

The Woes of Ghana's 4th Estate

Ishmael D. Norman¹

¹ Institute for Security, Disaster and Emergency Studies, Langma, Central Region, Ghana

Correspondence: Ishmael D. Norman, Ph. D., J. D., BA., ESQ., Present and Founder, Institute for Security, Disaster and Emergency Studies, Sandpiper Place, NYD 54/55 Nyanyano District, Suit # 1, Langma, Central Region, Ghana.

Received: May25, 2026

Accepted: June 26,2026

Published: June30,2026

doi:10.65343/tpss.v2i2.110

URL: <https://doi.org/10.65343/tpss.v2i2.110>

Abstract

Background: There is the growing perception that, the 4th Estate, or the Media, has been weakened in strength, integrity, and from dispassionate and non-partisan lenses in reporting the news, since the launch of the 4th Republican Constitution in Ghana. **Objective:** This paper investigates the developments surrounding the creeping effect of monetary inducement, lucrative public employment opportunities and increasing co-option of media personalities into political offices in Ghana. How does Ghana make its media more responsible and integrity driven? **Aim:** The goal is to identify the “pull and push” factors, and other attractions for this development, shine light on the threat such development poses to national cohesion, and to make recommendations for a more responsible media. **Method and Methodology:** The author conducted content analysis of literature and other publications such as news items, Podcast and social media posts through both random and opportunistic selection of legal and public documents addressing the themes of this paper. Published empirical literature on media accountability, reportage and influences in the media space as well as publications in journals and scholastic research papers culled from search engines such as ResearchGate, Sage, Taylor & Francis online journals, and political studies journals were accessed and reviewed. In addition, the Code of Ethics of the Ghana Journalist Association, the concept of “Manufacturing of Consent” of the public in the media space, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and Push and Pull Factors were the ethical and theoretical bases of the evaluation. **Results & Discussions:** The findings overwhelmingly support the initial observation that the 4th Estate is being emasculated through political appointments, job opportunities, hefty sitting allowances or “solidarity” payment for short meetings, and event coverages. The media appears to operate on the basis of partisan politics, with mutually beneficial agreements between political and media personalities to suppress dissent, accountability and transparency. The appointments of media practitioners and promotions into political offices, destroy the claim of journalistic “independence”, “truthfulness”, and “fairness” in reporting on critical developments. The practitioners appear to be in desperation competing for political favors and notice. These traits have cumulatively and negatively affected advertisement revenues. **Conclusions:** The Ghana Journalism Association needs to revamp its oversight responsibilities to restore community confidence, respect and social acceptance.

Keywords: 4th Estate, veiled Partisan reportage, threat to truth-telling, independent reportage

1. Introduction

1.1 Historical Estate Distribution

In the olden days, the First Estate was composed of the Roman Catholic clergy, followed by the nobility in the Second Estate, then came the Third Estate composed of the population. Naturally, the Fourth Estate was attached to the media as an influencing group with respect to the framing of critical national issues and the participation of the populace in the national discourse (Constable, 1995). The national constitutional framework threw a wedge in the conventional attribution of ranks in Society when political realism was the prevailing system of thought and governance and re-shaped the true owners of the land: We, the People, from the view point of human security. The Preamble to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana states:

IN THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD,

We the People of Ghana,

In the exercise of our natural and inalienable right to establish a framework of government which shall secure for ourselves and posterity the blessings of liberty, equality of opportunity and prosperity [...] DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

1.2 The Evolution of the Media From the 4th to the 9th Estate in Ghana's Governance Structure?

Today, the media appears to find itself a bit removed from the original fourth place. The constitutional design, has placed the Citizens as the First Estate, the Laws of Ghana at Second Estate, Human Rights at the Third Estate, Policy and Ethics as Fourth Estate, even before the ruling Executive, law making Parliament, and the enforcing agencies of the rights and privileges as well as the obligations of the citizens by Judiciary, Security Agencies and the Media in that order. The 1992 Constitution mentions the Media in Chapter 12, granting the "Freedom and Independence of the Media" (pp. 112-115). Perhaps, this is as clear a message as it can be emphasized that, its previous estate position has been shifted a bit from what it used to be, although it still remains essential to democratic governance. Thus, if we go with the constitutional structure, the media is now, the 9th Estate? Nonetheless, the new position of the media in the constitution is both symbolic and disturbing, with respect to the optics in describing the importance the nation places on the role of the media in Ghana today. The most pertinent parts of the Constitution to this discussion are found in Articles 162 and 163 where in 162(4), it states:

Editors and publishers of newspapers and other institutions of the mass media shall not be *subject to control or interference by Government*, nor *shall they be penalized or harassed* for their editorial opinions and views, or the content of their publications," (Emphasis, mine).

Ghana is a secular and presumptive democratic State under constitutional rule. By presumptive democracy, is to say, Ghana's democracy is tilted to one side, depending upon who the president is, and with it, everything else! As a general observation,

"The value of the exercise of democracy in Ghana and similar nations in Sub-Saharan Africa under republican constitutions such as those of Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda, is degraded with vote-buying; gift giving and inducement; voter intimidation; incumbent abuse of national assets to support campaigns; infusion of financial contributions from sources whose funds may be tainted with criminal activities (Tilly, 2003; Bogaards, 2009; Batory, 2016; Christiana Anaxagorou, Georgios Efthyonlou, Vassilis Sarantides, 2020). This brings that nation into the De-democratization domain with a long list of corrupt practices that in a mature democracy such [...] may not be so rampant and so blatantly common" (Lindberg, 2003; Lyng, 2023, pp. 144-172, In Norman, 2024, pp. 23-33).

1.3 The "Zero Estate" Status of the Church in Ghana's Governance System

It is not only the media that has been moved from its fourth position to a new status. The Clergy has also suffered what can be described as devaluation of social importance and mockery of religiosity in the affairs of the people of Ghana, despite the emergence of huge edifices built by various Churches in Ghana to pull in more worshipers and in turn, more revenue. Just as it is generally presumed that Ghana is a democratic nation, Ghana is also presumed as a predominantly Christian nation. However, presumption is not reality. This is because, many of its citizens pretend to be Christians despite the widespread infidelities among couples, concubinages, sidekicks, insidious and massive corrupt activities against the collective societal interests by these same believers in God and "Born Again Christians" with Jesus Christ as their personal saviors (Pew Research Center, 2019; Mauro, 1998). This goes without saying that, those of the Muslim or Islamic faith are just as culpable as their fellow believers of other faiths and religions. Considering the incidence and prevalence of corrupt activities in Ghana, faith in God is, perhaps, reduced to a fad, an empty ritual than endearing belief system, where one-day a week is set aside for God or Allah, but the rest of the days are devoted to avaricious and selfish pursuits (Agbenu, Opoku & Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2025; Butler & Harper, 1994, 277-286; Cochran, Chamlin, Beeghley, et al., 2004, 102-127).

In today's Ghana, the Church is not mentioned specifically in any part of the 1992 Constitution, but fused together with human security and human rights protections of We, The People in Chapters 5, and 6. Though in some circles, the Clergy remains essential for the spiritual and personal development and happiness of some of us Ghanaians; the role of the Clergy has been defined, and respectfully devalued systematically from the height it used to occupy, to its present; almost fringe position; in the overall governance system of the modern State. The concept of Separation of Church and State is not being actively practiced in Ghana, though there is no legal requirement for the citizens to incorporate religiosity into their mundane activities in the secular domain (Murray, 1947; Nsereko, 1986; Paulsen, 1986; Norman, 2013). Today, some of the Clergy in the various Churches are viewed as rent-seeking, financial institutions board-seeking chairmanships, money-grabbing-seed-sowing marketeers and wealth-seeking Church members capable of paying huge tithes every Sunday, without consideration to the sources of such payments (Akabike, Ngwoke, & Chukwuma, 2021). The Clergy is seen as captains of Church money making industry. Part of the diminishing or diminished power of the Clergy arose from their own internal struggle for supremacy among the competing religious faith. The struggle for prominence between the Catholic faith and the Protestants started long ago in Europe leading to the formation of new groups such as the Anglican Church, Lutheran, the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and the subsequent

evolution of charismatic groups that seem to have amplified the weakened status of the Clergy to a greater extent. Today, in many of these charismatic movements, the rich members who sponsor the activities of the Churches tend to possess as much power, and in some cases, more power than the so-called men of God, who are presumed to be the spiritual leaders of these money-making Churches? Then is the competition between the Clergy or the leaders of the charismatic Churches referred to as the General Overseers, which has not ceased and continues unabated (Amissah-Christian, 2021). It continues today through political affiliations, lobbying, using spirituality and prophetic messages as weapons of mind twisting influence, using Church auditoriums as theaters of political campaigns, with whole Churches endorsing a particular political party and its flagbearer or candidate for a given political position, and using faith for political not social advocacy (Orogun, 2023). In the struggle for congregants, some of the Churches allow indiscretion in the dresses and appearances of some women members, exposing their thighs, breasts and cleavages and as much skin as the eye could bear in Church. Hip-Hop music and dance moves are today common features in some Churches and Christian ceremonies, further devaluing spirituality and solemnity of worship into momentary discotheques, noise making and hollow emotional satisfaction of the members (Ngomane & Mahlangu, 2014; White-Hodge, 2010).

1.4 Selective Media Reporting

By and large, Ghana's democracy suffers from political interference by the ruling parties and leaders as well as experiences structural limitations due to poor and partisan selection of leaders of critical national institutions in favor of jobs for the boys (Lindberg, 2003; D'Alessio & Allen, 2000, Bakir, 2021). It is time for party boys and girls, among whom are media personalities, to chop some; when a new government takes over the reins of power (Afrobarometer, Round 10 Survey in Ghana, 2024). The Afrobarometer Round 10 survey in Ghana revealed the public's demand for media accountability with noticeable decline in trust. The practice of jobs for the boys and others is known in Ghanaian political parlance as a government of "family and friends" defined by whether one attends the same Church with the President and his wife, or one is tribes' man or woman, a party functionary, financial supporter of the political party, a foot soldier, or even former girlfriend of the leader as well as being blood relative (Osei Mensah, 2026). All such cases have occurred in Ghana under various Presidents such as John Kufour, Akufo Addo and John Dramani Mahama in 2016 /2020 and 2024/to the present. As for the Ministers and CEOs of State corporations, this is a common practice (Nyukorong, 2014).

The main stream media groups, sometimes, attempt to expose many of such abuses, but they are also easily "bought" with hefty allowances for attending government functions. On the face of such admonition, the media has the guarantees against negative government interferences and controls (Della Vigna & Kaplan, 2007). The freedom and independence of the media guaranteed in Article 162 of the Constitution, can easily be compromised in many ways, through both negative and positive rights of the media. The most innocuous and insidious disabling way to weaken the resolve and the strength of another person or entity, a competitor, is through benevolence, kindness, empathy, sympathy: Political appointments, cushy jobs in industry or other walks of life and academic scholarships abroad, expensive gifts such as vehicles, massive cash contributions to special aggrieved media personalities, the size of which cannot be said to be common to all media personalities that suffer personal losses of relatives, wives, husbands, children and so on (Chen, et. al., 2020, Nyukorong, 2014).

For the fear of being relegated to the side and not being invited again to such functions, some of the media personalities do not often report on many of such abuses but leave it to Podcasters and Social Media Influencers to report on such matters (Farley, 1938). The public believe they are more likely to be informed by podcast than the regular news chains, hence the growing influence (Deepika Das, 3/4/2026, Podcasts are dominating-Audacity; Tobin & Guadagno, 2022). A case in point is the general perception in Ghana among both National Democratic Congress devotees and opposition party members of the New Patriotic Party that, the Ghanaian media has lost its purpose and its integrity. In April of 2025, a former Chief Justice of Ghana, Sofia Akuffo, who was appointed as a member of the Council of State of Ghana, under Chapter 89(2)(i) of the 1992 Constitution, resigned her position but it took up till June of 2026 for the news to break in the public space. The author was reliably informed that there were media personalities, who were aware of the Chief Justice's resignation from the Council of State role in 2025, but were primed by the government communications machinery not to speak about it to the public (Goodarzi, 2021; Chahal, 2023; Government Communication 6/15/2026, Graphic online.com).

The media engages in selective reporting, when the issue appears to point fingers at the key political sponsors of their official stations or private interests (Chen, et. al. 2020; Dwomoh-Doyen, B. 6/6/2026 Arrests of critics in Ghana, Al Jazeera; Transparency Int'l, 10/2/2026, Anti-Corruption Efforts of Government Not Making Significant Impact). A responsible media is devoted to ethical reporting, governed by the values such as credibility, truthfulness and fearlessness or the absence of favoritism, neutrality, fact-checking, respect for privacy and accuracy (Arku, J., 12/9/2015, Mahama Accuses media of reporting corruption falsely).

The transition from being an alleged responsible journalist to becoming a political appointee is narrow, potentially deceptive and morally slippery. When such happens, how does society go back to conduct content analysis of the appointee's submissions over the period to assess the values with respect to responsible journalism? Does it also mean that the once media personality, but now a political appointee, was abusing the trust of the public for his or her personal gain? Such impressions kill the confidence and trust of the public in the media space (Bakir, 2021; Taher, 2025). The following research questions articulated as effects formed the basis of the focal analysis of the key issues in this paper thus:

- i. *What is the effect of the co-option of media personalities into well-paying government jobs on issues of truthfulness and accountability in reporting?*
- ii. *What is the Push and Pull Factors for media migration into government jobs*
- iii. *How does the public re-assesses the partisan content in the previous reportage of a co-opted media personality and the effect on national cohesion?*

The definition of responsible media breaks down into its unique parts as follows as working foci of this paper:

1. *Professional reporting creates trust as basic value which equates honesty, transparency and accountability to the audience in the public space,*
2. *Responsible media fraternity equates receptive audience of news items generated by the fraternity and promotes national cohesion, effective communication and agreement on critical issues,*
3. *Therefore, responsible media reenforces national unity, peace and development with credibility and trust.*

The foregoing assessment of the 4th Estate would take into consideration these values as expressed. The effect analysis was not systematically done but followed the literature review for consistency with regards to the internal arrangement of the paper.

2. Method and Methodology

The author relied on both random and opportunistic legal and official documents commonly available on the Internet to review the creeping effect of Media personalities into government jobs and appointments and the effect on public trust of the media. Interviews with purposively selected media personalities were conducted to add to the qualitative approach to the work. Published empirical literature, the Code of Ethics of the Ghana Journalist Association, the concept of "Manufacturing of Consent" of the public in the media space, the Theory of Reasoned Action, Push and Pull Factors, and Realism, were also relied on, in addition to publications in Communications journals and other social media platforms. In addition, scholastic research papers were culled from search engines such as ResearchGate, Sage, Taylor & Francis online journals, and political studies journals, using well-crafted search phrases such as "media personalities and political job rewards", "Cases of media personalities co-opted into political appointments", "Were those appointed into political jobs, part of the "sleeper-cells" of Political parties in the Media space", and "the public perception of political party affiliations of media personalities revealed" to meet the requirement of research repeatability. The inclusion criteria of the literature and other published papers were those where media reportage on compelling national issues are strung out for weeks on end while at the same time ignoring other equally pressing issues often tackled by Podcasters, social media and Influencers as well as post-election appointments of media personalities into well-paying jobs by the ruling government of the day. Such developments raise issues of media irresponsibility on the part of the personalities so appointed by the government, and questions about biased reporting are raised. All in all, 100 papers were selected from over hundreds of thousands of entries from the different jurisdictions and sources, most of which were rejected and used only 62 of those papers in this work. Those selected were based on the quantum of citations those papers had accumulated since their publications and the ranking of the journals in which they were published, which were analyzed and the findings summarized and reported as part of the literature review and results. The author found a few pertinent gray and published literature on Ghana in relation to responsible media which was included in this report. Each of the specific papers was read and briefed after a step-by-step and page-by-page investigation to assess how it impacted or affected the national media space, risk communication in governance and in politics. The author disaggregated the papers, read them again and selected the ones that dealt with the three research questions. After that the papers were grouped into their respective units, with summarized findings and interpretation based upon the author's education, skills, knowledge in professional codes of ethics, law and normative ethics.

3. Results and Discussions

The first item under the results and discussions section is to understand the push and pull factors for media practitioners' migration from journalistic practice or profession into political appointments or jobs with the government in power.

a. *What is the Effect of the “Push and Pull” Factors for media migration into government jobs?*

The theory of Push and Pull factors was articulated by Everett S. Lee in 1966 as a demographical tool for the analysis of why humans are “pushed” out of their places of work or residence and origin, and migrate to sojourn in new, unfamiliar nations or industries. Though the theory has not been situated in other theories such as realism and the theory of reasoned action, it is strongly associated with subjective realism of the individuals and the state involved in this discourse. It is also part of the reasoned action and expectations of the parties in this discourse as well. The “pull” factors come with attractions offered in the new location compared to opportunities in the old place of living or working (Everett, 1966; Bakir, 2021; Boumans, 2023). It comes with the belief that the new place would promote or enhance the person's wellbeing and flourishing, even if such a period is only momentarily as in the case of political appointments. The financial inflows into one's pocket, access to good education, healthcare and safety considerations are normally part of the pull factors, making the absence of such opportunities and amenities as parts of the push factors.

In addition to the subjective expectations of the journalists that migrate to political jobs and appointments, there is the exploitation of basic moral tools for building strong social connectivity and networks. Today, politicians own media houses, which gives them the power as captains of those institutions to hire and fire at will, sometimes with reason, nonetheless. A well-known Journalist in Ghana commented and I quote:

“Due to that, the fine line between Media ownership and the real journalistic work is often blurred” (Res A1, 10.13.2025).

Since 2010 up till now, through the Mills-Mahama, Mahama-Amissah-Arthur, then the Akuffo-Addo-Bawumia era, and the Mahama-Nana Opoku-Agyemang tenure, the bastardization of the media through acts of benevolence, generosity and the apparent supererogational assistances have been doled out to some well-known journalists with interested generosities. These “gifts” are never disinterested generosities but purpose-driven agenda with the goal to influence those still waiting for opportunities to be elevated to well-paying positions in another government. As reported by another national journalist,

“There is a long list of journalists who have since been drafted into politics, taking up governmental appointments [...]. This impedes the transparency mandate greatly. How can one bite the hand that feeds him or her? How can one be critical of a potential future master whose apron string he or she is tied to?” (Res A2, 10.13.2025)

b. *Convergence of Political Controls and “Push and Pull” Factors promotes Media Irresponsibility*

Although there is clear “Push and Pull” factors in addition to the mischievous machinations of the politicians, there is the general concern that, those men and women who are professionally and willingly “abducted” into political positions, are adults and have the free will, with the capacity to make wise and informed decisions. Perhaps, the new political appointments have been their goal all along and therefore part of the underlying reason action for going into the media profession in the first place. Despite, the abduction is proof of concept that, those journalists were “political active cells” or spies for the political party that appoints them to lucrative jobs, without competitive bidding. The appointment is the pay day for their contributions to the Party's political victory (Lindberg, 2003). They allow themselves to be “abducted” into political life, because they know they will lose credibility as journalists if it is known that they have specific party affiliations. They would not be easily and wholeheartedly received back into the profession as they first were, after such a discovery within the media space. At best, they could return to work in clearly defined political roles, or be back benchers as hidden editors or producers but not as frontline hosts and hostesses with presumptive objectivity not only in their commentary, but also in the analysts, the guests and the topics they choose to discuss (Guerrero-Sole, 2022). There would, henceforth, be the questions as offered by another journalist:

“Whose bidding are they manufacturing now? Who has given them money to promote this viewpoint as opposed to the other? What would he or she say tomorrow if he or she is given more money by the other side?” (Res A3, 10.15.2025).

It is suspected that the owners of private media houses may have concluded that, their reporters, some of them, get paid when they even interview political figures in the normal stream of news development. Others demand for money especially during the campaign season, district assemblies' selection of District Chief Executives, (DCEs) and so on, and, still, there are others who work as Masters of Ceremonies at both public and private events and functions for fees. The big professional locum winners are the ones that get ultimately appointed as

Chief Executive Officers of public agencies and commissions, or Communication Directors, etc. As reported by Afedzi Abdullah in October of 2021,

“Ghana’s media commission, the National Media Commission (NMC) urges media practitioners to avoid any action that could endanger the integrity, judgment or reputation of their organizations. Media practitioners are also specifically enjoined by the Commission to desist from accepting or soliciting gifts and favors from political parties and presidential candidates. [...] However, the practice of companies, event organizers, or politicians offering money and other gifts to journalists who report on them is rampant. Journalists often accept envelopes known as “Solidarity” or simply “Soli” with money from event organizers when they are invited to cover press conferences or other events (Afedzi, 29.10.2021, para 2-3, Jamlab.africa.com).

The Afedzi’s submission also offered that,

“As for journalists, I was told when you invite them for your program and you do not give them fat envelopes, they won’t do your story, an event organizer said”.

For these reasons, paying high salaries as a standard remuneration reward, may not be fair to the owners of the media houses; since they are agents, who have created the public opportunity for the journalists to be seen, discovered and become popular with the ultimate prize of being rewarded with government appointment. This is tantamount to heavenly reward, or “your reward is in heaven”, metaphorically speaking, regarding the salary ranges offered to journalists. This is part of the reasons why, perhaps, media houses do not pay their workers as well as one would have hoped.

3.1 What Is the Effect of Co-option of Media Personalities Into Well-paying Government Jobs on Issues of Truthfulness and Accountability in Reporting?

3.1.1 A Review of the Ghana Journalist Association Ethics

If journalists are not living within the controls of their Code of Ethics, what doctrine can be used to determine their professionalism and waywardness? We are compelled to review the Ghana Journalist Association Ethics to determine whether it was designed for giant loopholes for the practitioner to sail through easily and engage in corrupt activities as a journalist or rise above the moral dilemmas they confront in news reporting. The review of the Ghana Journalist Association Code of Ethics to assess potential rivers of Rubicon that may have been crossed by the media men and women, compels the evaluation of the conduct of journalists who hop from hosting television and radio shows into political saddles. Would they ever be able to return to their professions as media personalities, once they cross the Rubicon? Doesn’t the movement of media men and women into political appointments, foretell a passage of no-return? Would they be partisan? Would they be objective? Once one crosses the Rubicon, can one survive outside the media industry once the appointing political party completes its term of government? For the younger ones, isn’t this move a bit too risky? Who would appreciate and trust them after the foray in politics is over?

Let it be known that, this author does not take a stand on whether one works for a media house forever or leaves for greener pastures, new appointments in government or changes course mid-way. It does not also mean to imply immorality or dishonesty. It is simply an investigation into some of the underlying causes of why people in the media space would choose to join a government knowing full well, political business cycles have shelf lives that do not last longer than professional commitment to an industry. It is added here, and quoting from a post by MyNewsGH:

Several notable Ghanaian Journalists have been recognized and been elevated to new jobs under the Akufo-Addo government for various reasons that include their professional qualifications among others while others are alleged to have been rewarded for party ‘jobs’,” (MyNewsgh.com, 2021, para. 1-25, accessed 10.15.2025)

In President Mahama’s second government era, which began on January 7th 2025, seven media men and women were appointed with positions which some consider as juicy and others think those new positions pay relatively better than being a journalist or a host of a morning show. Apart from the financial reward, the new positions may appear to be of higher utilitarian value, but utility derived from anything or goods, do not last forever. And the ultimate question is, utility for whom, for what, or from where?

If by nature a man or a woman has insatiable desires for money, power and other social goods, self-esteem and other intrinsic values, such needs shall never be fulfilled no matter how much money one gets, how much political or social influence one may command. It is difficult for society to accept a media man or women who finds himself in a government job to be received in the same way as one who was not a journalist but worked publicly for his or her political party and became a CEO. Without any characterization of their skills informing the appointing authority that they are qualified for their appointments, some in the public space have raised

concerns about such appointments. Among them is the Former Chief Executive Officer of the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program, (NEIO) Kofi Ofosu Nkansah. His concern was simply stated, “Imagine if they were biased?” (<https://www.ghanaweb.com>, (accessed 10.10.2025). Some of these previous media men and women in President Mahama’s government include Dr. Randy Annetey Abbey, (DBA) (COCOBOD Welcomes Dr. Randy Abbey as AG. CEO, cocobod.gh, (accessed, 10.15.2025). He is followed by Mr. Abeiku Santana, Raymond Acquah, Lantam Papamko, Amefa Ampau, Yam Amponsa Ankrah, Paa Kwesi Schandorf, Veronica and others.

In the previous political administration of Akufo Addo, another list of journalists also may have been baited, perhaps, and recruited with comfortable financial packages. These included personalities like Kwabena Kwakye, Yaw Boadu Ayeboafu, formerly a columnist and Director of Newspapers of Graphic Corporations Group as the Chairman of the National Media Commission’s Board. Then Kwaku Sakyi Addo as the Chairman of the Board of the National Communication Authority. Egbert Faibille, Esq., became the CEO of the Petroleum Commission in 2017. Paul Adom-Otchere was appointed to the National Communication Agency, (NCA) board and then later to Ghana Civil Aviation Authority, (GCAA) Board. Fiifi Boafo moved from Oman FM to a new position under Akufo Addo as Manager in charge of CEO’s office at COCOBOD. Malik Daabu also moved from Multimedia Joy FM and joined the Ghana Maritime Authority as the head of Public Relations. Jefferson Sackey and Kofi Agyapong were appointed as Deputy Directors of Communications at the Presidency during Akufo Addo’s tenure as President. Perhaps, the greatest numbers of media personalities that had migrated from journalism to government oriented journalistic assignments and other positions was witnessed under the Akufo Addo administration with the most famous probably being Kojo Oppong Nkrumah. Mr. Nkrumah appears to have been quite skillful in maneuvering his rise from that position into being a member of Parliament. Not everyone is as fortunate and calculating as, perhaps, Mr. Oppong Nkrumah who saw the end of his ministerial appointment was near and made a wise move to remain useful to himself and his community.

A handful of these personalities have had, at least, one or more interviews with this author in the studios in the Media Houses that used to be their employers. Like the concern raised by Mr. Ofosu Nkansah, the question that rose after learning of their appointments was, was I being used to advance someone else’s private interests during either studio visits or even on Zoom or Meet conversations and dialogues? It is difficult to tell, but it is also easy to assumed that, despite one’s charitable analysis of the situation, the possibility still exists that one was exploited one way or the other.

3.2 The Ghana Journalist Ethics on the Phenomenon

The GJA Code of Ethics like all professional codes of ethics is aimed at “... ensuring adherence to the highest ethical standards, professional competence and good behavior in the performance...” of duties in journalism (GJA, #3, 2025, p. 1). Like any other professional code of ethics, it lacks specificity as to what is meant by “highest ethical standards”. Who decides how high the ethical standard is and how much effort should one put in; in order to reach the apex of that particular expected standard? Within each professional code of ethics is embedded subjectivity or individual stand-point on the issues at stake. Article 3(1): Professional Integrity states:

“Journalists should not accept bribes or any form of inducement to influence the performance of his or her duties”.

Here too, there is a subjective value in this admonition. If a journalist should not accept bribe, what is a bribe according to GJA? The various provisions of the GJA code are so lax that it is only the goodwill and family values of the journalists that really work to stop them from going bad. Let’s say, for example, I do a story of a man who then sends me a thousand cedis electronically before even the story is broadcast or diffused. Irrespective of the content of the story, what should the journalist do? Is that a donation or a bribe? Let’s further assume that the story is a bit scandalous but the man insists that because the journalist was polite about the way he approached the encounter, that was the motivation for sending the money. Would the journalist tone down the intensity of the story in order to be in line with the perception of his calm demeanor, which the subject of the story was so much touched by it? If the journalist were to tone down the intensity of the story, for example, instead of reporting that, the man who is alleged to have embezzled State funds and who until then did not even have a bicycle to his name had two SUV tear-rubber vehicles in his parking lot in addition to the two others he and his wife drive. Would it be professional if the journalist reports that, the man is alleged to have embezzled States funds although there was no evidence of the *actual money* during a visit or raid to the man’s house by a section of the security agencies and the reporter. The fact that two tear-rubber SUVs were parked in his parking lot is not evidence that the vehicles belong to him and that, they were purchased from the alleged embezzled funds without doing additional investigations to sustain that suspicion? In this way, if it later turns out that the two vehicles were the direct fruits of the embezzled funds after the report has been diffused in its toned-down version, at that later date, the journalist could be found to have accepted a bribe, though on the face of it, he did not do anything to solicit for the money that was sent to him by Momo by the man. Culture does not allow him

to refuse to accept the gift of Ghc1000 because the GJA Code of Ethics also admonishes the journalist in Article 6(1): Respect for National and Ethnic Values that:

A journalist should not originate material, which encourages discrimination on the ground of ethnicity, color, creed, gender or sexual orientation.

Although culture is not specifically mentioned in Article 6, it is part of the thinking. If one cannot promote hate based on ethnicity, one cannot also reject cultural conduct that one may experience in the rendition of one's services, if the rejection would lead to mischaracterization. If, for example the journalist desires to return the money and the man says, I am sorry in my culture once you make a donation to someone, reciprocity of kindness at a later date compels the recipient to accept the gift as given and cannot return it without going against his cultural norm. Though the conduct or the decision to return the gift is not written or spoken in the public space, it is still a form of communication which may clash with the cultural values of either the man or the journalist.

3.3 Journalistic Focus of the Media Houses in Ghana

It is difficult to distinguish one media house in Ghana from the other, besides the different owners and political affiliations, and apart from knowing the faces of the hosts and hostesses. For example, a sample of Joy News and TV3 Sports, Talk Shows and evening News Programs, one would notice that, If Joy News discusses an issue on "PM Express" at 9pm, at 10 pm, TV3 would discuss the same topic on "Ghana Tonight". I have been a guest commentator on both programs on a dozen or so occasions and have jumped from one station on the same topic to another station on the same topic. When it comes to the older, allegedly well-managed media houses, without naming any names, it is not easy to say Media House A stands for "conservatism" or "liberalism", gender equity or inequity. It is also difficult to say which one is predisposed to "investment and business coverage" and which one is largely focused on "human rights, conflict and related offenses" within the national security and safety environment, although each one of them is owned and controlled either by a political party, or someone heavily indebted and committed to a political party. When it comes to the contributors, commentators and so-called security analysts, the political affiliations and loyalty does not need too much energy to differentiate, although, again, there are a few of such personalities that are truly objective and approach their commentary with objectivity. The lack of specialization and focus are two of the major concerns of the media houses in Ghana and that casts them into a collective second-class group, in comparison with international media houses. Nationally, the media houses operate more or less like Cable TV stations as local stations are known in the Western world, as compared to the National TV networks like CBS, CNN in the case of the United States. The National Networks are free, over-the-air broadcasters with wide audiences diffused through local affiliates. Cable TV stations are paid subscription services with specialized media products such as sports, movies, and other entertainment shows. The Cable TV stations offer choices in viewing pleasure, provided one can afford to pay for the services (Jin X et al., 2024; Gil de Zuniga et al., 2025).

In Ghana however, the telecommunication system is not developed to allow cabling of television services to operate. The television programs are diffused through radio waves, which are broadcast through terrestrial towers, satellites or cable networks. The compressed signals are received by antennas, decode the signals into images and sound for the viewer, all happening in quick succession with the speed of light of about 300,000 kilometers per second. It is therefore difficult to deliver TV services through fiber optic or coaxial cables from providers to the audience/customer. This handicap affects the revenue generation of the national TV stations that have been compelled by poor technological base to operate as if they are National TV networks delivering services through over-the-air radio waves captured by individual antenna. Cable TV in many technologically advanced nations are not free but based on subscription, while Network TV services are free to air.

Since 1957, not a single national television station has been able to establish regional and international hub for international and regional news. The allocation of time to international news in most of Ghana's television stations during the evening news hour, averages no more than five (5) minutes and the stories each station covers are presented superficially at best. Some of the hosts and hostess, do not even know how to pronounce the names of international leaders of nations such as China, or even Russia. Some of these houses have been harmful to the culture of Ghana than they would like the viewing public to know (Taher, 2025). Take the case of showing religiously, foreign Sit-comes, Soap-operas and such like programs from South America, India, South Korea, China and the rest. Ask yourself, how many African movies are shown in those nations? Cultural appropriation is being pushed into the subconscious of Ghanaians with the willing participation of Ghanaian women, as the majority of the viewers of such programs, the very people whom society expects to be the repository of cultural knowledge, social etiquette and morality. The obsession with telenovelas and soap operas in Ghana and among Ghanaian women nauseated the Right Honorable Speaker of Ghana's parliament, Mr. Alan Bagbin (Happy 98.9 FM, 6/15/2021, accessed, 6/17/2026), to admonished Ghanaian women to stop watching telenovelas. If those to whom the nation has given the fiduciary responsibility to imprint the cultural values on the younger generations are being systematically brain-washed with other cultures, habits and traits of interpersonal and interspousal

relationships values, where would the Ghanaian family be in ten to twenty years of such cultural encroachment? Who should be blamed for the constant cultural misappropriation of foreign habits and skewed values into Ghanaian society? Producers of all the so-called leading television stations in Ghana, of course. Just as government requires certain institutions to have minimum operating capital, minimum operating facilities, government should be fair through the Ghana Communication Commission to demand for minimum operating capital and required annual locally produced new products for entertainment as part of granting operators' licenses to media houses. There is no one else to blame for the deteriorating morality of the nation than the media houses that keep showing culturally irrelevant Soap-operas, meaningless but violent and wicked romantic series, and Sit-coms as well as violent movies from India, South Korea, South America, Mexico, China and others.

The New York Times for over two hundred years has focused on speaking truth to power, educating the American reading public as well as its international audience, with the commitment to produce reports and news items that are *"accurate, independent and fair"*. It covers business, investments, stock issues and investigation, national and international politics, critical review of arts, arts auctions and museums exhibitions. The New York Times' slogan may have been adopted and modified by Joy News in Ghana as being *"independent, fearless and credible"*. One can easily see the linkage to the New York Times axiom, where it began with the goal: 'We seek the truth and help people understand the world' (1851) (New York Times Co., 2025). Therefore, can be assumed that 'accurate and fairness' is the essence of credibility, 'independence' is the equivalent of fearlessness. The New York Times has carefully produced a reading culture in the United States with books being promoted, well reviewed and showcased to the public. For an author to be placed on the *"New York Best Book List"* instantly puts the book in the top echelon of literary and scholastic status. It helps the publishing house to sell more books, and the population to read more books. Which of the media houses in Ghana, or Nigeria, or Togo, print or electronic promotes reading? None. When one compares the Ghanaian or Nigeria, Kenyan and other African media houses, one is forced by the reality of their operational foci to comment that those houses have so much room to grow but have no idea about how to pursue that goal, such as creating a cinematic avenue for the production of movies for international distribution (Jin X. et al., 2024; Gil de Zuniga et al., 2025).

4. How Does the Public Re-assesses the Partisan Content in the Previous Reportage of a Co-opted Medial Practitioner and the Effect on National Cohesion?

This paper cannot be completed without relying on Herman and Chomsky's research and publication on the role, the influence or the manipulation of the public by media houses in the process of helping to inform the public and to educate the leaderships. In Ghana, some of the media houses show bias, manufacture consent, promote one potential political person over the other by giving his or her agents more television time, influencing public opinion with skewed political analysis and opinions of biased analysts, according to the wishes of their puppet masters and the sources of advertisement incomes, grants to finance either investigative journalism or special programs on the environment, women empowerment and other interesting pre-occupations (Goodarzi, 2021; Boumans, 2023; Jin X. et al., 2024; Taher, 2025). Despite the proven corruption escapades within the Ghanaian society, the occasional scandalous expositions by the more experienced journalists like Manasseh Azure Awuni, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, Erasmus Asare Donkor, and few others, the morality of the politicians, who keep bouquets of lovers, sex-providers and multiple sidekicks, and to whom these politicians dole out money and favors, has never been part of the core character profiles of the average Ghanaian politician. If individual private morality is not the concern of Ghanaians, why should the public morality of a politician matter? Is the politician not the same person with both private and public façades?

The recent recorded history of the war on Galamsey (illegal mining) in Ghana, has revealed not only those in the media profession whose thoughts are controlled by their stomach and pocket politics like their political counterparts. To every general statement, conduct and behavior, there is always an exception. For example, Mr. Kenneth Ashigbey, the Convener of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey posed the question to President John Dramani Mahama and the Attorney General over the status of cases involving some members of the ruling party, National Democratic Congress, (NDC) who are allegedly implicated in illegal mining but have not been pursued in the same way as the owner of Akonta Mining, Bernard Antwi Boasiako, popularly known as Wontumi, and Ashanti Regional Chairman of the New Patriotic Party. On October 3, 2025, Mr. Ashigbey said the government may be engaged in selective prosecution. At the time that the challenge was made to President Mahama, Mr. Ashigbey was the Chief Executive Officer of Ghana Chamber of Mines and under President Mahama. To quote him:

"We believe that there is some political will that has been demonstrated but the elephant in the room was not mentioned. You heard the Attorney General talked only about Akonta mining. The Attorney General has referred some politically exposed persons to EOCO but we've not heard anything about that. [...] Our task is that, given the unprecedented crisis, we ask you, His Excellency, to clearly tell

your granular of definition of success in the fight against galamsey. Also share with us very definitive roadmap that would include key milestones and timelines and how we're going to get there" (www.ghanaweb.com, (3.10.2025, para. 3-7)).

This and other utterances on his Face Book page on 5th October, 2025, led Deputy Chief of Staff in charge of Operations, Honorable Stan Dogbe, a man this author admires so much, issued a response to Ashigbey, suggesting that Ashigbey may be a member of the opposition NPP, with the statement, and I quote:

"If your government, in the 8 years of your 'colored' advocacy, you have demonstrated the political will and clear strategies deployed in the last 9 months, I guess we would not be here". "Instead of gaining on negativity as a form of advocacy, you and your team, as advised by the President, should keep up the fight, but I add, do it constructively and stop hiding behind political bias to gain a voice."

This response garnered its own retaliatory response from Mr. Ashigbey to Honorable Stan Dogbe thus:

"Stan Xoese Dogbe, 'My government', really? Well, some in the NPP said the same. Thankfully, Ghanaians can judge my actions for themselves. My focus has never been on those who, like you, see every national issue through partisan lenses. My commitment is to Ghana and to those who genuinely care about our nation's future. They recognize the consistency of our message and the sincerity of our advocacy" (www.ghanaweb.com, (6.10.25, para. 1-13)).

The public and the media love a good fight, but not a single media house rendered an opinion in support of either position. Not a single media house rendered editorial to further explain the bone of contention between the two parties apparently working for the same NDC party. Where is the claimed of being "fearlessness" in media reporting? The claim is just a Pipe dream, it seems.

4.1 Manufacturing Consent and Tilting the National Discourse

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in their book, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, (1988)* contended that "the mass communication media of the U.S. are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship and without overt coercion" (p. 306). This was inspired by Walter Lippmann's work in 1922 on Public Opinion. "The core of Chomsky's theory rests with the notion that, the mass media, irrespective of which nation in which they operate, serves as the vehicle through which the elite owners or large corporations that own the media houses, political leaders with controls over the media houses and other influential figures dictate a substantial portion of their modus operandi. Herman & Chomsky articulated further the "Propaganda Model" as the main tool for "Manufacturing Consent".

The propaganda model shows how news items are filtered, like a source of dirty and unclean water, filtered to tone down the turbidity or negativity the particular news item may carry, before it is shared with the public. For example, Air Lines operating in Ghana seldom are written negatively about in the national media space no matter how unacceptable the conduct of a particular airline is or may be. There is seldom bad news about air-lines operating in Ghana, such as the extent of delays and take-off and landing. When the delays exceed a certain threshold, the airlines are supposed to provide food and drink and, in some cases, accommodation but in the African civil aviation sector, despite the good intentions of the International Civil Aviation Agency, often airlines flout the rules and regulations regarding passenger care. Oftentimes, unless the passenger himself or herself uses the power of social media to document and report such infractions, the established media houses in Africa seldom file news reports on airline related offences against passengers. Such infractions are written about in other nations where these airlines operate but when it comes to the Ghanaian, Nigerian, Kenyan and other African media spaces, the same air lines are treated with exceptionalism. Two things can be inferred from the media self-censorship of news items involving air lines. They control what the people may read about a given air lines for sponsorship for foreign travel, for ticket upgrade from, say, economy class to business or first class. Herman and Chomsky's dialectics centered on five key points: the Size and Ownership, and Profit Orientation of the Mass Media; Advertising; Sources of Information; Flak; Anti-communism (or other ideologies) (1988, 2002).

4.2 The Size, Ownership, and Profit Orientation of Mass Media

By ownership, the authors meant, a small number of large corporations own most of the media outlets. In the Western world, the corporations have their own financial interests and work to promote the benefit, gains and the corporate agenda. Herman & Chomsky postulated, as a result of the focus on corporate interests and profit, the media they produce tend to be skewed to the fulfillment of these goals. For example, CBS is owned by National Amusements, which controls about 77% of Paramount Global's voting shares through Class A stock ownership. Paramount Global is owned by the Redstone family as of November 2025 (Darius, [CH Companies History.com], 22.11.2025) with NBC being owned by Comcast Corporation, through NBCUniversal (NBCUniversal Transaction, 2025). "These investment and corporate giants own and control all of the world's major film studios, TV networks, and music companies, in addition to cable channels and systems, news magazines, and book

publishing” as reported in the *Upgrading the Propaganda Model* by Herman & Chomsky, (2002). Today internet portals are integrated into media systems for the maximization of advertisement opportunities and revenues. In Africa, owner of the State-owned media houses consisting of radio and television stations are part of the regimen propaganda machinery. The Ghana News Agency’s (GNA) mandate is different from the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, (GBC) though both are State-owned entities. GBC works as a public service media house, with its own television and radio stations. GNA also works as a news and information agency to the public. In addition to these, there is the Graphic Corporation, the New Times Corporation. They all work in tedium in propagandizing the government’s programs, events, functions and activities and under the watchful eyes of the National Media Commission. Although the government media houses, including print media tend to show bias favorable to the government in power, due to the presence of over one hundred private media houses, in the areas where the government media houses routinely exercise self-censorship, the private media house rush to fill in the gap particularly by the opposition media houses. This is not to deny the fact that, whether the media house is State-owned or privately owned, serving private interest of the owners is an unspoken reality which the reporters, hosts and hostesses observe religiously without deviation. It is however difficult to isolate the work of a media house with influence of the owner from the piece of work which has no bias, the author would use information readily available on the internet to provide additional data for the subjective evaluation by the reader. For example, Joy News, with its related radio and other television stations under the umbrella of Multimedia Broadcasting Limited is owned by Mr. Kwasi Twum with majority shareholding of 92.5% interest, with 7.5% interest held by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, as commonly known. This is nothing but sheer power, which could be used to shape how coverage of political events should go. The author selected Joy News because it is the largest independent commercial media and entertainment company in Ghana. Its hosts and hostesses appear to be more professional and compassionate; compared to several other media houses, which societal etiquette does not allow naming in this section of this paper. Despite this observation, one cannot realistically say, that media house does not suffer from manipulation by powers outside the news room. Ghana, however, has authorized or licensed 763 radio stations with 539 of these being in operations as FM radio stations, which includes community radio stations, university campus and commercial stations (National Communications Authority, 2025). Such a huge number of operators in the media space may help in segregating lies, propaganda and bias from the truth.

4.3 Advertising

To operate a media house is to become a perpetual servant of advertisers. This means, the media houses have to cater to the interests of the advertisers. “As a result, media companies may avoid content that could alienate their advertisers, even if it is in the public interests” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The Bud Light boycott case in the US: The boycott began with a section of the public’s, mostly conservatives, response to a social media promotion by the company of Tik Tok personality, actress Dylan Mulvaney, a transgender woman. Mulvaney promoted the Budweiser’s Bud Light beer brand in a video on her Instagram account in April of 2023. The reason for the boycott was, the sponsorship of Mulvaney was a political speech on the part of the company for choosing and allowing transgender women to advertise their product on her platform. Within a month, in May 2023, Budweiser’s Bud Light, sales fell between 11 and 26%, while Anheuser-Busch’s stock fell by 1%. Bud Light lost its status as the top selling beer in the United States (Moreno, 2023; Maloney, 2023). Ghana’s market is not well-developed to have such consumer power without political instigation of such an action by central government. Despite this observation, advertisers in Ghana and in many other African democracies wield enormous influence over the media houses with which they place their advertisement hard earned money to pay for their adverts while at the same time supporting the media houses’ revenue creation.

4.4 Sources of Information

In a nation like Ghana, or Nigeria, the average television audience or radio listener, and readers of print and online media do not question the sources of information on which the media houses rely. Media houses the world over, rely on government officials, parliamentarians, business executives, and experts aligned with the political elite and industry captains for insights and information, including investigative journalism. These sources have the power to influence the nature, content, and focus of the information presented by the media to the public. The experts unknowingly and knowingly help to shape the gaps in the news as presented to the media houses by the elite and given to the public by the media. That is to say, the power sources consist of the owners of the media houses, advertisers and the ultimate decider of the type of news given to the public as the consumers. For example, in the case of Ghana, since June of 2025, some media houses have already started prompting the Ghanaian public as to who should become the next flagbearer for both NPP and NDC. While the struggle or the debate for the flagbearer-ship in the NPP was in line with their impending internal presidential primaries on January 31, 2026, for the NDC, this conversation was or is pre-mature and totally repulsive to the members of the party. In the case of the NPP, when the internal flagbearer election was done, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, former Vice President of Ghana under Akufo Addo, emerged victorious. In addition, there appears to be serious

cleavages between the various wings of the party, which the just ended presidential primaries on the 31st of January, 2026 appears to have emerged new division. Not only is there the Akufo-Addo-Bawumia wing, but now, we have in addition to the Kufuor-Allan wing, Ken Agyapong wing, then Bryan Acheampong Wing, and on the fringes, the others. History will affirm or refute these observations, come January 7th, 2029.

In the NDC, some media houses together with their sponsors, have already picked in the middle of 2025, who the public should consider, without any consultation with the public. Opinion polls conducted by one single company cannot be the only voice or subjective basis for critical decision making. President John D. Mahama has been in office for barely seven months and already, there was agitation for who replaces him, while the man still had three plus years to go before the end of his tenure? To cover up the true intentions, the media houses invite experts, analysts and political party propagandists to promote the personalities whose names have emerged out of what, no one knows, since there has been no declaration or filing of any one so far for the flagbearer-ship in the party. These so-called experts, analysts, and real party propagandists come to justify the pick of the media houses, perhaps, after the prompting of the political elite to pursue that cause and course of action. To this, I rely on a quote from the Propaganda Model's authors: "We believe that what journalist do, what they see as newsworthy, and what they take for granted as premises of their work, are frequently well explained by the incentive, and constraints incorporated into such a structural analysis" (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, pp. 78-86).

In such a situation, dissent, or alternative candidates are pushed aside by the media, and in cahoots with their experts, and opinion pollsters on the suitability of their handpicked candidates. The Propaganda Model details the issue of conflict of interests even in the case of Ghana, let alone in the nations where principle-based ethics is deeply rooted in the mundane and political affairs of those nations. The best approach would have been conducting a random sampling of the constituencies to determine who they would prefer to select among similar candidates as presidential material. Alternatively, the media houses and their political experts and commentators could have exercised self-restraint and allowed the playing field to be populated naturally by those who want to seek for the high public office before engaging the public about the available choices. The way things stand as now, it appears, the potential candidates being pushed or marketed to the public is part of the agenda of some entrenched interest groups with the media houses as active and willing collaborators in manufacturing the consent of the public to the candidates they have pre-selected. This is another avenue for the erosion of the national democratic seeding.

4.5 Flak

Media houses are afraid of flak. Flak means strong criticism. It is possible that some in the media may consider some statements in this paper about the public-media relationship as being fraught with media flak. In military terms, it means gunfire or gunpoint. The word has its origin in the German language in 1938, where it became the shorthand for "fliegerabwehrkanone" which was a pilot defense gun. Flak became a generic term for ground anti-craft fire (Columbia Journalism Review, 2025). Flak also means negative feedback or to pressure the media into following a particular narrative. In July 10, 2025, President Trump sued Wall Street Journal, the owner, Rupert Murdoch over Epstein's letter story. The lawsuit accused the newspaper and its parent company of libel after it published an article about a lewd letter bearing Trump's name among the birthday notes collected as a gift for Jeffrey Epstein's 50th birthday. In 16th September 2025, Donald Trump filed a \$15bn lawsuit against the New York Times, accusing the paper of "being a mouthpiece for the Democratic Party" and "spreading false and defamatory content" about him (Michael Savage, 2025, para. 1-6).

In Ghana, in January 27th 2025, according to a press release under reference: NPP/HQ/2025/01/27/2024/DC, "the NPP withdrew from Media General's platforms over alleged bias and unprofessionalism, including TV3; 3FM; and Onua FM. The decision, communicated through a press release issued on January 26 and signed by the party's communications director, Richard Ahiagbah, follows months of supposed failed attempts to address concerns over biased and unprofessional conduct by Media General hosts and management" (Source: MyJoyonline.com, accessed, 10.19.2025). Mr. Ahiagbah stated that, quote:

In particular, the Key Points and Newday political shows religiously feature disruptive hosting and biased paneling. Depending on the issue, they assemble three or four people [...] whose political affiliation and orientation are known to be aligned with the National Democratic Congress against a single representative from the NPP. Our calls to balance the invitations to the program have fallen on pretentious deaf ears", unquote.

This released triggered the Media General response dated 31-01-2025. In that response, Media General stated that, quote:

"We categorically deny claims of biased paneling, disruptive hosting, and unprofessional conduct. Our teams uphold the highest journalist standards to ensure diverse perspective are represented", unquote.

Without addressing the core issues, there are constitutional requirements that have been implicated in this Press release and the response, with particular reference to Article 163, which states:

All state-owned media shall afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

Although this provision is specific to the State-owned media houses, it also extends to those that are privately owned via the National Mass Media Commission, which is mandated to register and regulate as well as monitor the activities of the media houses in Ghana. When the constitutional provisions and the Ghana Journalist Association ethics call for balanced view, it presupposes that, if there are three guest slots to a panel discussion, there should be, at least, one person each from the two dominant parties with one known independent voice in the middle to help moderate excesses of either the right or left side of him or her. Where a political party is not represented on the panel, then the host has to play that role of challenging the running assertions of a panel member in order to pull back the statement and situate it in objective analytical approach. Whether the NPP Press Release can be substantiated or not, the onerous is on Ghana Media Commission to ensure that, the threat of media houses manufacturing consent and political party propaganda, is minimized at best for the peaceful co-existence of all. The Preamble to the GJA Code of Ethics commands that,

(a) The fundamental objective of a journalist is to write a fair, accurate and an unbiased story on matters of public interest. All sides of the story shall be reported, wherever possible. Comments should be obtained from anyone who is mentioned in an unfavorable context.

The real challenge lies in (d)”

When stories fall short on accuracy and fairness, they should not be published. Journalists, while free to be partisan, should distinguish clearly in their reports between comment, conjecture and fact.

Another area that presents a bone of contention is under Code 3. While the GJA code calls for uses of confidential sources, it does not caution about the manipulative effect of the confidential source on the outcome of the story. Under Code 3: Integrity which states:

Conflict of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subject of news.

They should:

- a. Identify sources whenever possible. Confidential sources should be used only when it is clearly in public interest to gather or convey important information or when a person providing information might be harmed;*

Code 10 is about paying for News and Articles. It states that,

When money is paid for information, serious questions can be raised about the credibility of that information and the motives of the buyer and the seller. Therefore, in principle, journalists should not receive any money as an incentive to publish any information.

This clause in the GJA Code of Ethics is probably one of the most abused clauses in the nation by the media houses. This author has been engaged by media houses in Ghana since 2005 on issues concerning: tourism; disaster risk management; road traffic accidents; catastrophic fires; flooding;

earth tremors; and building collapse; sanitation; disease outbreak; pandemic; covid-19; national security; police use of force; crime propensity; kidnapping and rape; sexual harassment; serial killings; police investigative work; military takeovers; military-civil relations; civil-military relations; military-community relations; regionalism, xenophobia, and other areas. Most of these engagements were rendered for free including buying my own data for Zoom or Meet conversations and fueling my car to go to those studios. The media houses behave, as far as this author is concerned, in a partisan way when it comes to inviting guests to the studios without paying for as little as their transportations. Some media houses see the invited expert or guest as needing them more than they need the expert or contributor.

If government appointees and political party guests appear and receive no payment, it is because their appearance is a constitutional mandate, on top of doing a duty to their political parties. They volitionally choose to be at a given studio with the acquiescence of the hosts or hostess of the program to conduct propaganda exercise. But when an independent expert or contributor is invited to help analyze a matter, add value to the story and not provide for his or her transportation, is both irresponsible and rent-seeking in nature. When a political appointee appears at a media house, whether he or she accepts it or not, he or she is there to conduct propaganda for his political party, or agency or party leaders. Propaganda can have a concealed purpose and concealed identity, according to Jowett & O'Donnell, (2005, pp. 40-44). “The propagandist is very likely to appear as a persuader with a stated purpose that seems to satisfy mutual needs”. “In reality, the propagandist wants to

promote his or her own interests or those of an organization, sometimes at the expense of the recipients, sometimes not. [...] The propagandist does not regard the well-being of the audience as a primary concern” (p. 44). Journalists and media houses call on so-called independent experts to add value to the content of the stories they are covering, even if the story is being manufactured for consent, is to gain a smidgen of credibility. In the minds of some of the producers in the media houses, once one becomes a regular voice or commentator, it is presumed that, somehow, the commentator or expert is also a journalist, which is wrong. The discourse will now move on to the last variable in Herman & Chomsky’s dialectics on manufacturing consent through the media. That is on how hatred for communism or other political ideologies is used to suppress dissenting voices.

4.6 Anti-communism (or Other Ideologies)

In the Western world, the Cold War was used to justify encroachment on the rights of people by restricting certain activities and advocacies. Victims of this approach suffered the mislabel of being a communist. The media was used to filter information flow, opinions and commentary to shape the perception of the public on politics, international developments and economic policies. Similar developments emerged soon after 9/11 terror attack in the US, particularly with the way individual liberties were trampled upon with government surveillance with the help of the media framing acts of civil disobedience as either domestic terrorism or external terrorist attacks on the US. In many African nations, the media helped to shape the public view of terrorists and their activities due to the unfortunate terror attacks in nations such as Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger to mention but a few. Since 9/11 attack by terrorists on establishments in the United States and the subsequent attacks in other nations, coupled with drug trafficking, the West African sub-region has been labeled as a trans-shipment port for massive amounts of cocaine from South America into Europe and other parts of Africa to finance terror activities by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes (UNODCC, 2002; Levi, 2010; Luna, 2008; The Chronicle Newspaper, 2007). This has negatively helped to change the perception of the people of West Africa themselves about their own environment. As the more industrialized markets of Europe and America become more successful at frustrating the efforts of the traffickers, through enhanced surveillance and successful prosecution, the traffickers looked for safe havens for trans-shipment of their goods. West Africa presented such opportunities due to a combination of factors (Bjorn and Sandler 2008; Tanielian et al., 2006). In reaction to the growing concern over the use of West African sea and air space as transit routes, in 2008 Ghana passed an anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism legislation as a disruptive measure on the finances of the drug traffickers. This was due in part to the perceived and real threat posed by the effects of the narcotics drug trade and distribution on the national economy, society and central planning at both micro- and macro-economic levels (Bjorn and Sandler 2008; UNODCCP 2002). It was also meant to provide the legal platform for combating the twin problems of narcotics drugs and terrorism. The problem with this scenario is that Ghana’s legal preparedness for mundane criminal investigations such as murder or non-exotic health emergencies such as malaria and cholera is vulnerable. Another challenge is the observation made about the skills-set of the many of the journalists in Ghana’s media when it comes to demonstrating real understanding of terrorism. They are quick to frame criminal suspects, migrants and foreign street bagger’s operating along the streets of the big cities in Ghana as terrorists because the government said so. On January 5th 2023, the Ghanaian Times carried a story claiming the arrest of some foreign nationals alleged terrorists, which they said happened in September 2022, under the frontpage title: “48 alleged terrorists missing?” Later, in a joint statement issued by the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana Immigration Service debunked the story that no such terrorists have been arrested by either entity (Bernard Ralph Adams, 2023, para. 1-6). The shaping of the perception of those in a given ecosystem and around it, becomes more systemic when strong political motive is the driving force. “Shaping perceptions is usually attempted through language and images, which is why slogans, posters, symbols and even architectural structures are developed during wartime” (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2005, p. 8). They added that “perception is the process of extracting information from the world outside us as well as from within ourselves. Each individual has a perceptual field that is unique to that person and formed by the influences of values, roles, group norms and self-image” (pp. 9-11). While Ghana and nations like it in the West African region that have not experienced terror event or attack, they can still see their nations as facing both imminent and existential terrorist attacks. This could be due to the fact that other nations within the West African region have had terrorist attacks.

5. Conclusion

The growing level of recruitment of media personnel into government jobs, is intentional strategy on the part of political parties and will continue to be both a direct and existential threat to media objectivity and professionalism. So, next time you hear the phrase from a television or radio station, “objective, independent and bold or fearless”, remember that you are being played. Think about it again and situate it in the general scheme of news development and the political economy. The relationship between the media practitioners and the political elite, is a game of subterfuge, with the intention to ringfence the potential media critics or silence them with jobs and economic opportunities, SUV and other perks. Another worrying development in the Ghanaian

Media space is the constant fielding of government appointees, known political party representatives, communication directors, even deputy general secretaries and other officeholders in the political parties as part of talk show panel members. One is likely to see a combination of NPP and NDC, CPP, APC representatives on just about every national issue as panel members, even if the individuals do not possess the intellectual or subject-matter knowledge of the issue at discussions. As they sit at the TV studios, some whisper into their mobile phones for AI assistance on topics they have zero knowledge or skill to discuss it. Aided by AI response, then they begin to pontificate as if they are experts of the subject. This often leads to politicization of topics that require objective, dispassionate and deep analysis to help educate the public. After reviewing talk shows on CNN, BBC, Sky News and other national media houses in South Africa, even Togo, Kenya and Nigeria, the Ghanaian media houses appear to have erred in their constant fielding of political party representatives and the ruling government appointees to sit at TV stations for hours on end every week propagandizing for their parties. Such practices deepen cleavages between the political parties and promotes identity politics. It makes the development of news in Ghana infantile, objectively biased, and decidedly partisan at best.

The author's conclusion to the Ghana Journalist Association code of ethics is, it does not rise to the level of principle-based ethics but a mere list of "dos" and "don'ts". It is under-developed, whether intentionally or due to the paucity of expertise in ethics, unintentionally. The proper ethical code should be more substantive, should contain more descriptive definitions of what is good or admirable and what is not. The GJA Code is too elementary, too lax and easy to sail through or around it when confronted with ethical dilemma as a journalist. It would, therefore, be overreaching if one were to issue a condemnation of any journalist, who has accepted an appointment from any government as having compromised his or her duties as a journalist. Although the conduct skirts the issue of impropriety with respect to the mere acceptance of a new post from a new or old government, until it can be proven that the journalist was pushing an agenda for the government prior to his or her appointment, that conclusion can be unfair. The only way to ascertain wrongdoing of the journalist who accepts government job promotion, is to conduct a retrospective review of all their previous programs, stories, statements and comments, including the opinions of guests to the vary program that journalist was hosting, and through content analysis; using keywords pre-determined to measure the incidence and frequency of certain statements that show bias or moral bent towards a particular persuasion.

References

- Afedzi, A. (2021, October 29). Cash for Coverage: How poor remuneration is depleting ethical values in Ghana's media, Jamlab. Retrieved June 15, 2026, from <https://jamlab.africa>
- Afrobarometer, "Round 10 Survey in Ghana". (2024). The Media and Ghana, CDD HQ, Accra, Ghana.
- Agbenu, A. O., Opoku, K. J., & Kuwornu-Adjaottor, J. E. T. (2025). Christian Religiosity and Corruption in Ghana: A case study of selected Churches in Hohoe Municipality. *E.-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, EHASS*, 6(8), 1733-1745. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20256833>
- Akabike, G. N., Ngwoke, P. N., & Chukwuma, O. G. (2021). A critical analysis of tithe and seed sowing on contemporary Christianity in Nigeria. *Herv. Teol. Stud.*, 77(1), 1-8. Pretoria, Journal SciELO. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i1.6485>
- Al Jazeera, Trans. Int'l. (2026, February 10). *Anti-Corruption Efforts of Government Not Making Significant Impact*. Press Release.
- Amissah-Christian, A. (2021). Differences in conflicts management strategies between Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches within the Cape Coast Metropolis. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Sciences (IJRISS)*, V(VII), 2454-6186.
- Anaxagorou, C., Efthyvonlou, G., & Sarantides, V. (2020). Electoral Motives and the Subnational Allocation of Foreign Aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. *European Economic Review*, 127-132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurocorev.2020.103430>
- Bakir, V. (2021). *The business of media*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315690834-8>
- Batory, A. (2016). Denying the Commission: Creative Compliance and Respect for the Rule of Law in the EU. *Public Administration*, 94(3), 685-699. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12254>
- Bernard Ralph Adams. (2023). No arrest of 48 alleged terrorists – Police, Immigration Service. Retrieved October 20, 2025, from [Metrotveonline.com](https://metrotveonline.com)
- Bernstein, M. (2005). Identity Politics. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 31, 47-75. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100054>

- Bjorn, L., & Sandler, T. (2008). Re-thinking Counter-terrorism, Project Syndicate. Retrieved from www.project-syndicate.org
- Bogaards, M. (2009). How to classify hybrid regimes? Defective Democracy and Electoral Authoritarianism. *European Journal of Political Research*, 51(10), 435-468.
- Boumans, D., et al.. (2023). How media content influences economic expectations. Evidence from a global expert survey. *Journal of Forecasting*, 42(6), 1295-1308. <https://doi.org/10.1002/for.2961>
- Butler, M. A., & Harper, J. M. (1994). The divine triangle: God in the marital system of religious couples. *Family Process*, 33, 277-286. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.1994.00277.x>
- Cap, P. (2023). *Handbook of Political Discourse*. Cheltenham. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800373570>
- Chahal, V. (2023). The Media's Impact on Political Discourse and Public Opinion. *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 8(4), 138-152.
- Chen, W. F., et. al.. (2020). Detecting Media Bias in News Articles using Gaussian Bias Distributions. *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics*, November 16-20, 4290-4300. <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2020.findings-emnlp.383>
- Cochran, J. K., Chamlin, M. B., Beeghley, L., & Fenwick, M. (2004). Religion, religiosity, and nonmarital sexual conduct: An application of reference group theory. *Sociology Inquiry*, 74, 102-127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2004.00081.x>
- Constable, G. (1995). *The Orders of Society. Chap. 3 of Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 249-360. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511581793>
- D'Alessio, D., & Allen, M. (2000). Media Bias in Presidential Elections: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 50(4), 133-156. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02866.x>
- Deepika Das. (2026, March 4). Podcasts are dominating-And signaling a shifting audience behavior, Audacy.
- DellaVigna, S., & Kaplan, E. (2007). The Fox News Effect: Media Bias and Voting. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122(3), 1187-1234. <https://doi.org/10.1162/qjec.122.3.1187>
- Dieterich, H. R., & Willson, J. P. (1970). The Dimension of Political Discourse: Some Observations on the Free Silver Controversy of the 1890's. *Social Studies*, 61(1), 13-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1942.11019018>
- Doyle, G. (2003). *Understanding Media Economics*. London: Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446279960>
- Dwomoh-Doyen, B. (2026, June 6). Arrests of critics in Ghana provokes alarm over free speech under Mahama, Ghanaweb, Accra, Ghana.
- Everett, L. (1966). A theory of Migration. *Demography*, 3(1), 47-57. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2060063>
- Farley, J. A. (1938). *Behind the Ballots: The Personal History of a Politician*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., et. al.. (2025). Pathways to Political Persuasion: Linking Online, Social Media, and Fake News with Political Attitude Change Through Political Discussion. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 69(2), 240-261. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642221118272>
- Goodarzi, et al.. (2021). New Media and Ideology: A Critical Perspective. *Journal of Cyberspace Studies*, 5(2), 137-162.
- Government Communication. (2026, June 15). Graphic online: Sophia Akuffo: Mahama has accepted resignation and processes are underway for replacement.
- Guerrero-Solé, F. (2022). The Ideology of Media. Measuring the Political Leaning of Spanish News Media Through Twitter Users' Interactions. *Communication & Society*, 35(1), 29-43. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.35.1.29-43>
- Huang, H., et al.. (2024). Uncovering the Essence of Diverse Media Biases from the Semantic Embedding Space. *Humanities and social Sciences Communication*, 11, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03143-w>
- Jin, X. (2024). The effect of international media news on the global stock market. *International Review of Economics & Finance*, 89, 50-69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iref.2023.07.096>
- Jowett, G. S., & O'Donnell, V. (2005). *What is Propaganda, and How does it differ from persuasion?* (Chapter 1, 4th ed.). Montana State University. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Levi, M. (2010). Combating the Financing of Terrorism: A History and Assessment of the Control of 'Threat Finance. *British J. Criminol.*, 50(4), 650-669. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azq025>

- Lindberd, S. I. (2003). It's Our Time to "Chop": Do Elections in Africa Feed Neo-Patrimonialism rather than Counter-Act it?. *Democratization*, 10(2), 121-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714000118>
- Luna, D. M. (2008). Narco-Trafficking: What is the Nexus with the War on Terror? Anticrime Programs, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. U. S. Dept of State. Retrieved from <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/terrorism/state/110828.pdf>
- Lynge, H. (2023). Electoral Manipulation in the Grey Zone: Evidence from Ghana's Parliamentary Elections in 2008 and 2012. *Journal of African Elections*, 22(2), 144-173. <https://doi.org/10.20940/JAE/2023/v22i2a7>
- Maloney, J. (2023). Bud Light Loses Title as Top Selling U.S. Beer. *The Wall Street Journal*.
- Mauro, P. (1998). Corruption, causes, Consequences and agenda for further research. IMF/World Bank. *Finance & Development*, 35(1), 13.
- Moreno, J. E. (2023). How a Mexican Lager Quietly Rose to Become America's Best-Selling Beer. *The New York Times*.
- Murray, C. J. (1947). Separation of church and state: True and false concepts. *Woodstock Theological Center Library*. Retrieved from <http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/library/Murray/1947c.htm>
- Ngomane, R. M., & Mahlangu, E. (2014). Leadership mentoring and succession in the charismatic churches in Bushbuckridge, HTS Theologiese Studies. *Theological Studies*, 70(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2065>
- Norman, I. (2023). Chapter 9; Interference in the adjudication of cases and the negative consequences on justice, pp. 135-141, *Identity Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa: The effect of Identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and Vigilantism*. Cambridge Publishing Limited, UK.
- Norman, I. D. (2013). Separation of Church and State: A Study of Accra City's Use of Public Buildings and Schools for Religious Services in Ghana. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 3(7), 282-288 <https://doi.org/10.4236/aasoci.2013.37036>
- Norman, I. D. (2024). Foreign Election Interference in Africa's De-Democratization Culture. *European Journal of Law and Politics*, 3(3), 23-33. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejpolitics.2024.3.3.130>
- Nsereko, D. D. (1986). Religion, the state, and the law in Africa. *Journal of Church and State*, 28, 269-287. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/28.2.269>
- Nyukorong, R. (2014). Corruption, Nepotism or the Whom you know Factor and How it Affects Recruitment in the Banking Sector of Ghana. *Developing Country Studies*, 4(24), 38-53.
- Orogun, D. O. (2023). Prophecies in politics: A review of integrity, impact on voter-behavior and good governance. *HTS Theological Studies*, 79(2), a8685. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8685>
- Osei Mensah, R. (2026). Economic exclusion and criminal adaptations: A qualitative study of youth unemployment in Ghana. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.102683>
- Paulsen, M. A. (1986). Religion, equality, and the constitution: An equal protection approach to establishment clause adjudication. *Notre Dame Law Review*, 311-317.
- Pew Research Center. (2019). Religious household patterns by region. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org>
- Savage, M. (2025). *Donal Trump files \$15bn lawsuit against the New York Times*. The Guardian News & Media Limited, UK.
- Schaefer, B. D. (2003). Multilateral Economic Development Efforts in Sub-Sahara Africa. *Heritage Foundation*, No. 858:2003.
- Tanielian, L., Ricci, K., Stoto, M. A., Dausey, D. J., Davis, L. M., Myers, S., ... Wills, H. H. (2006). Exemplary practices in Public Health Preparedness. *Rand Corporation's Center for Domestic and International Health and Security*.
- The 9/11 Commission Report on Terrorism. (2002). W. W. Norton & Company, 500 5th Ave., New York, NY 10110.
- The Chronicle Newspaper. (2007, October 15). Ghana Breeds Drug Barons, p. 4, Accra, Ghana.
- Tilly, C. (2003). Inequality, Democratization and De-Democratization. *Sociological Theory*, 21(1), 37-43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9558.00174>

- Tobin, S. J., & Guadagno, R. E. (2022). Why people listen: Motivations and outcomes of podcast listening. *PloS One*, 17(4), e02658026. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0265806>
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime. (2002). Project Document: Strengthening the Legal Regime Against Terrorism. FS/GLO/02/R35, Vienna: UNODCCP.
- White-Hodge, D. (2010). *The Soul of Hip Hop: Rims, Timbs and a Cultural Theology*. InterVarsity Press.

Copyrights

The journal retains exclusive first publication rights to this original, unpublished manuscript, which remains the authors' intellectual property. As an open-access journal, it permits non-commercial sharing with attribution under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), complying with COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines. All content is archived in public repositories to ensure transparency and accessibility.