journalist also inform the choice of frame used to report issues of poverty. Here, the values/motivations of the journalist to get recognized and awarded determine the frame the journalist uses to report issues of poverty. Some journalists also frame poverty stories using the plight of the poor because, according to the respondents, these reports are recognized by the Ghana Journalists Association's (GJA) annual awards for its members. Apart from the GJA awards, many other institutions and organizations (both domestic and international) recognize and award journalists for some particular category or reports. The expectation of being recognized and awarded for the stories a journalist reports is a reason why the plight of the poor frame, for example, is used to report issues of poverty in the newspapers. In all, the journalists whose reports are recognized and rewarded, feel satisfied with themselves and get energized to do more.

Related to the award are the supports characters in the story get after the story is aired. Individuals and organizations sometimes donate to support poor and vulnerable people who are featured in the stories' journalists report. This also motivates journalists to use particular frames that will elicit support from benevolent people. They opine; 'journalism gets result'.

Some journalists report some particular issues in society as a result of their personal feeling towards the issue or personal value they placed on the issue. For example, a respondent asserts that he has a special interest in persons living with



disabilities, especially the blind. For this reason, a lot of the human-interest stories he writes about concern the blind and the efforts some blind people are making to survive.

#### **4.5 Summary**

Premised on two media theories – agenda-setting and framing theories – the study analyzed news stories in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* to first establish the prominence given to issues of poverty by the newspapers and the frames used to report poverty-related issues in the newspapers. The third research question sought to establish the reasons for reporting issues of poverty using the identified frames. Analysis of the data gathered indicates that the newspapers do not give much prominence to issues of poverty in Ghana. This finding was established after an analysis of the newspaper editions that published poverty-related stories and the number or frequency of poverty-related stories that appeared in the two newspapers in 2019. Findings indicate that in 199 editions, only 263 poverty-related stories were published in the two newspapers – the *Daily Graphic* published 194 poverty-related stories while the *Ghanaian Times* published only 69 poverty-related stories. Another level of analysis that established the little prominence given to issues of poverty by the newspapers is an analysis of the placement of poverty-related stories in the newspapers. Only 14 stories appeared on the front pages, 10 appeared as editorials and 11 appeared on the back-pages of the two newspapers. Over 86 percent of stories related to poverty appeared on the other inside pages of the newspapers where readers rarely open to read. Therefore, apart from the scant number of poverty-related stories reported in the newspapers in the year under study, only a handful of the stories serve as lead stories or headline stories of the newspapers.

Using frame analysis as an analytical method, four frames emerged from the data as frames used to report issues of poverty. They are poverty redress frame, poverty advocacy frame, the plight of the poor frame, and the poor as a nuisance frame. Extracts of the data are used to illustrate the presence of these frames used to report issues of poverty. Dominant among the frames used is the redress frame followed by the poverty advocacy frame. The study further sought to find out the reasons for the use of these frames to report issues of poverty from the perspectives of journalists. Four reasons were identified from the thematic analysis of the transcript of the interview conducted with journalists. These are news sources, economic reasons, personal values of journalists, and the media mirroring the views of the members of the society. The findings of the study are qualitatively analyzed with thick, rich descriptions and illustrations. The researcher made sure to observe ethical standards by protecting the identity of respondents. The next chapter presents conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings of the study, limitations of the study, and the conclusions drawn from the study. The chapter also presents recommendation that may guide poverty coverage in the news and future studies into media frames of issues of poverty.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study sought to find answers to three research questions, premised on two media theories – agenda-setting and framing – using the qualitative approach of enquiry and the case study as a design. As repetitive as it may appear, it is important to restate the questions that guided the study;

1. What prominence do newspapers give to poverty issues in Ghana?
2. What are the frames newspapers use to report issues of poverty in Ghana?
3. What are the reasons behind the frames of poverty from the perspectives of the journalists?

Qualitative content analysis and frame analysis are data analytical methods employed to analyze the data gathered. Regarding prominence of issues of poverty in the newspapers, the study found relatively few news stories about poverty. A qualitative content analysis of news stories in two state-owned newspapers, spanning January, 2019 to December, 2019 found 263 stories that relate to poverty issues although the poverty phenomenon is prevalent in the country (GSS, 2018). The *Daily Graphic* reported 194 stories,

representing 73.8 percent of the total number of stories identified while the *Ghanaian Times* reported only 69 stories representing 26.2 percent of the data.

Again, on the subject of prominence of issues of poverty in the media, the researcher analyzed the placement of poverty-related stories in the newspapers. The findings are that over 86% (228) of the stories are buried in the obscure parts of the inside pages of the newspapers apart from the editorial page. Prominent news stories (generally referred to as headline news) of any newspaper are placed on the front page of the newspaper. Regarding poverty issues, only 14 stories are placed on the front pages of the two state-owned newspapers – nine and five poverty-related stories on the front pages of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* respectively, whereas the editorial pages of the two newspapers together carried only 10 (3.8%) stories and only 11 (4.2%) poverty stories appeared on the back pages. In sum, the newspapers do not give much prominence to the poor and their issues in Ghana.

The study also established four dominant frames used to report issues of poverty but these frames are not mutually exclusive of one another. The frames are poverty redress, poverty advocacy, the plight of the poor, and the poor as a nuisance. Stories that are reported using the poverty redress frame include efforts made, especially by politicians and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to eradicate poverty in the country. The frame of redress, the most dominant frame used by the newspapers, includes calls for aid or assistance for addressing issues of poverty among individuals and in communities. Most of these calls are made by NGOs and CSOs in health, human right, education and water and sanitation. Extracts of these news stories are captured in the data analysis. Next is the frame of the plight of the poor that is used to report situations of

poverty and the precarious and difficult conditions in which many vulnerable citizens find themselves. This frame, as representative as it captures the issues of poverty, is scantily used by the newspapers to report issues of poverty. The last of the frames that emerged from the data analysis is the poor as a nuisance. This frame as found in this study also has its root in literature. It is used to report the poor as criminals and social deviants, whose actions need to be checked, else they pose a danger to socio-economic progress and development of the state.

The study continued to find out the reasons for the use of these frames from the perspective of journalists. Four journalists were interviewed and the thematic analysis of the data established four reasons for the use of the four frames used to report issues of poverty. These reasons are the sources of the news, economic reasons, media's traditional role as a mirror of society, and the personal values of the individual journalist. These, according to the journalists, dictate the frames journalists use to report issues of poverty.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Study**

The study sought to find out the prominence given to issues of poverty by the state-owned newspapers, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*. It also sought to examine the frames used by the newspapers to report issues of poverty and the reasons for the use of the frames from the perspectives of journalists. The findings, however, should be seen in the light of the limitations. Apart from time constraints, the universe of newspaper issues that are relevant for the study proved difficult to access, especially in the face of the global pandemic, COVID19. Requests for access to targeted libraries for newspaper issues were flatly denied on the onset while limited access was granted

following persistent appeals. Apart from the constraints of access to newspaper articles necessitated by the novel coronavirus, the restrictions imposed on movement in the country also affected/delayed arrangements for a face-face interview, the process through which data was gathered from journalists. This notwithstanding, the journalists granted the interviews after initial hesitations on the conviction that the strict protocols of physical distancing would be observed.

Regardless of these limitations, the findings of the study have critical implications for future studies on media and poverty reporting, media theories and practice.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The findings of the study suggest that the newspapers do not give much prominence to issues of poverty and that not much has changed regarding the prominence the media gives to issues of poverty as established in literature. The newspapers in Ghana give very little prominence to issues of poverty as evidenced in the number of poverty-related stories found in the two newspapers for the entire year of 2019. This conclusion is further reinforced by the placement of poverty-related stories in the two state-owned newspapers analyzed. Only 14 poverty-related stories were captured on the front pages of the newspapers, whereas over 80% of the stories related to poverty were placed on the inside pages where audiences rarely pay attention and hardly read. The study, therefore concludes that the media in Ghana do not give prominence to issues of poverty and that poverty remains a lexicon (like other words as development, economy, human right) that is used to play political football and captured by the media, largely, from the prism of politicians and NGOs.

Another conclusion drawn from this study is based on the frames used to report issues of poverty by the newspapers. Even though it is established that the newspapers give little attention to issues of poverty, the frames used to report issues of poverty are largely positive frames (redress, advocacy, and plight) and the newspapers very rarely use negative frames (nuisance). It should be repeated that these frames are not mutually exclusive of one another. In a single story that relates to poverty, more than one of these frames are identified. Again, journalists have varied reasons for using these frames to report issues of poverty and these include resource constraints, editorial discretions, and personal motivations, among others.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

From the forgoing, it is clear that the media in Ghana needs to pay critical attention to the phenomenon of poverty, especially when poverty remains an evil that plagues the modern world. Like a monstrous octopus, poverty projects its nagging, prehensile tentacles in communities and villages in Ghana. While the media continues to play the vital role of highlighting the successes and putrefactions in our society, it should not lose sight of the endemic poverty that plagues millions of people in Ghana. The media should consciously set the agenda for discussion of issues of poverty. Journalists are encouraged, regardless of their challenges, to give attention to and report about the experiences of the majority low-income earners in Ghana, the daily struggle of the majority non-formal sector employees and the million others who are unemployed either as a result of physical vulnerabilities or a lack of employable skills. It is recommended to news editors to create space for poverty-related stories in their bulletins or publications.

Editors of the print media, for instance, could dedicate a page or two of their publications to poverty just as they do for other issues like education, politics, gender and sports. When this is done, more of the issues of poverty would come to the limelight that may prompt duty-bearers to take actions or implement policies to address the situation of the poor in the country.

It is also recommended that such frames that will elicit maximum attention and support towards the poor and their struggles be used to report issues of poverty by journalists. This recommendation is appropriate because, as Rose and Baumgartner (2013) put it in their study that compares media portrayals of poor individuals to policy decisions taken by the US government that are related to poverty, when media framed conditions in lives of the poor as an issue that needs attention, support for welfare increased. Since their study shows how media depictions and frames create real world responses that greatly affect the lives of individuals in the lower class, journalists in Ghana are encouraged to report issues of poverty in frames that advocate more attention towards the conditions of the poor in the country.

More research is recommended into the innovative strategies the media could employ so that issues of poverty are highlighted. Further research is recommended into journalistic and editorial practices that hinder the coverage of the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized in societies in Ghana. An ethnographic or phenomenological study is also recommended in the lives of the poor in Ghana, especially experiences of people in the remotest parts of the country where statistics show poverty is very prevalent.

The government, through the media regulatory bodies such as the National Communication Authority (NCA) and National Media Commission (NMC) should make



it as a matter of policy to ensure that issues that affect majority of the Ghanaian such as poverty be made an integral part of the programming of every media outlet in the country. As Martin Luther King Jr. puts it in the Nobel lecture, “there is nothing ‘news’ about poverty. What is new, however, is that we have the resources to get rid of it”. One such resource that can be used in this fight against poverty is the indispensable role of the media.



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**APPENDIX A**  
**CODING INSTRUCTION**

**(This is to guide the coding process of data gathering and analysis)**

- Note the date of the newspaper issue.
- Read the heading of each story in the newspaper (this captures the subject matter or the theme of the story). If the heading relates the story to issues of poverty, proceed to read the content. Otherwise, move to the next story.
- If the heading could not give a clue, proceed to read the story.
- Read the story carefully and extensively.
- Look out for terms/words such as these: *poverty, poor, impoverish, lower class, slum, low economic status, poor standard of living, inaccessible healthcare, deprived, deprivation, beggars, needy, orphan, urban poverty, pauper, and lack of money, hunger, mortality, disease, welfare, suffering, and survival.*
- Underline these words carefully.
- Note down the page number of the story.
- Write down the heading of the story or a summary of the subject matter of the story.
- Note and write down the part of the paper the story is placed.
- Choose from this list: *front page, back page, editorial page, other inside pages*
- Identify and write down the writer of the story (see by-line).
- Read the story over and again to identify emerging codes.
- Indicate clues that helped to determine or identify the codes.
- For each story, write down the codes.
- Identify patterns in the codes

- Merge themes that are similar to form major themes.
- Categorize the data into similar themes
- Write down dominant themes



## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

**(This is to guide the conduct of interview with journalists)**

1. Kindly confirm your name and the newspaper you report for.
2. In your opinion, why do you think the media in Ghana give little prominence to the issues of poverty in Ghana? (Prominence herein refers to the frequency of poverty-related news and where the news is placed in the newspaper).

The study identified **four major themes** journalists use to report issues of poverty in the newspapers; poverty redress, poverty advocacy, the plight of the poor and the poor as nuisance.

3. In your opinion, why do journalist reports issues of poverty, using the;
  - a. **Poverty Redress frame?** (Reports of attempts to solve issues of poverty. These include stories of NGOs sponsoring students' education, NGOs providing free health care to poor community members, government disbursing funds to PLWD among others)
  - b. **Poverty Advocacy?** (News articles on calls to address urgent needs of community members, appeals for support for the vulnerable, editorials on the need to pay attention to issues of poverty by government, appeals for support to pay medical bills, etc.)
  - c. **Plight of the Poor?** (News articles that throw light on poor people, the conditions they are in and the consequences of their poor state, etc.
  - d. **The Poor as Nuisance?** (news articles about the mess slum dwellers create, drug trading and drug use in slums, the poor involved in criminal acts and the dangers their presence at some places pose to the whole community, among others)
4. (Ask follow-up questions as required).