

# The the media and political leaders perpetuate

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The late president of Ghana, Professor John Evans Atta Mills expressed his “amazement and strong worry” about what he sees as a deepening culture of insults that has tainted Ghanaian politics to the detriment of national development. According to the President, he is “bewildered by the tremendous waste of precious time by politicians who engage in abusive exchanges in the media instead of focusing on issues of national interest which affect the ordinary person”. President Mills made the statements at the inauguration of the renovated Accra-Tema rail line on Thursday, October 28, 2010.

He said the use of insults by politicians corrupts the young generation and could constitute a disaster for societal development. He admonished that the focus should be on developing the country and improving the living standards for Ghanaians by providing good health care delivery, reducing poverty and enhancing education. Some of the negative effects of politics of insults the media and political leaders perpetuate include the following; Politics of insults creates a generation of uncultured and irresponsible future political leaders, as the common Ghanaian proverb goes, the one that is behind, learns the walking pattern of the one in front, so it will not be any surprise if the current generation mimics’ the unwarranted behavior of their elders. An article by Kare Anderson (Forbes News, October 26, 2012) denotes that, research has revealed the effect that is heating up political conversations is the rule of behavioral contagion to the third degree. From how much we eat to whom we hate, we are instinctively imitative creatures to a startling extent. Not only do those who know you emulate your behavior (and vice versa) but their friends do as well. In fact, according to the co-

authors of Connected, we are influenced by the behavior of our friends' friends' friends – people we do not even know.

Sweeping our country right now is a wild contagion of charge and counter-charges about who should be president and the kind of person you must be if you do not agree with me. Then there are the crowds of people who are angry about the angry discourse. Contagion multiplied, this tends to explain that politics of insults which is encouraged by politician and the media in Ghana has a higher propensity of it being carried on from generation to another generation. The behavior can spread like wildfire since every corner of the Ghanaian society is exposed to the media. Another negative effect that politics of insults can have on Ghana is the possibility of inciting a civil war in the country, the moment politicians start to shoot insults at each other during debates and arguments on radio and TV, the possibility of one being offended at the end of everything is very high. For instance, insults which directed towards a specific ethnic group has a possibility of pitching the followers of such insulted politician to the ethnic group of the one that caused the damage.

According to Samuel Marfo (2016), Ghana is perceived as a peaceful country in a volatile region and prides itself on becoming a middle-income country in a foreseeable future. Considering the political climate of Ghana as opposed to other countries in the West Africa-sub region including Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone among others, Ghana can be said to be a 'small heaven' in a conflict endemic sub-continent. Having experienced most coup d'états and political summersaults after independence in 1957, Ghana is now a democratic country and regulated by the Republican Constitution of <https://assignbuster.com/the-the-media-and-political-leaders-perpetuate/>

1992. The liberalization of the airwaves, coupled with the practice of multi-party democracy, has given the citizenry the opportunity and freedom of speech and freedom of association. However, a critical observation and monitoring of the events in Ghana in recent times have revealed that, due to freedom of speech, the political landscape of the country has become a theater of most vitriolic insults especially from politicians and their cronies which poses threat to the democratic peace enjoyed in the country.

Ghana as a country can learn a huge lesson from the Rwandan genocide which was between two major tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis; the civil war was highly inflamed by one particular radio station. A research by Allan Thompson (2007) revealed that the voice of Hutu Power was the private radio station RTLM, established by extremists who surrounded the president. And RTLM was an echo of other extremist media, notably the newspaper Kangura. Once the president's plane was shot down by unknown assailants, the message from RTLM was unmistakable: the Tutsi were to blame; they were the enemy and Rwanda would be better off without them. The killings began almost immediately in Kigali through the night of 6-7 April. Hutu moderates, who were willing to share power, were among the first targeted, along with Tutsi marked for extermination in a campaign that eventually fanned out across the country. Many of the hundreds of thousands of Rwandans who were slaughtered had huddled in churches for sanctuary.

Death squads lobbed in grenades. In their frenzy, killers severed the Achilles tendons on the heels of their victims, so they could return and finish the job later. Teachers killed students, neighbors slaughtered neighbors as local

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officials helped organize the killing. Ghana has enjoyed peace in the West African sub-region for decades and if it does not want to repeat the mistakes of other African countries, then it must desist from such indecent activities.

As Jamie Metz (1997) observes, ' mass media reach not only people's homes but also their minds, Shaping their thoughts and sometimes their behavior and so the media must regulate the way politician say certain things during various debates and arguments.