

## **The Mediatization of Political Communication in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Cases of Cameroon and Ghana in a Comparative Perspective**

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**Abstract :** The concept of mediatization of politics describes changes with regards to media and politics, as the political sphere is increasingly shaped by the media and conforms to its logic. The mediatization of politics in established democracies of the West has been the object of several researches. However, there is an overwhelming paucity of literature on this reconfiguration of the political life around the media in the emerging democracies of the Sub-Saharan Africa. A majority of Sub-Saharan countries have been progressively experiencing the modernization of their societies and significant developments with respect to political communication since the early 1990s. This has been facilitated by factors such as the adoption of democratic reforms, the development of mass media, the advent of social media and the rapid spread of new information and communication technologies. Thus, this paper investigates the extent to which political communication in Sub-Saharan Africa is mediatized, especially with regards to the social media. Through in-depths interviews with twenty political leaders and political observers in Cameroon and Ghana, this article argues that the social media has become the main arena of voters' mobilization and political participation in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, a greater extent of freedom for political activism on social media is observed in the new democracy of Ghana, unlike in the enduring authoritarian political system of Cameroon where the government attempts to control the use and content of political discourse on social media.

**Keywords :** mediatization, political communication, social media, sub-saharan africa

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