

# Illustrating and Shaping Public Political Memories through Cartoons: The 2013 Presidential Election Petition in Ghana

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## Abstract

This study discusses Ghana's presidential election petition hearing by the Supreme Court in 2013 using available data on political cartoons under the pen name 'Daavi' limited to themes of the petition hearings published in the *Daily Graphic* newspaper to illustrate and present the proceedings and final verdict of the petition. Adopting the case study method, we purposively sampled 17 out of 25 cartoons covering the election petition published in the *Daily Graphic* newspaper; we applied a method of content analysis to sort the contents of the cartoons to find that the 'Daavi' cartoons chronologically reflected the proceedings and outcomes of the petition hearing. This study shows that political cartoons are appropriate means of communication when adequately employed, thus, we discovered the use of political cartoons as an art form and mode of communication by academics and policy makers to shape political agenda and social issues in Ghana.

**Keywords:** political cartoons, presidential election, petition, political polarization, Ghana

## Introduction

Ghana after undergoing many years of military rule fully embraced constitutional rule in 1992. Since then, Ghana has grown leaps and bounds in the realms of democracy and has become a beckon of hope for the rest of Africa. However, the election of December 2012 and the sixth since the Fourth Republic in Ghana was the most bitterly contested.

President John Dramani Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) was declared winner of the December 2012 polls by the Chairman of the Electoral Commission. This was challenged by the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the largest opposition party in the country. What started as a mere protest by the New Patriotic Party casting doubt on the credibility of the 2012 elections gradually turned out to be one of the greatest challenges of the democratic life in Ghana (Daily Graphic, Tuesday, July 30, 2013; p.10). On December 28, 2012, the NPP filed a petition at the Supreme Court challenging the results of the 2012 presidential election alleging that the December 7 & 8, 2012 election was fraught with malpractices of over-voting, non-signing of pink sheets by some presiding officers or their assistants, voting without biometric verification and duplicated serial number of pink sheets (Bokpe, 2013). This challenge to the declaration of the presidential elections held meant that the Supreme Court was the final arbiter under the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

A nine-member panel set up by her ladyship, the Chief Justice Georgina Wood, and presided over by Mr. Justice William Atuguba was to determine whether or not there were statutory violations, omissions, irregularities and malpractices in the conduct of the elections held on December 7 and 8, 2012. The panel was also to ascertain whether or not the omissions, irregularities and malpractices (if any) affected the outcome of the results of the elections (Baneseh M. K., 2013). This presidential petition was unprecedented because for the first time in the history of this country, a sitting president's legacy was challenged through the constitutional system. The Supreme Court's August 29, 2013 verdict ended an eight-month saga that captivated the country. During the eight months' duration of the court hearing, the audience heard legal jargons, saw courtroom wrangling, listened to fierce legal arguments and occasional humour.

The presidential election petition went down in the history of Ghana as the most discussed court case on radio, television, in the newspapers, by word of mouth and social medial. One other mode of communication used in presenting the proceedings and outcomes of this unprecedented presidential petition was the use of political cartoons in the newspapers in Ghana.

Cartoons have been defined as simplified drawings, representational or symbolic, which make satirical witty or humorous points (Alimi & Shopeju, 1999). Political Cartoons otherwise known as editorial cartoons are single panels of graphics that are satire of political events. Apart from serving as a corrective measure, they also serve as historical documents and are a 'snapshot' of the political climate of a given period (Akinloye, 2010).

Political cartoons serve as important adjunct to editorials, providing summary of a certain situation or event. As a visual image, cartoons can instantly make a point that would be difficult to articulate in written text and often leave a lasting impression on the reader (Wigston, 2002).

Cartoons, according to Sani, I *et al.* (2012), constitute one of the most strategic and vital medium of using language to disseminate information and reorient the public on current issues reflecting social and political realities of a particular society at a particular time. To them given the use of linguistic and nonlinguistic devices, political cartoon genre provides a medium for communicating messages through which social and political agenda are set.

Cartoons also serve as one of the creative strategies available to media for performing critical functions of provision of news, personality projection information, education, exposure of scandals, consensus building, agenda-setting, entertainment and the chronicling of events among others (Olatunji, 2012). In his study of political cartoons, Walker (2003) also observed that cartoons deserve to be studied and when this is done a conclusion emerges that political cartoons are another means whereby powerful interests reinforce their views on society.

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the role played by political cartoons in representing the proceedings and final verdict via the mass media. It also aims to identify and explain the meaning and importance of images or visual illustrations to depict issues and events as well as representations of major political figures in political cartoons and how effective these cartoons represented deliberations during the eight months petition hearing as represented in the Daily Graphic newspaper. This study, like that of Alimi & Shopeju (1999), is limited to the themes of the presidential petition in 2013 after the 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Ghana.

In order to analyze the selected cartoons there is need to ask the following questions. Did the political cartoons of Daavi in the Daily Graphic reflect the true deliberation during the presidential petition? What prominent media frames did the cartoonist use to portray the political petition? What characters and symbols were used to depict the presidential petition? What non-visual cues or words were used in the cartoons?

## **Method**

The case study method was adopted for the study since it emphasizes detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. The Daily Graphic, one of the Ghana state owned newspaper was purposively selected because it is perceived to be the most credible newspaper in Ghana (Amankwah, 2012). The paper is published daily and widely circulated across the whole country. This study like others before it (Sani et al, 2012; Amankwah, et al. 2012) used content analysis to sort the contents of the cartoons in the newspaper to depict the proceedings of the presidential petition in Ghana.

The sample comprises 17 out of 25 cartoons extracted from the Daily Graphic covering the year 2013, the presidential petition year. The researchers with the support of the staff of the Ho Polytechnic Library systematically went through the Daily Graphic covering the period January to December, 2013. Only cartoons produced by Daavi were considered because they were regular and consistent in the paper throughout the trial period. Most of the political cartoons used for this study are of the single panel form since this was the one used in the Daily Graphic. The analysis was chronological and visual elements of the work was studied and analyzed to establish the findings of the study

## **Theoretical Background**

From the theoretical perspective, the media in general and newspapers' cartoons in particular perform diverse roles. Political cartoon consists of more than words. It is a complex system of symbols, pictures, and words put together in a way that newspaper readership that understand the intended message of the cartoonist, will better understand the issue that the cartoonist addresses (Wigston, 2002).

Engaging with cartoons effectively is a matter of looking at pictures, reading the words, understanding pictorial representations and keeping with current events (Bush, 2012). The problem of analyzing political cartoons is the lack of definite supportive theories. However, for this paper, the researchers adopted the framing theory of the media to examine how political cartoons were used for framing the unprecedented 2013 political petition in Ghana. Political cartoons are chosen based on two main reasons advanced by Hoffman and Horward (2007). First, cartoons provide a format within political communication in which complex messages can be expressed through a single image. Secondly a political cartoon as a format simplifies the complex political situation and therefore helps people to understand current events.

Iyengar (1997) suggests that the media can influence the importance people attach to issues or events through the subtle means of "framing." According to Entnam (1993): To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (p. 52). As Iyengar (1991) notes: "Framing is the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media to make them more important and thus to emphasize a particular cause of some phenomena" (p. 11). The framing and presentation of events and news in the mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events (Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, 1995). A media frame therefore is the central organising idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991).

## Literature Review

The genre of political cartoons is seen by some researchers as an important medium of formation and building of public opinion on salient political and social issues (Abraham, 2009). Caswell (2004) views political cartoons as both opinion-molding and opinion-reflecting. Visual image is one of the critical components of the development of the political processes. Of the various visual forms and illustration genres in modern times, the cartoon is perhaps one of the most used to inform, educate and entertain viewers (Adejuwon & Alimi, 2011).

Cartoons are sometimes satirical and humorous in subject and inevitably elicit readers' participation. Adejuwon & Alimi (2011) citing McLunham (1964) referred to cartoons as a form of cool media. Nelson argues that cartoon is a screaming medium that cannot be denied attention (Nelson, 1975). Cartoons are used to express opinion, construct valuable arguments and provide specific knowledge on contemporary social issues. The goal of the genre is to provide political commentary, and address crucial issues (Sani, I et al, 2012).

According to Walker (2003) one of the powerful weapons that a cartoon has is its seemingly innocent humour whose message can be absorbed, without much reflection or resistance. Nevertheless cartoons are frequently overlooked as a form of political communication. Sani (2012) in their study observed that Nigerian political cartoons set social agenda by mainly encapsulating current and sensitive issues that people are much concerned about. According to Ashfaq & Hussein (2013) cartoons published in newspapers are the critiques of the issues of personalities and institutions of the current situation. Petersen (2013) in his study concluded that cartoon narrative was a useful medium for informing the development and diffusion of health-enhancing social representation that shape the potential for health-related behavior change.

Kwansah-Aidoo (2003) in his examination of the intricate connections between media, specific events and agenda setting in Ghana argues that the media's framing of those events provided their audience with certain ready-made patterns of cognition and thereby enhancing the possibility of agenda setting. Muin (2011) quoting Cohen (1963, p. 13) observed that the press is significantly more than purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about.

Abraham (2009) quoting DeSousa and Medhurst (1982) identify four main functions of editorial cartoons: an entertainment function, which derives from the ability of cartoons to make us laugh at situations and individuals; an aggression-reduction function, which derives from the fact that cartoons provide a symbolic avenue for public to vent its frustrations against social leaders; an agenda-setting function, through providing readers with a sense of the most salient issues and topics in society, and a framing function, the product of its spatial limitation and therefore its need to distill complex social issues into a single frame that captures the sense of an issue.

Conners (2013) in his analysis of Political Cartoon Images of the 2012 Presidential Debates found out that consistent with other media covering the 2012 presidential campaign, political cartoons attended to the events surrounding the three presidential debates between Mitt Romney and Barack Obama. He concluded that political cartoons offer a humorous visual commentary, were part of the campaign media narrative, and were perhaps more memorable than many stories or columns themselves. In content analysis of newspapers, news magazines, and network newscasts, Entman (1993) identified five traits of media texts that set a certain frame of reference, and therefore have a critical impact on information processing (a) importance of judgment; (b) agency, or the answer to the question (e.g. who did it?); (c) identification with potential victims; (d) categorization, or the choice of labels for the incidents; and generalization to a broader national context. According to Udoaka (2003), cartoons make an effort to reveal mankind to itself, to penetrate artificial armours, expose hypocrisy, deflate pomposity, replace shame with truth, debunk and slowly destroy pretension through honesty.

## Discussion & Findings

The scene in **Fig. 1** depicts the difficulty of conducting democratic elections in Ghana and the problem of acceptance of the results. No election result declared by the Electoral Commission of Ghana is devoid of suspicion and acrimony of cheating by the various political parties. Political parties especially the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the National Patriotic Party (NPP) who have been dominant in the Fourth Republic of Ghana are always disputing the election results. The scene in **Fig. 1** denotes the tug of words between the NPP and the NDC over the 2012 elections results which finally resulted in the NPP going to court to challenge the results.



**Figure 1:** Tug of Words: (*Daily Graphic*, February 5, 2013 p.1)

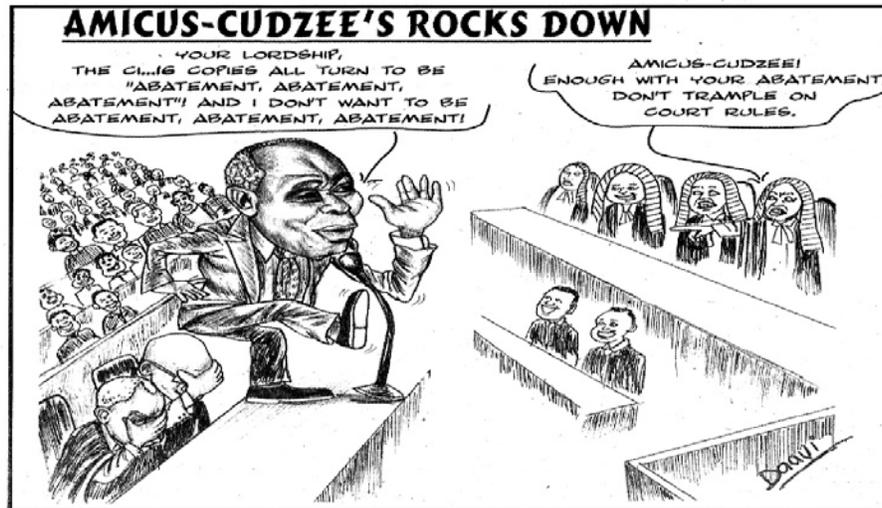
The three figures on the left depict the NPP presidential candidate Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo describing the NDC executive as ‘stealers’ while his vice presidential candidate of the NPP, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, and Chairman of the party, Mr. Jake Obetsebi-Lamphey, see themselves as democrats that believed in the rule of law and therefore would fight their case in the Supreme Court.

The caricature figures on the right depicts President John Dramani Mahama, the presidential candidate of the NDC, who was declared winner basking in victory while the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Dr. Kwadzo Afari-Gyan and Johnson Asiedu Nketia, the General Secretary of NDC party telling the NPP leadership to go to court. In deed what started as tug of words among the winners NDC and the losers NPP turned out to be one of the greatest challenges of the democratic process in Ghana.



**Figure 2:** I put it to you! I suggest to you! (*Daily Graphic*, April 26, 2013 p.19)

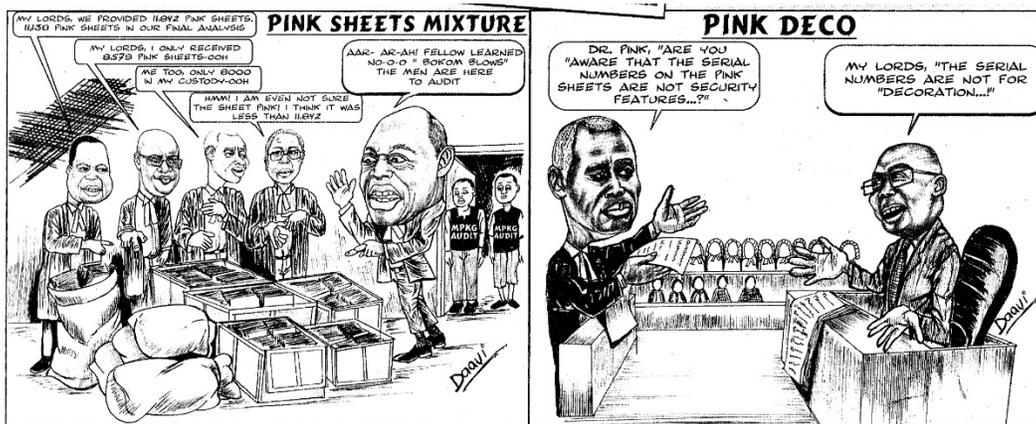
**Fig. 2** connotatively depicts the scene set for the hearing of the unprecedented presidential petition in Ghana. Teams of lawyers who are legal luminaries in the country represented the parties involved in the case. The characters in the frame are from left Tsatsu Tsikata, counsel for the NDC; Philip Addison, lawyer for the petitioners; Tonny Lithur, lawyer for President Mahama and James Quashie-Idun, counsel for the Electoral Commission, The text is indicative of the legal arguments that were advanced among the lead counsels in the case brought before the Supreme Court.



**Figure 3:** Amicus-Cudzee’s rocks down (*Daily Graphic*, May 30, 2013)

Prior to the hearing of the substantive case, the Supreme Court had to deal with more than 21 interlocutory applications. **Fig. 3** is a scene of the interior of Ghana’s Supreme Court showing the panel of Supreme Court judges hearing the case, observers and lawyers of the respondent. In **Fig. 3**, Mr. Benoni Tony Amekudzi, an Accra legal practitioner, who filed an ex-parte motion under an *amicus curiae* (friends of the court) claiming that the ongoing petition hearing challenging the results of the 2012 presidential election was in gross violation of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

The scene depicts the unprepared Amekudzi making misleading references to clauses in the 1992 Constitution seeking review. The case was however, dismissed by the Supreme Court. This paved the way for the substantive case to be heard. In **Fig. 3** are seen two characters representing the lawyers of the respondents holding their heads in frustration with the conduct of Amekudzi. They viewed his intervention as unnecessary. The panel of judges of the Supreme Court shown in the figure accused him of “trampling on the rules of the court”. But his intervention brought much entertainment and comic relief to those in the court room. *Amicus curiae* have since become a household name in Ghana.

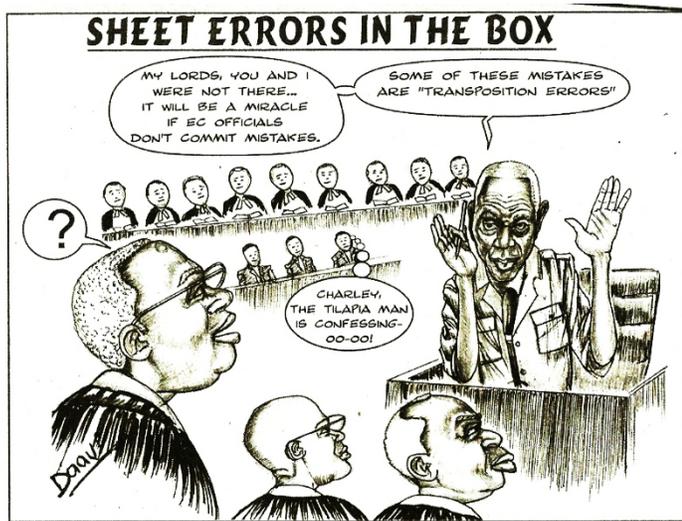


**Figure 4:** Pink Sheets Mixture & Pink Deco (*Daily Graphic*, May 18, 2013 p.29)

One of the most bitterly contested issues during evidence gathering at the presidential petition hearing was the actual number of pink sheets filed by the petitioners as exhibits to the court registry. So contentious and divisive was the issue of pink sheets between the petitioners and respondents that the Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court had to sort the service of an independent international audit consulting firm, KPMG, to count and confirm the number of pink sheets submitted by the petitioners. A pink sheet is the form on which the statement of poll and declaration of results for the office of President and Parliament are recorded (Banesseh, 2013). It is called pink sheet because the colour of the paper used for printing is pink. **Fig. 4** is a double frame cartoon and depicts the arrival of the personnel from KPMG to help count the pink sheets.

The boxes and sacks in the figure denote the huge number of pink sheets submitted to the Supreme Court by the petitioners. The lawyers representing the two parties in the case are seen exchanging words about the actual number of pink sheets submitted.

Another highlight of proceedings was pink sheets with quadruplicate serial numbers and different polling station with same codes. The scene in panel 2 depicts Tsatsu Tsikata, lawyer for the NDC, questioning Dr. Bawumia, the star witness of the petitioners if he was aware that the serial numbers were not security features and Dr. Bawumia satirically retorting that they could not be for decoration purposes.

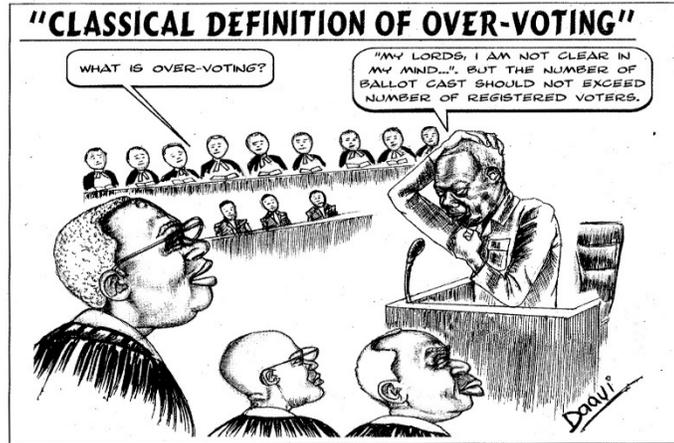


**Figure 5:** Sheet errors in the box (*Daily Graphic*, June 1, 2013 p.29)

The scene in **Fig. 5** depicts cross examination of witnesses during the petition hearing in the court room. One of the keenly contested issues brought before the Supreme Court by the petitioners of the 2012 presidential election was that of some presiding officers not signing pink sheets (statement of poll and declaration of results forms for the office of president and parliament) and some pink sheets having duplicate serial numbers. There was long drawn discussion about pink sheet errors.

**Fig. 5** depicts the Chairman of the Electoral Commissioner, Dr. Kwadzo Afari Gyan in the witness box responding to a question from lead counsel, Lawyer James Quashie-Idun, of the Electoral Commission, that the errors on the pink sheet were nothing but transposition errors which involved entering spots wrongly when care was not taken. He also opined that the petitioners and all others were not there during the day of election and could not determine what happened to necessitate such errors. The top figures represent the panel of the justices of the court neatly robed listening attentively to the explanation from Dr. Afari-Gyan. The Chairman of the Electoral Commission being depicted as a tilapia man is humorous because the chairman engages in commercial tilapia farming. The other two lawyers depicted close to the witness box were lawyers Tony Lithur representing the President and Tastsu Tsikata representing the NDC.

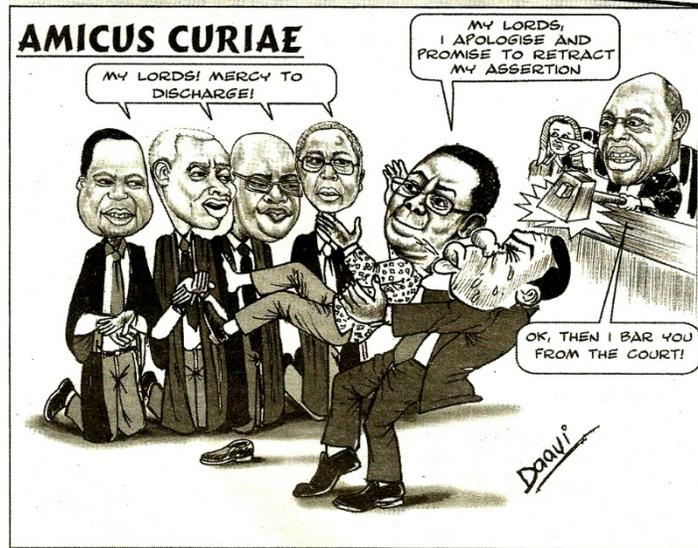
Another major complaint filed by the petitioners was the alleging irregularities of over-voting. **Fig. 6** depicts the court room showing the panel of judges seeking the definition of the concept of over-voting from the Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Ghana.



**Figure 6:** Classical definition of over-voting (*Daily Graphic*, June 5, 2013 page 19)

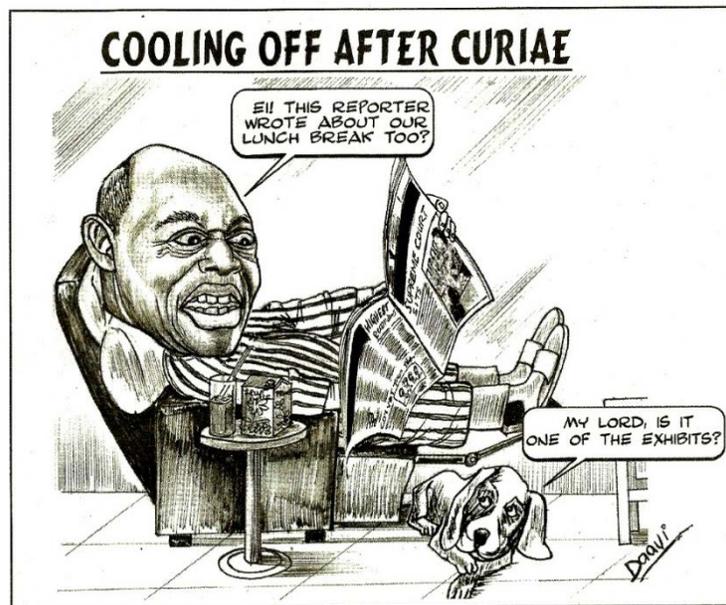
In the dock is the Chairman, Dr. Kwadzo Afari Gyan, giving a classical definition of over-voting to the court as “the number of ballot cast should not exceed number of registered voters at a polling station”. The three characters facing the Chairman of the EC are lawyers- James Quashie-Idun, Tonny Lithur, Tastsu Tsikata - representing the respondents listening attentively to what the Chairman had to say about over-voting because it was critical to the determination of the case.

After several verbal warnings to political activists, social commentators, lawyers and journalists to desist from distorting the proceedings of the court, the Supreme Court displayed its legal muscle and barred Sammy Awuku, the Deputy Communications Director of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) from attending further hearing of the presidential election petition. This was because he was distorting the facts of the proceedings in reportage of the proceedings in the media.



**Figure 7:** Amicus Curiae (*Daily Graphic*, June 29, p.29)

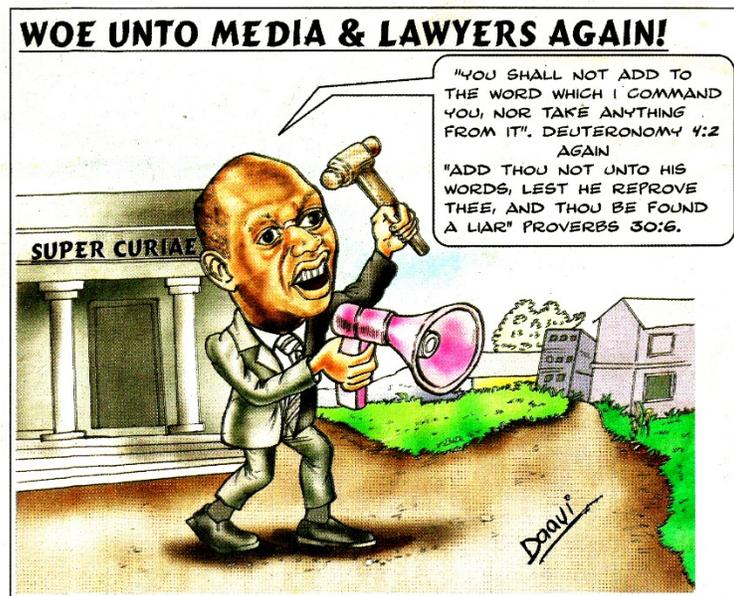
**Fig. 7** depicts a scene in the court room where the lawyers of both petitioners and respondents eagerly pleaded on behalf of Sammy Awuku for the Justices of the Court to temper justice with mercy. In the centre of the figure is the frozen Awuku being taken out of the court room after he had been barred from attending any further hearing of the case by Justice Atuguba.



**Figure 8:** Cooling off after curiae (*Daily Graphic*, Wednesday June 12, 2013 p.13)

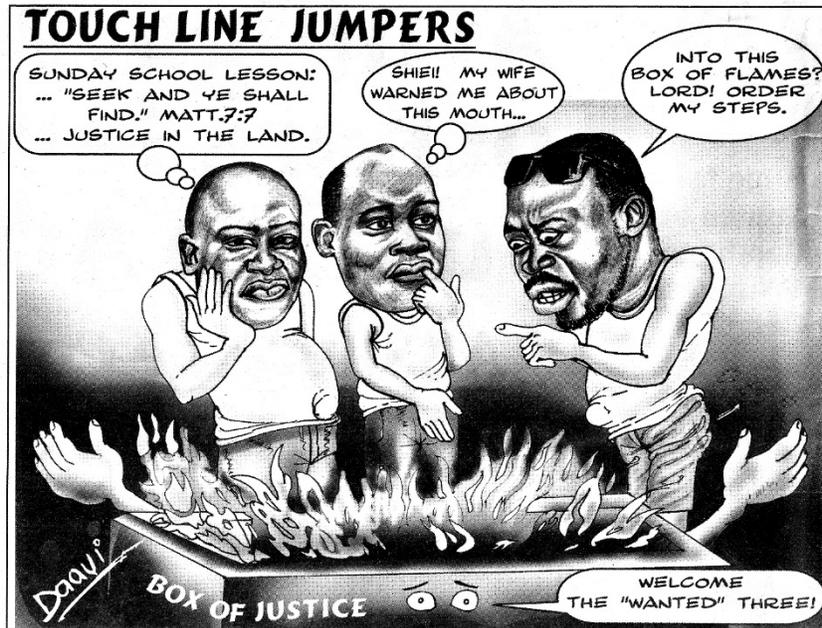
**Fig. 8** depicts a sober Justice Atuguba relaxing comfortably in a cozy chair reading the daily newspaper which had reported on the lunch break of the Justices of the Court. This was just after the furious Justice Atuguba had exercised his judiciary powers and barred Sammy Awuku from further attending the proceedings of the court, and also cautioned all persons including the President of the Republic not to make prejudicial misreports or misguided statement about the petition trial because they would not be spared the wrath of the Supreme Court. Satirically, there is a dog lying under his chair wanting to know if the lunch was part of the exhibits in court. Connotatively, the cartoon vividly depicts the presiding judge of the nine member panel as human after all.

The justices of the Supreme Court after countless warnings against contemptuous comments about the proceedings of the Supreme Court drew the red line to prevent commentators usurping the powers of the court. The Supreme Court on June 24, 2013 issued a final warning to lawyers, political activists, social commentators and journalists to desist from making prejudicial and contemptuous comments on the election petition



**Figure 9:** Woe unto media & lawyers again (*Daily Graphic*, June 26, 2013 p. 2)

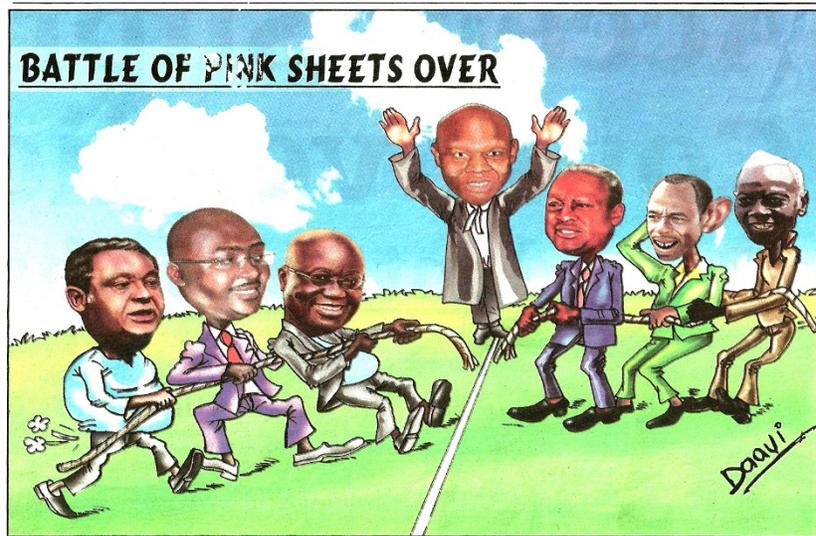
**Fig. 9** depicts the court room and the Presiding Judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Atuguba, warning counsel, media and political commentators that the court would not allow its authority and that of the state to be submerged to the authority of anarchy. In effect the court would not tolerate any unprofessional behaviour and would not hesitate to crack the whip on any one who went contrary to its directives. The Biblical quotation showed the importance and seriousness attached to the statement by the presiding judge. The gavel represents the power and authority of the presiding judge and the loud speaker showed the echoing of the warning to everybody in the country.



**Figure 10:** Touch line jumpers (*Daily Graphic*, July 2, 2013 p.2)

The scene in the figure depicts the “hunted” three, Ken Kuranchie, Editor of the Daily Searchlight, Stephen Atubiga, a member of the NDC Communication team and Kwaku Boahen also of the NDC who had contravened the orders of the Supreme Court. They had crossed the red line by acting in contravention of the Supreme Court order of June 13, 2013 and were summoned to appear before the court for contempt.

**Fig. 10** depicts the Supreme Court as a hearth of hell-fire ready to consume the three recalcitrant commentators, welcoming the wanted three. The realistic style employed in depicting each of the three characters now facing the wrath of the Supreme Court is that of fear and therefore soliloquizing for not respecting the directives of the Court. Ken Kuranchie, Editor of the Daily Searchlight newspaper who was jailed for 10 days. Kuranchie while waiting for his verdict recalls his Sunday school lessons indicating his Christian background. Stephen Atubiga was jailed for three days. Kwaku Boahen was pardoned because of statutory limitations.



**Figure 11:** Battle of pink sheets over (*Daily Graphic*, July 23, 2013 p.2)

**Fig. 11** denotes the end to evidence gathering at the petition hearing. The petition hearing which stated on April 17, 2013 ended on July 17, 2013. The characters in the scene depict Justice William Atuguba in the middle bringing to a close the petition hearing with his famous remark ‘at long last the battle of evidence has ended’ (*Daily Graphic* July 18, 2013 p. 32). This was after the petitioners and respondents had ended their submission in the court.

**Fig. 11** depicts the tug of words of evidence gathering between the petitioners -Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, presidential candidate of NPP; Jake Obetsebi-Lamprey, Chairman of the NPP; Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, running mate of Nana on the left and the respondents namely President John Dramani Mahama, Johnson Asiedu Nketia, the General Secretary of NDC party, and Dr Kwadzo Afari Gyan of the Electoral Commission (EC) on the right in the case.



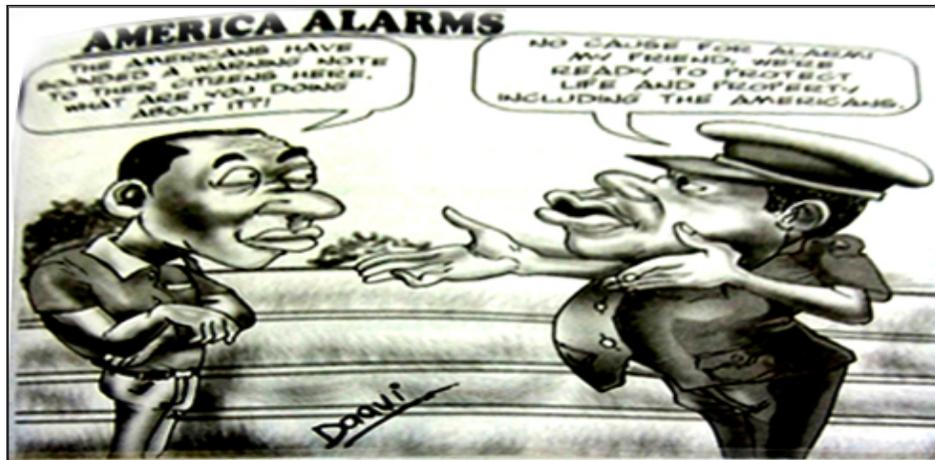
**Figure 12:** Contempt in the box (*Daily Graphic*, August, 17, 2013)

The scene in **Fig. 12** is the Supreme Court room. The captions are concise and definite explanation of the scene in the court room. When the custodial sentence was slapped on the two personalities by the Supreme Court in figure 10 for making contemptuous comments, most people in the country had expected that social commentators, party activists, lawyers and journalists would be guided in their public discourse. But that was not to be. Rather many more reckless and contemptuous remarks were made on social media platforms, radio and in the newspapers to the discomfort of many peace-loving Ghanaians.

Two personalities Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie alias Sir John, the General Secretary of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and Hopson Adorje, a member of the NPP communication team, were summoned to the Supreme Court for making intentional criminal contemptuous remarks about the Court including asking relatives of the justices hearing the election petition to plan their funerals.

**Fig. 12** depicts the deflated firebrand Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie, the General Secretary of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), a seasoned lawyer, weeping in the witness box, the hot box of baptism of fire while an angry Justice Atuguba on the extreme left top corner humiliates him by asking him to show the power he has to be making those reckless statements. In the lower left corner, is a caricature display of Mr. Ayikoi Otoo, NPP lawyer intervening on behalf of the accused explaining that it was the local Ga god “Gbeshe” that influenced him, compelling the justices to temper justice with mercy by imposing fines, instead of custodial sentences, on the contemnors.

For scandalizing the Court Sir John was fined GHC5,000, made to sign a bond to be of good behavior or in default go to jail for six months, and formally retracted and apologized for the contemptuous comments. The theme of **Fig. 12** is strikingly similar to that of **Fig. 10**. These cartoons depict a scene of indiscipline, non-repentant nature of some political commentators, party activists, the media and total disregard to the powers and authority of the court and the need for the Supreme Court to bare its feet.



**Figure 13:** America alarms (August 1, 2013 p2)

**Fig. 13** depicts the mood in the country during the petition hearing especially towards the days of the final verdict. Just when many people thought the election petition hearing was drawing to a close, the American embassy in Accra issued a statement warning its citizens in the country to be weary of the outcome of the final verdict.

**Fig. 13** denotatively depicts the Minister of Interior wanting to know what actions the Inspector General of Police (IGP) had taken to mitigate the fears of persons living in the country before and after the final verdict. The IGP is seen assuring the minister that Special Forces have been put in place to protect every life and property including those of the Americans. This portrays the heightened fear that engulfed the country during the petition hearing.



**Figure 14:** Peace promotion party (PPP) (August 19, 2013 p10)

Since the commencement of the election petition at the Supreme Court, tension has been building in the country because nobody knew how the final verdict would be received by Ghanaians. With the countdown to the petition verdict, various categories of people including the President, traditional societies, civil society organizations, women groups, children and political parties prayed and appealed to all Ghanaian to accept the verdict so as to preserve the peace we enjoy as a nation. **Fig. 14** depicts a dove representing the party of peace loving Ghanaians preaching peace while the innocent child, representing all children in the country, dreamt nothing but peace and saw nothing but peace after the final verdict.



**Figure 14:** Peace Union Party (PUP): (*Daily Graphic*, August 26, 2013 p.10)

**Fig. 14** depicts the two former heads of state of Ghana (J. A. Kufour and Jerry John Rawlings) and their wives (Mrs Konadu Agyemang Rawlings and Mad. Theresa Kufour) embracing each other and calling on Ghanaians to be patriotic and accept the final verdict so as to protect the sanctity of the democratic process in Ghana.



**Figure 15:** *Friends of peace* (August 26, 2013 p12)

**Fig. 15** depicts the lawyers of both the petitioners and the respondents preaching peace and calling on Ghanaians to accept the final verdict irrespective of how it went. They seem to be saying to Ghanaians that though we are on either side of the divide we are not enemies. To them irrespective of how the final judgment went it was victory for Ghana and nobody should do anything untoward to destroy the peace we enjoy as a nation.

**Figs. 13, 14** and **15** depict the fear for non-acceptance of the final verdict by some people and therefore the call by former presidents, national peace council, and national house of chiefs, party leaders and media practitioners for every Ghanaian to accept the final verdict for peace to prevail across the country.



**Figure 16:** August 29 ... ‘The Judgment Day’ (August 17, 2013 p.29)

**Fig.16** depicts the security measures put in place for the day of delivering the final verdict on the presidential petition hearing. The date was August 29, 2013. The scene in the figure portrays the Inspector General of Police giving directives to the special police cum army personnel put in place to keep the peace to deal drastically with any person wanting to disturb the peace during and after the declaration of the final verdict. The Special Forces are portrayed in this scene armed to the teeth and combat ready. However, after the final verdict, everything went quite. The much anticipated show of displeasure by people not accepting the verdict and hence pouring on the street did not happen. The security personnel and their armour became a contradiction of the mood of the people.



**Figure 17:** Ghana Wins (*Daily Graphic*, August 30, p.2)

There are two main characters in this cartoon. The lead petitioner, Nana Akufo-Addo, is represented in black coat and President Mahama, the respondent in white long-sleeved shirt. **Fig. 15** depicts Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo embracing President John Dramani Mahama after the final verdict which declared the president the winner. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the loser, conceded defeat, congratulated the President and decided not to challenge the decision of the court by asking for a review of the verdict. This brought to a close officially the legal contention of the 2012 presidential election results.

The connotation of the Ghana map is that Ghana was bigger than any individual and nothing must be done to destroy it. The embracing by the two political characters is symbolic indicating that the two protagonists in the case were not enemies. The atmosphere that pertained in Ghana after the final verdict showed that Ghana's democracy has come of age and would resort to the rule of law rather than the gun to resolve election disputes. The citizens have shown that they are peace loving people. In all it was Ghana that won the presidential petition case.

## **Conclusion**

The year 2013 marked an important milestone in Ghana's democracy. For the first time, the official results of a presidential election were litigated in the Supreme Court. As a result, many media houses employed various forms of media to present the outcomes of daily court proceedings. In this article, we use available data on one of such media forms; political images created by Daavi's cartoons to assess and discuss the 2013 presidential petition. The cartoonist combined characters (images) with words and other symbols to present facts about the presidential petition hearing.

Adopting the case study method, we purposively sampled 17 out of 25 cartoons covering the election petition published in the Daily Graphic newspaper. Applying a method of Content Analysis to sort the contents of the cartoons, we find that the animate and inanimate images in the scenes were easy-to-interpret, and the intended messages were meaningfully communicated to the audience. Daavi's cartoons used mostly single frames to frame and set the agenda for the themes that were discussed in the public sphere during the presidential election petition hearing. From the discussion, it seemed that in most part, the verdict was honest, truthful and acceptable to many Ghanaians. The characterization of events and use of humour by the cartoonist brought to the fore the extreme political polarization in Ghana, however, the general peaceful atmosphere in the country after the final verdict showed that Ghana's democracy has come of age and would resort to the rule of law rather than the gun to resolve election disputes.

## **Recommendations**

Our findings show that cartoons are appropriate means of communication that can impact even in political discussions. Just as it was used to portray Ghana's 2013 election petition hearing in Ghana, political cartoons as an art form and mode of communication can be used by academicians, policymakers, and other stakeholders to shape political agenda and social issues. This is because, cartoons other than words leave a lasting picture in the memory of readers and political cartoons can be used to ensure peace before, during, and after many general elections. Our work only illustrates how political cartoons were used by a particular cartoonist to portray the 2013 election petition hearing in Ghana. Thus, we recommend the need for further inquiry into how other political cartoonists tried to use this art form and mode of communication to shape political agenda in Ghana.

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