POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GHANAIAN MEDIA: CONCEPTUALIZING NEWS
MEDIA'S ROLE THROUGH THE MEDIA COALITION AGAINST GALAMSEY

By

Nancy Achiaa Frimpong

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

In Rhetoric, Theory and Culture

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

2019

www.manaraa.com

This thesis has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture.

Department of Humanities

Thesis Advisor: *Dr Sue Collins*

Committee Member: *Dr Ramon Fonkoue*

Committee Member: *Dr Oren Abeles*

Department Chair: *Dr Ronald Strickland*

To my Friend, Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Table of Contents

v

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my advisor Dr Sue Collins for her invaluable guidance, mentoring and faith in me. I appreciate her motivation, prompt and constructive feedback and critical eye for detail.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr Ramon Fonkoue and Dr Oren Abeles, for their insightful discussions, suggestions and reading materials.

I am grateful to the following professors for their constructive suggestions during the conception of this thesis: Dr Bob Johnson, Dr Craig Waddle, Dr Patricia Sotirin, Dr Beatrice Smith and Dr Nancy Langston.

My special thanks go to Nancy Henaku and Edzordzi Agbozo.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to my mum, dad, siblings, Mr and Mrs Nuro and Mr Agyemang for their love, prayers and support.

Abstract

Ghana's checkered political history since independence has impacted journalist-politician relationships which affected news media's role and journalistic practices. Like most African countries, nascent media in Ghana have largely functioned as the mouthpiece of the government or have opposed the government. This government-media collaboration and/or adversarialism is a product of media ownership systems and journalist-politician relationships/interactions. Consequently, the media in Ghana either function as a lapdog (provide support for the government) or watchdog (subject government to media surveillance and demand for accountability on behalf of the citizens). However, unfolding events about the rise of illegal mining popularly known as galamsey in Ghana and the media's response have necessitated a reflection and reconceptualization of the news media's role. The formation of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey, to lead the fight against illegal mining, comes at a time when illegal mining is rampant, at its peak and incurs devastating environmental effects of national interest.

Using political economy as a framework, this thesis examines media-politician relationships and media ownership systems to reflect on Ghanaian media's role since their establishment to determine how they have evolved over time and determine how the media conceptualize their role. This thesis examines the role of the news media in Ghana through the Media Coalition Against Galamsey's anti-galamsey campaign. It finds that, media participation in the political process began with the struggle for independence; however, recognition of its mandate as a fourth estate enshrined in the 1992 constitution has been lacking. Thus, through advocacy, the media instrumentalizes galamsey to assert this

mandate and seek legitimacy. They also actively negotiating to participate and be included in decision making processes.

Keywords:

Galamsey (illegal mining), Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG), news media, journalism, political economy, Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

This study seeks to examine the significance of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG) in the fight against illegal mining in Ghana and how they conceptualize their role as the fourth estate to hold government accountable. The study will further explore media-politician relationship to determine the impact such interaction has on news media's role through the advocacy of the coalition. The analysis is placed within the framework of political economy which focuses on the processes of production, relations/interactions between distributors and producers and consumers and producers. Political economy identifies as critical the various dimensions of structuration which enable production, distribution and consumption to take place. This circuity presents the interdependency of the various levels eminent to understanding social relations centered around the issue of power. Who controls resources and how do these resources get used?

1.2 Illegal Mining

In Ghana, illegal mining is known as *galamsey*. The word galamsey is the corrupted form of the phrase "gather and sell" used by the Europeans to describe the ways in which indigenous Ghanaians mined gold. Currently, galamsey refers to illegal mining undertaken by unlicensed and informal artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM) which are undocumented and unregulated (McQuilken & Hilson, 2016). The practice is associated

1

with the poor in developing countries (Lahiri-Dutt 2004; Yakovleva, 2007), who in their efforts to survive and escape the harsh economic demands, resort to galamsey.

Extraction activities, like mining, in Africa and consequently Ghana are contentious concepts due to the high dependence of people on the environment. In Africa, illegal mining is a matter that revolves around issues of survival, livelihood and poverty. With much of Africans depending on natural resources, mineral extraction including gold, diamond, and bauxite which promises an effective and possibly genuine means of wealth creation and liberation from poverty. Statistics show that about 13 million people around the world (IIED & WBCSD, 2003) and 10 million people in Africa are engaged in Artesanal Small Scale Mining (ASM) with about 80 to 100 million more people's livelihoods directly or indirectly dependent on their activities (World Bank & IFC, 2003). Though illegal mining is vilified, the activity employs about one million people while providing support for 4.5 million people in Ghana (McQuilken & Hilson, 2016); a country with a current population of 29.6 million[1]. Aside providing employment opportunities, it also contributes to wealth creation, reduction in petty crime, etc. (Afriyie, Ganle & Adomako, 2016; McQuilken & Hilson, 2016).

Nonetheless, research show that the negative impact galamsey has on the environment far outweighs its economic benefits to the few rural folks engaged in the operation. The dangers of galamsey are centered around environmental degradation, health risks hazardous work conditions, safety, etc. (Andrews, 2015, World Bank & IFC, 2003).

---

[1] According to a report by citifm.com in March 2018 http://citifmonline.com/2018/03/12/ghanas-population-hits-29-6m-statistical-service/

2

Literature on illegal mining emphasizes the hazardous nature of their activities. Not that legal mining does not have negative impacts on the environment, however, by obtaining a license, mining corporations (large scale mining) are expected to adhere to measures which mitigate pollution, environmental degradation and ensure the safety of their workers. Contrary to the above, illegal miners do not apply such measures to alleviate problems that arise from their activities. They are believed to carry out their operations indiscriminately. As such, illegal mining is linked to hazardous work conditions, lawlessness, environmental degradation, air and water pollution, deforestation, and deaths (Chuhan-Pole, Dabalen & Christopher, 2017; Adjei, Oladejo & Adetunde, 2012; Ofosu Mensah, 2011).

The concept of legal versus illegal mining cannot be divorced from the colonial laws (Concession Ordinance in 1903 and the Mercury Ordinance in 1932) enacted by the British Government to regulate indigenous mining activities. The passing of these laws began the criminalization of indigenous mining and alienated local people from engaging in mining (Afriyie, Ganle & Adomako, 2016). Post-colonial governments upheld these laws until the Minerals and Mining Amendment Act 475 in 1993 and 2006 and the Small-scale Mining Law (PNDCL 218) in 1989 were enacted to provide a legal framework for individual Ghanaians to obtain licencing for mining. However, challenges with bureaucracy and access to equipment and formal finance make license acquisition difficult for these illegal miners (Alhasan, 2014, 47). Such requirements discourage local miners from acquiring a license. Consequently, their actions have attracted hostile criticisms from some members of the general public including the media, think tanks, civil societies, etc. One of such

3

groups that has emerged to advocate against illegal mining in Ghana is the Media Coalition Against Galamsey.

The coalition is made up of news organizations (News Times Corporation, Graphic Communications Group Limited, and Ghana Broadcasting Corporation; professional organizations (Ghana Journalists Association, Private Newspaper Publishers Association, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association, and Ghana Community Radio Network); and a religious organization (Christian Council of Ghana). Their objectives are to "carry out public education on the ills of illegal mining activities; carry out advocacy with stakeholders to ensure the eradication of galamsey; and promote sustainable mining" (Constitution of MCAG).

1.3 Research Questions

The thesis is guided by the following questions:

- What is the political significance of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey in the fight against illegal mining (galamsey) in Ghana?
- How does the advocacy of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey explain media's role as the fourth estate?
- How does the media-politician relationship influence the news media's role in Ghana?

1.4 Rationale for the Study

4

In recent times an anti-galamsey campaign has foregrounded the discourse on illegal mining in Ghana. This has become significant not only as a historical precedence but as a form of collective consciousness that impinges national unity towards safeguarding the environment and promoting sustainable mining. It is against this background that this study hopes to add to research conducted about news media's role in Ghana through the anti-galamsey campaign. This study emphasizes the significance of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey in the fight against galamsey and seeks to examine the Ghanaian news media's advocacy against illegal mining through their role in the organization, Media Coalition Against Galamsey. The aim of this study is to examine the discourses of galamsey in Ghana paying particular attention to the coalition's involvement as frontliners to push for the eradication of illegal mining and to advocate for sustainable mining. More specifically, it examines the illegal mining campaign known as anti-galamsey in order to highlight the ways in which the Coalition constructs its role in the fight against illegal mining. It seeks to understand its impact. Attention to galamsey by the media has usually taken the form of media reports. Additionally, many scholars have done extensive media analyses of such reports. What is significant is the coming together of the media as a coalition to champion/lead the fight against illegal mining and how this attempt seems to challenge the traditional notion of the role of the media in society by assuming the position of activists to advocate against illegal mining. In this instance, the media's role is no longer limited to such functions as agenda setting, framing and gatekeeping but has become the voice and active participants propagating and shaping the discourse on illegal mining. They are not just a resource for covering events and providing information, but are creators and drivers of messages and events about the campaign against galamsey. Examining the role

5

and rhetoric of the media about illegal mining through these two roles helps understand how mobilization occurs. This study aims to understand the underlying assumptions informing such advocacy and how that is enacted in their relationship with stakeholders through their strategies employed in their advocacy.

1.5   Justification/significance of the Study

This study is significant because it contributes to the body of research on how the media functions through advocacy. It does this through the role the Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG) plays in the fight against galamsey, which has received almost no attention by scholars. In addition, it will help understand the coalition's rhetoric about illegal mining and its push for eradication. It will also provide a different perspective, which is media engagement contextualized within history and the present, in the analysis through a historical approach of political economy of communication. This study is significant to understanding how news media involvement in the fight against illegal mining shapes discourse on mining and constructs news media's role in Ghana. Particularly, how constructions and contestations about mining in Ghana is framed and the resulting tensions between political actors, journalists and citizens. The novelty of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey positions this study as chatting a new course by adding to existing literature on the theories about the functions of the news media in Ghana.

1.6 Chapter Outline

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the study, background on Galamsey, states the problem statement, purpose and significance of the study. Chapter two presents a literature review on dominant western theories on liberal democracy and the role of the media in a democracy as well as media practices and routines. It also examines the political economy of the Ghanaian media with particular emphasis on media history, ownership, function and professional and journalistic practices. The third chapter focuses on the Media Coalition Against Galamsey, its discourse and how its discursive representations help explain the media's role in Ghana. Finally, in chapter four, findings from the analysis are outlined together with recommendations for future research.

7

CHAPTER TWO: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GHANAIAN MEDIA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on political economy of communication, liberal democracy, and theories on media's role to help show how these theories map onto the Ghanaian context to reveal distinct practices that are different from western models. This will be achieved by examining the political landscape of Ghana in interaction with the news media since the colonial era up until the Fourth Republic[2], showing how media/journalist-politician relationships help understand news media's operations and role in liberal democracies and how such interactions affect news media's practices and routines.

2.2. Political Economy

Vincent Mosco (2009) defines political economy as the "the study of control and survival in social life" (p. 3). This definition emphasizes the processes of social change and organization, power relations as well as "production and reproduction." It encompasses the political and economic by invoking organizational mechanisms and the relationships established in a community and their means of production to sustain a certain order/ and

---

[2] The fourth republic is Ghana's fourth attempt at democratic governance since Ghana attained independence in 1957. It began with the passing of the 1992 constitution, which came into effect in January 1993.

how that established order is maintained. In addition, it is concerned with the distribution and allocation of resources within a capitalist system. Thus, political economists undertake studies in ownership and control to examine power relations, structural inequalities and class systems (Wasko, 2005). Political economy is characterized by social change and history, social totality, moral philosophy and praxis. These characteristics reveal the length and breadth of political economy as a holistic approach to communication emphasizing context, relationships within society, values and social change. Several researchers have studied political economy of communication using different approaches including historical analysis (change and continuity), analysis of media as commodity and industry (understanding the media as a business entity), analysis of transnational communication and media, media/state relationships, and resistance and opposition (Wasko, 2005).

Drawing from the concept political economy, communication researchers emphasize the importance and value of communication through media apparatus (like the mass media: radio press, and television) and their technologies as well as information through the process of production, distribution and consumption. The focus of political economy of communication is to understand mass media commodification, evaluate constraints and challenges of distance on the production and distribution of media products and analyze social relations through access to media technologies or products. Hence, Mosco states that political economy of communication should be seen as "a social exchange of meaning whose outcome is the measure or mark of a social relationship" which exceeds mere transmission of data; rather it should be seen as "social production of meaning that constitutes a relationship" (p. 6). Consequently, he consents that society and

9

communication are mutually constituted. Thus, all forms of interactions emerging from social exchanges, as a product, symbolizes the kind of social relationship that exist in a society. It feeds into the understanding that communication is also about "power in hierarchies" (p. 68).

The political economy of media production refers to expansion in the media landscape and ownership systems affecting their surveillance role (Amoakohene, 2010). As has been noted, politics and market are central to political economy. Consequently, power relations and means of production are determining factors for asserting hegemony and control. The need for control over human and material resources by means of an interaction between market forces and political actors brings about intense competition. Hence, political economy requires a concentration on "specific set of social relations organized around power or the ability to control other people, processes, and things, even in the face of resistance" (Mosco, 2009, p. 24).

Such power in the media as a social process is centered and can be exercised through information or the news about which politicians and journalists are in contention. As some scholars have noted, media cannot control actions of people directly but can potentially control minds of readers by "determining the forms of consciousness and the modes of expression which are made available to the people" (Murdock & Golding, 1974, p. 205; van Dijk, 1995). Of course, according to van Dijk, such control by the media can be resisted, while political power through legislative instruments can control by means of coercion. However, the issue of access to both media personalities and politicians, though may vary, becomes an important factor in the struggle over news dominance. Access can limit such control based on who controls the resources that instigates this access, re-

10

enforcing the issue of state and market interaction. The media's impact over people's lives happen primarily through provision of facilities which dictate viewer "discretionary spending" and through "information about, and explanations of, social and political processes" (Murdock & Golding p. 205). Invariably, the media are actively involved in distribution of power and legitimization which positions it as a privileged "institution." Although the communication environment of mass distribution of information is changing, it is still important to acknowledge that political economist must recognize the media as industries and commercial organizations engaged in production and distribution of resources[3].

Media-journalist relationship is an inevitable interaction especially in the Ghanaian context, where almost every issue is politicized and also because the news media operate in and was born out of a political system.

There are two types of media ownership and media systems private owned and state owned. This culminates into two distinct genres of journalism: "the conservative rhetoric of state-owned media and the provocative, oppositional news" by the private media (Hastings, 2006, p. 75). Research conducted by Media Ownership Monitor (2017) shows that many of the owners of private media organizations in Ghana have affiliations with or are owned by politicians. Thus, journalists reproduce the discourse of politicians. Such affiliations and leanings affect news media content and representations of government in power and

---

[3] This claim is based on Graham Murdock and Peter Golding assertion that political economy of mass communication must recognise that "the mass media are first and foremost industrial and commercial organizations which produce and distribute commodities" (p. 205-206)

11

those in opposition. It is not surprising that successive governments have always accused the private media of supporting the opposition while the opposition also accuses state media of favouring the government in power.

Thus, understanding news media ownership, media/state relationship and the history of journalism provides a context for examining the coalition/media's political significance as advocates against illegal mining. It will help describe and explain the constraints and affordances influencing the coalition's discourse on illegal mining. The goals of political economy are social change and historical transformation which feeds into stakeholders' demand for changes in attitude, policy and law enforcement.

2.3. The Role of the Mass Media in Liberal Democracies

In a democratic society- which is structurally characterised by competition, election and public participation- the role of the media is critical for ensuring an effective and productive government. From emphasis on the media's decision about what news gets covered and what topics to think about and how to think about such topics, the media's importance cannot be underestimated (Straubhaar, Larose & Davenport, 2012). The media are considered "vehicles of information… and channels of communication" that represent reality and serve as bridge between communicators making information accessible to the public (Jensen, 2012, p.1).

It is also the case that the media in political process are a power resource with a symbiotic relationship with political actors (Louw, 2010). The media are expected to be a watchdog of those who hold power or aspire to hold political positions, distinguish truth from lies, present different perspectives on key issues (Machesney, 2004; Amoakohene, 2010). News media are considered as civic forum, mobilizing agents, reproduction and dissemination sites and "sites of institutionalized communication for building political power who are licensed to manufacture and circulate dominant ideas" (Louw, 2010 p.18; Pippa, 2000).

Some media scholars agree that there is a symbiotic relationship between journalists and politicians, ie, journalists and politicians are inseparable, which culminates into how the media's role is perceived (Timothy Cook, as cited by W. Lance Bennett, 2016). Thus, the mass media, its nature, self-understanding of its role and relationship to the political process and practices help validate within the public domain the ethos of political ideologies and actors, and beliefs (p. 47). As Eric Louw (2010) points out, media interaction with political actors creates certain patterns and practices which affect future journalistic practices. This is because both of them understand news as a form of control or governance. Accordingly, Louw outlines six types of media/journalist-politician relationships which help explain media's role in a democratic society. Four of these roles are important for explaining the role of the media in Ghana[4]. The first is partisan journalism

---

[4] The two other roles listed include: **Muckraking/Yellow journalism:** this type of journalism "is commercially driven and strives to build mass audiences through sensationalism" (p. 50). Emphasis is placed on sex, pain, conflict, the spectacular, etc. **Junkyard journalism:** this merges aspects of muckraking (private life of the rich and famous) with adversarial watchdogism.

13

wherein the media support a particular political party and work collaboratively with the parties they support to help promote their cause and ideologies. Second, Fourth Estate Journalism is concerned with and participation in the policy formulation process in order to provide the "policy-making elites with information and intelligence, opinion and platform for debate" (p. 50). Third, watchdog function is premised on the notion that for journalists to be effective, they must intentionally have an adversarial relationship with politicians. It focusses on personalities rather than policies. The fourth is the lapdog function. Here, journalists collaborate with politicians and refuse to scrutinize what they report as facts from these politicians. There is no adversarialism.

It is clear that the media at any particular time either work to support or oppose the government. In the case of Ghana, the role of the media has not been monolithic; rather, it has had a mix of media-politician relationships and has evolved following the different political administrations that Ghana has experienced. The Ghanaian news media emerged as full actors and facilitators in the pre-colonial era but alternated between being a government mouthpiece and watchdog in both post-independence and pre-1992 constitution. The history of the role of the press in Ghana in a checkered political atmosphere constituted by partisan journalism, watchdogism/fourth estate journalism, and lapdogism as products of the media-politician relationship resulting in either adversarialism or collaboration.

14

Ghana's history shows that there is a correlation between the free press and media's role as watchdogs. From 1874 to the late 1950s and under civilian administrations, Ghanaian owned newspapers functioned as watchdogs that were critical of the colonial administration, and grew amidst tensions and conflicts in demand for independence, and civilian rule. Since independence, nine government administrations have ruled Ghana: five military and four civilian administrations. With the exception of Dr Kwame Nkrumah's (the first president of Ghana) regime, the various civilian governments allowed for the free operation of the private press, which flourished, though such were not without controversies and scandals that marring press freedom. They also allowed for private and state-owned media to co-exist. Journalists functioned as "loyal opposition" performing the role of "watchdog adversary" (Amoakohene, 2010 p. 32). As such, between 1992 and 1996, the private press served as the voice providing alternative views in the absence of an opposition in parliament[5]. This was critical for testing the viability of Ghana's budding democracy.

Journalism was noted to be freest under the administration of Dr Kofi A. Busia[6]. It was during his reign that the Newspaper Licencing Act was repealed. However, both

---

[5] In 1992, the opposition New Patriotic Party boycotted the parliamentary elections. The result was that the legislative arm of government became a one party parliament except for an independent candidate Hawa Yakubu (See Kabral Blay-Amihere's *I spoke for Freedom*).

[6] Busia was president on the ticket of the Progress Party (PP) from 1969 until 1972 when he was overthrown by the National Liberation Council (NLC) led by Gen. Joseph A. Ankrah and Gen. Akwasi A. Afrifa

15

governments in these two republics faced intense criticism from the press following the former's dismissal of the then editor[7] of the *Daily Graphic* and the latter was taken to court for attempting to make changes to leadership positions in the state owned newspapers namely *Daily Graphic*, *The Mirror* and The *Ghanaian Times.* The news media monitored, scrutinized and exposed state activities and abuses of its functionaries, serving as a check on government and official authority in accordance with constitutional provision as the fourth estate (Amoakohene, 2010, Norris, 2000). However, the news media in Ghana have been criticized for not enforcing their full exertion on exposing abuses and checking government functionaries; rather, it has had to comply with the nation's developmental agenda which unfortunately may align with the political party in power. There are also issues with news media companies who are directly linked to some political parties. Hence, they are not critical when the party they sympathize with is in power. As a watchdog, the Ghanaian press in colonial times faced adversity, threats and harassment but relentlessly kept true to its mandate as a watchdogs- demanding freedom, critiquing and serving as a check against abuses of power. Such resilience can be productive in the news media developmental agenda where they are not coerced into a servile admission of government's development plans, rather they effectively evaluate, analyze and critique policies for their implementation.

---

[7] The editor of the *Daily Graphic* advocated for a revolutionary confrontation to end apartheid in South Africa instead of Busia's dialogue approach (Asante, 1996).

Watchdogism and the fourth estate branch of government are interwoven in that the news media are protected by the constitution against suppression and repression in order to ensure that the three arms of government carry out their mandates. The current notion of the fourth estate implies that the media are a distinct entity within the political process and should perform autonomously (Louw, 2010). The 1992 constitution of Ghana guarantees media autonomy and freedom by establishing it as a fourth estate. It assigns media as the fourth arm of government, another estate separate from the three arms of government but have similar and equal right to free speech, protection, participation and autonomy but still possess a special right to monitor the other estates within the state. This special right constitutes checks and balances over the other arms of government to ensure they do not abuse their powers. The news media are mandated to scrutinize government and civil organization activities and hold them accountable, to participate in policy formulation process, and to provide information and platforms for debate for policy makers (Amoakohene, 2010). Such checks and balances, scrutiny and accountability have not been effectively carried out by the news media in Ghana due to the lack of access to information as well as government officials being sources of information. Access to information in Ghana is limited due to the absence of a law that gives journalists the right to information bordering on government policies and activities[8]. There is a desire by government/politicians to repress information or reveal/expose certain conducts or

---

[8] The Right to Information Bill is enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana in Article 21(1)(f), however it was not until March 25, 2019 before it was passed into law after about 20 years when it was first drafted. It is awaiting presidential accent. This law is expected to be operationalized in Janauary 2020 (https://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2019/March-26th/parliament-approves-rti-bill.php).

activities. Such opacity means journalists must find other means of gaining information. The tension between journalists and politicians results in hostility and conflict. In addition, this tension results in the struggle over news or information and presents a real challenge for the media-politician relationship since "the ability or inability of officials to make or control news is an important part of the power to govern" (Bennett, 2016, p. 11). Although, public and private media are insulated against governmental control and interference through the National Media Commission who have oversight of state-owned media (Blay-Amihere, 2015), it is obvious that denial of access to information is a measurement of control. This lack of transparency does not help to adequately ensure that the arms of government are under the surveillance of news media. Journalists are currently waiting for the operationalization of the right to information bill so that they can effectively demand accountability and ensure that there is transparency in governance. As such, although, the news media as a fourth estate sought to make journalists part of the political process, by enabling journalists to pursue information, politicians would prefer to remain hidden from the general public, the current system disables the news media from asserting their mandate (Shadow & Asare, 2016; Amokohene, 2010).

During the military regimes, news media in Ghana operated as lapdogs. The military regimes used authoritarian methods of press control to censor content and muzzle the press. Additionally, they issued decrees to indemnify state-owned press against libel suits, ensured that there were economic measures to halt private newspaper publication, and arrested and detained editors of private newspapers (Asante, 1996; Amoakohene, 2010). There were also harassments and threats against journalists and military interrogation of

18

media practitioners and managers who scrutinized, evaluated and criticized the regime. Broadcasting and newspapers were a state monopoly. Similarly, during the era of Kwame Nkrumah (although he was an elected president), private news media were harassed out of existence and government had control over the media. Kwame Nkrumah believed that the press was instrumental in "promoting national growth and integration… as well as modernization" (Asante, 1996, p. 8 & 15). However, his distrust for private press may have stemmed from the fact that Western styled journalism in his view was costly for his young government and a distraction from the revolutionary agenda he propagated to the rest of Africa for freedom and emancipation. He is quoted as saying that

> Just as in the capitalist countries the Press represents and carries out the purpose of capitalism, so in revolutionary Africa our revolutionary African Press must present and carry forward our revolutionary purpose. This is to establish a progressive political and economic system upon our continent that will free men from want and every form of injustice and enable them to work out their social and cultural destinies in peace and at ease (see Ainslie 1966, p. 19 as cited in Asante 1996, p. 8).

This marked the process towards controlling the press and harassing other presses that seemed to resist his control. Thus the press became "docile, ineffective and sycophant" (Asante, 1996, p. 8). Content was monitored and administered by the government which had grown powerful and become authoritative. Subsequent military regimes followed the footsteps of Nkrumah muzzling the press and thus journalism functioned as lapdog. The legacy of successive governments discontinuing projects started by their predecessors and the absence of an actual national developmental project or goal undermined the concept of a national developmental agenda. Therefore, according to Amoakohene, compliance with promoting the developmental agenda altered Ghanaian media's role in the different phases of political regimes. As it has already been indicated, this significant change resulted in a

19

lapdog role. In line with the developmental agenda, Asante argues that mass media pre and post-independence, being controlled and owned by the government meant that the government defined communication policies and developmental goals.

2.4. Media in Africa and Ghana

While watchdog and fourth estate roles are ideal and enhance the perception of what the media's role are, the media in Africa have not always had an ideal environment in which to function. Political instability and economic challenges have impacted mass media productivity as well as their relationship with governments. Kwame Karikari (2007) postulates that media "ownership systems, their character, strengths and weaknesses, their political and social outlooks, and above all their outputs and impacts are all the products of the societies that have formed and shaped them" (p. 10). Particularly, political influences through colonialism and regime changes have often defined the African media role either as lapdogs or watchdogs.

The emergence of mass media in Africa was motivated by different factors. While the origins of the newspaper differ in African countries, it has been established that broadcasting, radio and television, were ideological tools used by the colonial government and under state monopoly. At the time of independence, these were handed down to the independent governments. On the other hand, the newspaper was the only medium Africans had access to resist, agitate, mobilize and organize support for demanding

20

independence (Karikari, 2017 p. 12). As such, various sources of newspaper ownership used newspapers for ideological purposes ranging from social, political and religious reasons. Karikari identifies four sources of ownership. These sources that established newspapers include the colonial state, the European settler colonists, the Christian missionary institutions and the early African elite (p. 12).

Just like most colonized African countries, the mass media in Ghana is a product of colonialism, political developments and the history of the continent" (Karikari, 2007, p. 10). It is, thus, not surprising that after independence tensions between the practice of journalism and political control and until now the mass media's negotiation between meeting international standards and adhering to local journalistic practices or traditions is wrapped up in western expectation of good journalistic practices. The role of the mass media has transitioned following the country's liberation from colonialism and a state-owned media system to a "liberalized and pluralistic environment" (Amoakohene, p. 22-23). Contributing to this transition in the media's role is the checkered political history of Ghana where governance has alternated between military and democratic rule. As such, the news media's role and their relationship with those in power has been sweet and sour at different regimes. Nonetheless, this has not deterred active participation of media in developmental and political affairs in the country. The mass media has been very active in Ghana's political process. Understanding the role of the news media in Ghana can only be complete by tracing its evolution since colonial era through post-independence to the drawing of the 1992 constitution to the present, which forms the fourth republic. These

21

time periods are crucial to establishing the context shaping the growth and practice of journalism in Ghana.

Ghana's history positions the press as intricately meshed into the political process from the onset of the press which is also linked to the ownership systems. Hence, politicians and journalists, in the first century of Ghanaian media, were closely linked confirming what Timothy Cook's assertion that politicians and journalists are inseparable (Bennett, 2016). They are not only interdependent but in the then Gold Coast (now Ghana), leaders of nationalist movements/ politicians of the indigenous press doubled as journalists. The news media largely represented by the nascent press in the then Gold Coast served as ideological tools for colonial governments and nationalist movements. The first newspaper set up by the British colonial government, *Royal Gold Coast Gazette[9], was* established to provide information about government business, while the second colonial newspaper was set up as a response to the nationalist movements' critique of colonial rule and demand for independence.

The nationalist newspapers, on the other hand, served as channels for educating the locals on the policies of the colonial government (Anokwa, 1997; Osafo, 2016, p. 868), advocated against colonial regime and were known for their adversarial role in providing dissenting views and demanded and fought for freedom which received support from the missionary newspapers but was vehemently opposed by the colonialist.

---

[9] This was established by a British colonial governor, Charles MacCarthy, in 1822

Using the press as a mouthpiece these competing groups sought to mobilize support and to spread their ideologies. This placed the news media as active participants of the political process, not only as a channel to disburse ideologies and mere politicking, but positioned journalists as political activists demanding self-governance. This politics-journalism environment produced ownership systems that have continued to date. Pre-colonial ownership of the press was between the colonial government and private individuals or groups. Private ownership was categorised or comprised of missions/missionaries like the Methodist, Basel and Catholic Churches, and individuals or groups who were either businessmen or members of the elite group who were literates. Additionally, there is the dimension of European and indigenous ownership which defined the scope of reach of these newspapers. Thus, determining the production levels in terms of quality and quantity as well as the type of information put in the public domain. The stability of these presses, particularly the length of their existence, was influenced by financial strength, access to printing facilities and of course the political atmosphere.

Unlike the U.S where the mushrooming of early newspapers depended on wealthy politicians (McChesney, 2008), Ghana's press in the late 1800s developed from an elitist intelligentsia who began a critical appraisal and critique of the colonial administration. Journalists at the time were the elite in the society such as lawyers, clergymen, doctors, merchants and schoolmasters who had western forms of education did not have any education in journalism. Jones Quartey describes them as "amateurs of great brilliance and prestige... *whose...* personal contribution to the craft of journalism was in the realms of political patriotism and literary excellence" (1974, p. 37) but not in the art of professional

23

journalism which emphasizes factual accuracy, objectivity, nonpartisanship, independence and abhorrence for sensationalism (Bennett, 2016; McChesney, 2008). Professional journalism was nonexistent; nonetheless, Quartey places the period between 1931 and 1937 as a period of professionalism because trained journalists like J. B. Dankwa and Nnamdi Azikiwe revolutionized journalism with their expertise. It was not until 1959, that the first journalism school, Ghana Institute of Journalism, was established about 137 years after the first newspaper was published. In this regard, journalists' political biases were evident as they operated along party lines. Objectivity as described with terms such as fairness, accuracy, balance or truthfulness was marred by news media sympathy towards certain political parties or allegiance to particular ideologies.

The system of ownership in colonial time allowed for what seemed to be a pluralistic media environment where the press- state, missionary and private-owned- operated alongside each other. This created an environment of co-existence. Although the private press in the colonial era shared the same vision, they operated individually. The aim of these papers was to pressurize the colonial government to grant Ghana independence. The *West African Herald*[10] set a precedence for the mushrooming and proliferation of nationalist newspapers and missionary owned newspapers published by indigenes of Gold Coast for local consumption. The missionary newspapers were produced in both local and English languages to propagate the gospel. The state-owned newspapers served the interest of the

---

[10] The *West African Herald* (formerly called *Accra Herald*) was the first African-produced and edited handwritten press in the Ghana.

24

government. Although there were diverse newspapers co-existing, it wasn't a friendly and peaceful landscape, especially for the private press which opposed the government.

The media environment was rife with competing interests and for various reasons brought about animosity between the nationalists and the colonial rulers. The different interests of the various ownership systems brought tensions and started an era of intense dissent resulting in adversarial confrontation. Deviation of indigenous newspapers from providing information, education and entertainment (Asante, 1996) to being the mouthpiece of the nationalist movement resulted in a backlash from the British colonial government. In addition, there were overlapping interests particularly, in the case of Rev Solomon who converted the *Gold Coast Methodist*[11] (started in 1886 and later renamed *Gold Coast Methodist Times*) from a missionary paper to a "nationalistic tract, full of passages burning with patriotic zeal and anti-colonial passion" (Jones-Quartey, 1974, p. 11). This shift was a cause for alarm for the British colonial government and resulted in the passing of several laws[12] to curtail the development of the indigenous press, control journalistic practices and also censor content. These laws were met with resistance from practising local journalists to which the colonial government responded with either imprisonment, fines or

---

[11] The change in name came with the change in editor from two English missionaries Reverends W.T. Coppin and W.M.Cannell to a native clergyman Reverend SRB Solomon who later became known as Reverend Attoh Ahuma. He was later sacked for for his political outburst and some quarrels he had with the church based on doctrinal and personal conduct issues. See Jones-Quartey 1974.

[12] These laws included the *Newspaper Registration Ordinance of 1894* (Cap 116), the *Book and Newspaper Registration Ordinance of 1897* (Cap 12) *Criminal Code (Amendment) Ordinance of 1934* also known as the Sedition Ordinance (Ordinance No. 21 of 1934).

25

deportation. The laws established a system where the colonial government demanded information about publications including returns on the total number of papers circulated, personal information and address details of editors and restricted content production (Anokwa, 1997; Osafo, 2016). Further, these laws allowed for easy identification and prosecution of those who fell foul of these laws. Thus, these laws necessitated a regime of criminalization of journalists and editors. What appeared to be tolerance on the part of the colonial administration was in fact tyranny against the press. Of course, as stated earlier these laws were resisted and fought against. However, it did not stop the government from prosecuting offenders under these laws. For instance, under the Book and Newspaper Registration Ordinance of 1897, the editor of the *The Gold Coast Methodist* and printer of the *The Methodist Journal* were prosecuted (Anokwa,1997). Kwame Nkrumah[13] who revived the demand for independence and later became the first president of Ghana, was imprisoned for his radicalism expressed through his newspaper.

Broadcasting has seen more than a 100 percent increase since the inception of the 1992 constitution. The constitution marked the beginning of media independence and the proliferation of news media in Ghana. Specifically, private press and broadcasting began to spring up and develop along with various private media training institutions and

---

[13] Dr. Kwame Nkrumah established *The Accra Evening News* in 1948. It served as the mouthpiece of the Convention People's Party (CPP) which demanded for immediate independence with the slogan "self-government now". The CPP was a political party formed to demand independence from the British. It broke away from the United Gold Coast Convention whose motor was independence in the Shortest possible time. *The Accra Evening News* became very popular and successful. Soon two other papers, *Morning Telegraph* and *Cape Coast Daily Mail* in 1949 was started for the same political purpose.

26

commissions. It resulted in an upsurge in the number of news media organizations. Radio is currently the most popular and common news source in Ghana. Statistics from Media Ownership Monitor Ghana show that two thirds of the population rely on radio, with television on its tail as the second most popular news source, while only a fifth of the population rely on newspapers for news. Prior to the coming into force of the constitution, there was only one broadcaster of television and radio, controlled by the government. According to the National Communication Authority, as of the fourth quarter in 2018, there were 398 radio stations in operation out of 487 stations who had authorization to operate. Out of this number, there are 31 public, 5 foreign, 358 commercial, 71 community and 22 campus radio stations spread across the country. Out of the total 136 authorised television stations, only 88 are on air. The National Media Commission reports that as at 2017, there were 70 registered newspapers and 140 registered magazines and journals. Similar to the colonial era, the media ownership system in independent Ghana is split between the state and private individuals/organizations. Privately owned broadcasting and print media outnumber state-owned media.

In the midst of a vibrant pluralistic media environment as it exists in Ghana currently, free press/ independent media and freedom of speech may not have been fully achieved even though Ghana is seen as country with the freest media in Africa (Shardow & Asare, 2016). Impediments in the form of subtle governmental influences, financial constraints, polarization through partisanship and ownership interests malign the news media viability and ethos. Between the period of 1831 and 1956, more than forty and over newspapers had

27

existed at one time or the other. At the time of independence only 11 of them existed (Jones-Quartey, 1974).

Thus, the idea of objectivity becomes highly contested not because it is nonexistent but because of political orchestrations both within and outside media organizations. Through the multiplicity of news media organizations civic engagement is possible by means of representations of diverse viewpoints based on ideological and/or party affiliation of these news media. An interpretation of such pluralism would suggest the availability to the public rich and balanced information on major issues.

The news media as a mobilizing role should be able to spark interest in public affairs, makes news available to all levels of people, encourage diverse levels of civic engagement and generate practical knowledge, political interest and civic engagemenin (Pippa, 2000). In summary of the news media's political function, Amoakohene observes that "the media often set the agenda for debate, provide information, and engender discussion on issues of national and international importance through the platforms or forums they provide" (p.25). Plurality of news media in Ghana and multiplicity of ownership systems enriches the media landscape for understanding media evolving role.

2.5. Journalistic Routines

Professionalism concerns education and firm grounding in the ethics of journalism (Blay-Amihere, 2015). W. Lance Bennett (2016) defines professional norms to constitute "moral standards, codes of ethics and guidelines about inserting voices and viewpoints into stories" (p. 131) and journalistic routines to mean rules and practices that reporters and editors are trained to follow. Following the late start of professional journalism in Ghana as pertains to internal education of journalists, journalists relied on their literacy skills to publish and disseminate news. Professional journalism proposed the idea of neutrality and fairness, training of journalists and separation of editorial operations from commercial affairs. Pippa Norris (2000) asserts that a common way journalists can understand objectivity is by showing "balance and expressing fairly the positions of both sides of a dispute" (p. 27). The idea of objectivity could only be a moral burden that did not hold as much importance as emancipation and freedom during the struggle for independence.

Jennifer Hasty (2005) observes that journalism in Ghana has been influenced by cultural legacies, colonial domination and postcolonial nationalism (p. 72). She asserts that these positions and circumstances have resulted in tensions between Ghanaian journalists' vocational commitments to global practices of journalism. So that though the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) trains students in these global standards, "journalism is deployed as a context shaped by alternative understandings of reality, sociality, and citizenship" (p. 78), as opposed to journalistic emphasis on objectivity in Europe and America. Her ethnographic study of the Ghanaian state newspaper, *Daily Graphic*, shows that the production of news is mutually constitutive and intertwined with cultural discourses (Hasty, 2006). As such, journalism in practice is not influenced by a belief in a

29

certain truth which must be represented, but operates within the cultural context of collaborative construction of identity placed within history which is hierarchically organized. That is, news production emphasizes authorities and their discourse as opposed to describing and foregrounding the news event. This study will therefore consider how news media produce news on illegal mining and how that affects the claims they make as a coalition.

Due to the pluralism of news media in Ghana, the performance and conduct of the mass media have come under severe criticism for "low quality journalism, biased reporting and cowardly acts" (Asante, p. 122). Largely, they have been accused of professional irresponsibility (Blay-Amihere, 2015; Diedong, 2016). Blay-Amihere purports that unprofessional and unethical violation by the Ghanaian news media are characterized by sensationalism, misleading headlines, lies and unattributed quotes. Although the Ghana Journalist Association and the National Media Commission are to ensure professionalism, sanction media responsibility and adherence to the media code of ethics, these bodies lack the power to enforce verdicts and regulations. They have become the proverbial toothless bulldogs. These criticisms come in the wake of economic, political and ownership issues as well as training and education. Media ownership structures have been found to affect news media production as well as their role in a democratic state. Political scientists Mohammed S. Shardow and Bossman E. Asare (2016) in their research on four Ghanaian newspapers found that media development in the fourth republic does not line up watchdog role. They assert that media ownership structures and partisan affiliations affect media practices and adversarialism. They state that private owned media tend to promote

30

preferences of their owners and are critical of the government as opposed to public media who favour the government in power and are less critical of their activities. Although the legal framework grants media freedom and independence, state-owned press is not free from government control since due to reward and punishment schemes, the government is able to get their way with the press. Thus, as Diedong notes, they are less adversarial towards government and tend to accommodate and support policies of the government. Concerning the private press, these scholars found that ownership by politicians impede their watchdog role. The poor financial base of private press stifles innovation, and affects quality newspapers and the hiring of qualified journalists resulting in corrupt practices (Shardow & Asare, 2016; Diedong, 2016). On the contrary, state media is better resourced through government assistance. It is not surprising that the *Daily Graphic* has the highest circulation figure and is also adjudged the best newspaper in Ghana. However, in the broadcasting arena, the private press has a wider patronage than the state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation.

2.6. Summary

The significance of this chapter was to show ownership systems and political culture within which news media in Ghana has operated. It is evident that the news media are linked to the political system (Ansah, 1988) in which its operates and therefore it would be erroneous to ignore the political systems that shape the media-citizen and media-government relationships. Taking a historical approach to political economy, enables an examination

of how the interplay of politics and market impacts news media's roles. Clearly, the news media is dependent on the party in power.

It is also clear that Ghanaian media/journalist-politician relationships have never been fixed and they have become more complicated after the constitution came into full force. The tensions especially between private media and the government heightened in light of a constitutionally guaranteed media freedom, independence, and safety. As the media landscape expanded with the mushrooming of private media, they became notorious for meddling in party politics, lacking professionalism and failing to assert their fourth estate role (Shadow & Asare, 2016; Blay-Amihere, 2015; Amoakohene, 2010). Such criticisms must take into account the private media's poor financial base, resources and remuneration and limited access to information (Diedong, 2016). These limitations cause journalists to accept monetary offers, and to resort to illegal means of accessing documents like theft and impersonation (Hasty, 2005). In light of Louw's typology of media/journalist-politician relationships, the analysis shows that such relationships are not distinct categories existing separating but are complicated by their coexistence. Thus, the role of the news media in Ghana in the current democratic dispensation constitutes serving as a lapdog and/or watchdog, ie, they are either supportive of government or are adversarial (Amoakohene, 2010).

This implies that journalism is not absolutely free from government control. State-owned media also have their share of government influences through what political scientists Shadow and Asare (2016) call a reward system, which occurs through appointments and dismissal or other times journalists are made redundant or sidelined on the job. However,

32

the history of the media shows that the press despite its challenges has largely maintained its watchdog role. In recent times, the watchdog role is actively pursued only when the news media's favorite political party is in opposition. Such politicking breeds mistrust and allegiance to the political parties instead of the public.

In the face of such an oblique media system, mushrooming of broadcasting and print media, and different ideological leanings of the diverse news media, how does a collective action exemplified in the Media Coalition Against Galamsey assert its fourth estate role and carry out its watchdog role? In what capacity does the history of the press impress upon current journalistic practices to hold government and other institutions accountable on behalf of citizens? How does the media through the coalition conceptualize its role in the fight against galamsey? The next chapter shall explore these questions through the discourses of the coalition.

CHAPTER THREE: MEDIA COALITION AGAINST GALAMSEY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the discourses of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG) regarding its role and significance in the fight against galamsey. It explores a wide range of coalition-produced texts to investigate how its sees itself, and its relationship with the state and political actors as well as what these texts suggest constitute the role of the news media in the galamsey fight. These texts include the coalition's produced documents and press statements/releases, website, interviews, constitution of MCAG, etc. First, it looks at the composition of MCAG, how the coalition understands galamsey, its effects on the environment and what it perceives as the cause of and subsequently the proliferation of galamsey leading to an illegal mining crisis which has become a national canker. Second, the role of the media as espoused by the coalition is critically examined to understand the news media's role and political significance regarding environmental issues as exemplified through the galamsey debate.

Understanding the coalition's attitude and explanation of galamsey is key to unlocking journalism's perceived role and interaction with stakeholders in illegal mining. Also, it is significant in understanding environmental issues in a postcolonial state whose future is hunted by colonial legacies lingering in the current political landscape and in the shaping of policies. Such policies are also linked to international conversations about the adverse effect of illegal mining in developing countries. It is not a secret that the criminalization of

34

galamsey started with colonial laws enacted by the British Government to regulate indigenous mining activities. The laws, Concession Ordinance in 1903 and the Mercury Ordinance in 1932, established a procedure for land owners to acquire grants of mineral rights. Subsequent Ghana governments continued in the legacy of the colonial rulers and further enacted the Minerals and Mining Amendment Act 475 in 1993 and 2006 to help regulate the sector. It is the case that environmental issues or mineral extraction is framed within the context of struggle, resistance, repression and survival in the event of state intervention and state and citizen interactions (Obi, 2005). Such struggle is as a result of the people's reliance on land and water to make a living and political actors' resolve to control these resources. It, therefore, holds semblance to colonial nationalist movements' agitation for independence from colonialism as "the principles of human conduct in relation to justice and injustice, good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice" (Ojomo, 2011 p. 573). In addition to these moral concerns, environmental representations by the media revolves around issues pertaining to a "choice between economic prosperity and an Edenic vision of nature" (Cooper, 1996, p. 236). In this instance, jobs versus rivers, forest, land, etc. As such, the complexity of environmental issues, particularly its intense "multidimensional and often dramatic ways" (Cox, 2013, p. 144) as presented in the media complicate simplified solutions usually offered by advocates as is the case in the anti-galamsey campaign where political will to enforce mining law will help resolve the menace.

3.2. Media Coalition Against Galamsey

The Media Coalition against Galamsey (MCAG) was launched on April 14, 2017 in response to the rising illegal mining activities in Ghana. The campaign is tagged #StopGalamsey to foreground the urgency of illegal mining eradication due to environmental and socioeconomic challenges it poses to Ghana. The media came together to establish a common voice to pressurize the government and to draw public and stakeholder's attention to the increased intensity in and proliferation of galamsey activities as opposed to the individual media reports on illegal mining which received little attention.

The coalition is made up of news organizations (News Times Corporation, Graphic Communications Group Limited, and Ghana Broadcasting Corporation); professional organizations (Ghana Journalists Association, Private Newspaper Publishers Association, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association, and Ghana Community Radio Network). Although membership is limited to media organizations, print and broadcasting journalism and professional associations, others can be admitted as affiliates. As a media group, the coalition takes on attributes of media responsibilities and rights as well as privileges enshrined in the constitution of Ghana. The coalition considers itself as acting in the capacity of the media (whether print, electronic or digital) in Ghana, such that the coalition is synonymous with the media. Hence, actions of the coalition in the pursuit of the anti-galamsey campaign are considered as a collective act owned by the media. Equally, actions of individual media organizations are owned by the coalition. However, seeing that this is an organization and the constitution of Ghana sanctions freedom of association, the

36

membership of all journalists or media organizations cannot be verified[14]. Therefore, collective ownership of the advocacy by the media in Ghana is problematic, since their representation of all media in Ghana does not distinguish between those who are members and those who are not.

MCAG'S objectives are to "carry out public education on the ills of illegal mining activities; carry out advocacy with stakeholders to ensure the eradication of galamsey; and promote sustainable mining" (Constitution of MCAG, n. d.). Promotion sustainable mining and public education on the adverse effects of galamsey. The campaign seeks to draw public attention to the adverse effects of galamsey activities on the environment, help end illegal mining activities in Ghana and push for sustainability.

The coalition has a constitution which stipulates its objectives, membership, governing structure, duration of existence, etc. MCAG hopes to continue its advocacy until such a time as when they achieve a desirable outcome, which is the eradication of galamsey.

MCAG consists of both private and state-owned media. Such solidarity of the media is not rare in Ghana, MCAG is unique following its organization, structure and visibility and support it from the government to end galamsey. The president of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo in 2017 stated that he will put his presidency on the line to fight

---

[14] In an interview with the Administrator/Project Manager of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG), Gloria Hiadzi, she stated that membership of the organization cannot constitute the totality of all media organizations and journalists in Ghana since the coalition is an association of association. As such those who belong to the various associations which make up the coalition are considered automatic members.

37

galamsey. This promise was welcomed and was interpreted as a commitment from government to eradicate illegal mining, since politicians and government officials are often accused of engaging in galamsey activities. The coalition has also pledged support for government indicating that the campaign will help support the "president's vision of planting for food and jobs" (MCAG). Consistently the government, has stated its continued commitment towards ending galamsey by taking steps which earned the coalition their trust. The government placed a temporary ban on galamsey in April 2018 and lifted it in December the same year; published a document titled Roadmap on Lifting Small-Scale Mining Ban, established an anti-galamsey task force known as Operation Vanguard[15] to fight galamsey (Abissath, 20). These measures were a response to the coalition's activism and an indication that the government supports the work of the coalition. The interaction between government and the coalition is a cordial one and it is meant to spur on and mobilize the nation against galamsey. By implication, for the first time government and media agree to place the needs of the nation first and conserve the environment for posterity.

The activities of MCAG is funded through donor funds and resources of member organizations and associations. The activities of the coalition are sponsored by STAR-

---

[15] Operation Vanguard is a "400-member military cum police friendly contingents to combat illegal mining across the three most galamsey ravaged zones in the country" including the Ashanti, Eastern and Western Regions. It consists of personnel from Ghana Armed Forces, Ghana Navy, Ghana Air Force and Ghana Police Service (Sodjah, 2017, August 02). It was commissioned on July 31, 2017 (http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/features/3966-operation-vanguard-a-timely-saviour-of-our-environment).

38

Ghana, an independent donor pooled funding organization which is funded by UK aid, the EU and USAID (STAR Ghana) (MCAG, n. d.). The financial situation of the coalition presents two complicating situations of control and power relations. On the one hand, the coalition can be assessed as being independent from government control and influences. The absence of financial assistance from government suggests that government's stake in the affairs of the coalition is low; as such the coalition can take a critical stance against government and ensure that its representations do not favour government ambitions and goals at the expense of the coalition's own goal and override national interest. On the other hand, the coalition is implicated in external influences from western actors. It feeds into the larger discourse on Africa's history being connected to influences from around the world and continues to be at the receiving end. Moreover, the issue of illegal mining is a global discourse in which the argument biased against indigenous people in mining communities. Most large mining corporations are owned by people from the west. Therefore, MCAG's discourses fit within the global discourse on putting an end to illegal mining.

It must, however, be noted that the absence of financial assistance from government does not necessarily mean a total independence of MCAG from government. The coalition has partnerships with government institutions, religious groups, civil societies and companies[16]. To achieve its objective of carrying out this advocacy with stakeholders to

---

[16] The names of the collaborators or partners of MCAG as listed on the coalition's website include Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), Ghana Grid Company Limited (GRIDCo) , Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Mining, Ministry of Information, NCCE, Muslim Community, Christian Churches, GOIL, Ernst & Young, Ghana Law School, Occupy Ghana, Council for

eradicate galamsey, MCAG must collaborate with government institutions/agencies like the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Minerals Commission, Forestry Commission, etc. who have the power to regulate mining activities and enforce mining laws. These partnerships provide an avenue for stakeholder engagement, create a common voice and solidarity and galvanize stakeholders into action. Hence, MCAG, though assumes an independent position, has to negotiate its relationship with government to achieve its aim.

3.3. MCAG's Framing of Galamsey: A result of system failure, An Act of Illegality, Criminality and War

The coalition first extols the role of the media as critical to exposing galamsey perpetrators and pressurizing government and leadership to exert their powers to fighting the menace; second, it employs the rhetoric of blame on system and leadership failure as inhibiting government actions in the past to present to curb illegal mining; third, the group asserts that influx of expatriates and their indigenous collaborators in mining areas has resulted in the high incidence of galamsey operations; and fourth MCAG considers galamsey as an act of war on Ghana, its citizens and the environment. These assertions are not mutually exclusive since the status of galamsey as illegal framed as causing environmental

---

Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)/Water Research Institute (WRI), International Association for Impact Assessment IAIA among others (http://www.stopgalamsey.com/project/stop-galamsey-now/about/).

destruction and a criminal activity seem to be the natural result of the interplay of these discourses.

Illegality and criminality foregrounds the coalition's stance and speech on galamsey. The term "illegality" is at the center of the coalition's advocacy. This may seem like an obvious, over emphasized phenomenon which needs no stating since illegal mining implicates itself. However, galamsey is a law and order problem, a consequence of perpetrators' disregard for the constitution and legislation that makes this activity illegal. In its *Strategic Plan* document, the coalition states that

> The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, states that any mining activity that takes place without ratification by Parliament is illegal (MCAG, Brief Profile/Strategic Plan).

Any mining operation in the absence of following due process which includes acquiring licence is an offence to the state. The illegitimacy of galamsey forms part of a wider debate on legality and illegality which is informed by individual country's licencing policies or regulations. The Minerals and Mining Act stipulates licencing policies and mineral rights pertaining to mining. Disregard by small scale or illegal miners for these laid down procedures enshrined in the constitution is an offence to the state. The criminalization of galamsey sanctioned by the law legitimizes the coalition's actions as an act in the interest of the state, by calling for an enforcement and implementation of the law. It exposes the relevant authorities' failure to ensure the sanctioning of the law and equally cast them in light of shirking their responsibilities. As such, the remedy to such impunity is punishment prescribed by the law. In an interview the convenor of the coalition describes the galamsey as a vice like armed robbery stating that

41

> I hear people say ban galamsey. You cannot ban an illegality. You cannot ban armed robbery. It is an illegality that laws in Ghana that speak against this. So what we need to do is to enforce the law (Myjoyonline, 2017, Pm Express 27: 31-42)

Thus, they position the remedy to galamsey as requiring legal action, while at the same time pointing towards the dormancy of the law. The laws are enacted to deal with vice; as such galamsey should be addressed using legal apparatus. Consequently, the acknowledgement of an inactive law places an indictment on institutions and organizations responsible for mining like the Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Environment, Forestry Commission, and other law enforcement agencies, etc.

On the other hand, the coalition expresses disappointment with the 1989 mining law which permits artisanal and small scale miners to operate legally by acquiring license. The group contests that the "liberalization of laws on mining in 1989" and legalization of ASM for the purposes of providing jobs and "increasing government revenue has turned out to be a curse" (MCAG, Multiliteral Mining, n. d.). Consequently, the coalition insists on banning both illegal miners and licensed small scale miners and rejects the argument supporting galamsey as a means of employment. Such insistence questions the coalition's disposition towards the law. On the one hand, the law is an instrumental resource for abolishing galamsey; on the other hand, it is the source of the problem it seeks to eradicate. The dilemma this complexity creates for the coalition is a certain form of double standard where the ambiguity of the intentions of the law is brought into disrepute. Similarly, the coalition's advocacy is cast in the light of selective alienation of large scale mining, who equally act based on mining legislation that allows them to operate, from criticism and

42

being banned; and as has been indicated, mining in all its ramifications affect the environment negatively, as such the absence of large scale mining/corporations in the discourse of environmental destruction is suspicious. The single lens through which the coalition through which the coalition problematizes galamsey simplifies galamsey as just a matter of law and order, not acknowledging intricate complexities of political, social, and economic events impacting the continuation of galamsey. Such atomistic analysis, strips the debate off the nuances presented through historical events and social milieu that have shaped galamsey in Ghana.

Galamsey is described as an act of war by the coalition. It is considered a destructive activity which brings hardship to the people in mining communities and the country at large. Describing their advocacy as a fight and battle, the distinction is drawn between illegal miners who are called nation wreckers and the coalition who deem their advocacy as defensive mechanism to safe the country from further destruction. Such a description places illegal mining in opposition to national interest and heightens the threat to national security, provoking communal action and solidarity. The threat constitutes death, destruction of farmlands, water bodies, political instability in mining communities and a possibility that Ghana will become extinct because of famine and lack of water. The coalition considers the advocacy as an intervention on behalf of future generations. In a press statement, the MCAG states that "we must not lose this fight for the sake of our future generations" (MCAG, Press statement). Incorporating posterity into the discourse, allows the coalition to insist on and direct public consciousness towards the understanding that

43

galamsey is a deadly and harmful activity which deprives Ghanaians of their right to enjoy the environment. Due to the reliance of most Ghanaians on the land for survival, galamsey threatens this basic source of food, water and other economic activities like farming. Galamsey becomes an issue of good and bad, a moral discourse. As such, the issue of right or wrong takes center stage over all other concerns.

Leadership and system failure, according to the group, account for the proliferation of galamsey activities which have damaging effects on "water, food security and health" (Constitution of MCAG, n. d.) as well as destruction of resources including farmlands and forest reserves. The idea of leadership as a symbol of trust is important, seeing that authority is an important fabric in the Ghanaian culture. Leaders are custodians, who provide guidance and direction. Hence, an abuse of power or office has detrimental consequences on the welfare of citizens. Calling out on governments, judges, police, army, civil servants in state institutions, the coalition demands from them a sense of commitment towards their constitution mandated obligations in helping fight galamsey.

While on the one hand the coalition seems to rely on government apparatus as appropriate and right channels to address the problem, it also recognizes state apparatus' limitations at law enforcement due to the issue of politicization of galamsey where governments in power for fear of losing future elections halfheartedly pursue actions they put in place to curb the problem, while "you find the opposition coming to try and win political favours" (MyJoyOnline TV, 2017). Showing the adverse impact of political patronage and partisan

ideology, the coalition describes politicians as elections thinkers rather than transgenerational thinkers.

3.5. Role of the Media in #StopGalamsey

Maintaining and reproducing the common discourse on galamsey, the Media Coalition Against Galamsey considers the media as an important apparatus with the authority to demand change in administration of illegal mining activities. The coalition's gloomy construction of galamsey as an act of war on the state, a criminal enterprise, and a destructive force on the environment makes illegal mining a threat that must be forestalled. As such, media involvement cannot be undermined because the media are avenues for mobilization, sensitization, education and visibility. It is in the spirit of such perilous construction that the coalition deems media's role as necessary to resolving and ending galamsey. The coalition frames the media's role, first, as a constitutional mandate to hold leadership accountable and a guarantee for ensuring press freedom and freedom of expression; second, the coalition's function is to educate the public and provide information about the ills of galamsey; and third, MCAG functions as a mediator between citizens and stakeholders or duty bearers and serve as an avenue for their engagement.

3.5.1 Media Mandate: A Matter of the Constitution

The constitution assigns roles, powers and provides fundamental principles by which state institutions exercise their authority. In the case of the media, the constitution assigns them

45

the right to freedom, independence (autonomy) and freedom of expression, allows for media pluralism, divergent and dissenting views and mandates them to uphold the responsibility and accountability of government to the people of Ghana (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). These rights and responsibilities are described as establishing the media in Ghana as the fourth estate of the realm. The fourth estate consists not only of holding government accountable but possessing the autonomy to serve as check and balances on the other arms of government and also participating in policy formation, being a forum for debate and providing information for policy-making elites (Louw, 2010). Journalists ensure that government institutions and officials, civil/public servants are under media surveillance in the interest of the state and citizens. News media are seen as serving the interest of the public by representing and demanding strict accountability of officials to the people of Ghana. Thus, the media's role as watchdog is asserted: to expose any form of abuse of power and corruption.

> ...The Coalition was therefore formed to enable the media live up to its mandate as captured in Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, to hold leadership to accountable to the people (MCAG, Brief Profile/Strategic Plan).

Relying on the constitution to demand political accountability of office holders and to assert their watchdog role serves as a guarantee for the protection and safety of journalists, and provides legitimacy for its mandate and possibly justice for the citizens who are affected by galamsey menace. Legitimacy becomes an important element for the survival of the group and to boosting their authority to be able to engage with others, become visible, gain acceptability and become a 'forceful power' to reckon with. The history of media

46

silence, harassment, government interference, imprisonment, etc., which threatened media survival in Ghana, seem to haunt the coalition in its activities. Since the advocacy is geared towards exposing abuse of power, wrongdoing and corruption, demanding for accountability, the news media are aware of the antagonism that will develop from their advocacy. Therefore, it is not coincidental that the coalition lists the threat to personal security of journalists as one of the challenges the media industry faced in investigating and reporting on galamsey in the past.

> These actions have along the way, had to be abandoned due to challenging factors especially in the media industry such as lack of logistics to carry out adequate advocacy and education as well as the threat to personal security on the part of the frontliners (MCAG, Brief Profile/Strategic Plan).

While security challenges place a serious indictment on Ghanaian media freedom and rule of law, lack of logistics raises concerns about the capacity of journalists to reach remote areas where galamsey activities take place. These limitations hinder journalists' investigative prowess and their ability to cover stories about mining activities. Illegal possession of weapons by foreign and indigenous galamsey operators makes galamsey sites dangerous for journalist who do not have any protection from the state. Galamsey operators use weaponry in their operations to protect themselves and also ward off any potential attacks. Hence this advocacy does not only seek to bring about change in the mining industry but it is an avenue for the coalition to insist on the recognition of their mandate, demand legitimacy and protection and assert their political function. Thus, there is the instrumentalization of galamsey to foreground media significance as stipulated by the constitution. It is a means for the Ghanaian media to assert its position as a fourth estate

47

who have the special privilege to scrutinize and evaluate the activities of the three arms of government and enjoy autonomy. Galamsey provides the coalition the visibility to demand change in the attitude of government towards journalism and recognize the media's constitutional mandate.

Staying true to its watchdog role, the coalition employs the "name and shame" strategy to expose perpetrators. The coalition urges journalist to constantly track all persons or institutions responsible for either oversight of mining activities, implementing mining policies or enforcing laws. Identifying one of the core factors in the proliferation of galamsey activities, the coalition "believes that galamsey is as a result of system and leadership failure…" Consequently, government and stakeholders should be monitored and criticized for the non-enforcement of mining laws, complacency and corruption. Exposing the relevant authorities' failure to ensure the sanctioning of the law casts them in light of shirking their responsibilities. Abuse of office and impunity are conditions which allow galamsey to thrive in the full glare of authorities. As a result, naming and shaming is an effective measure for getting leaders and the system to work effectively.

 In a Facebook post and a press statement, specific officers like the District Chief Executive (DCE)[17] and Forestry Commission are called out for refusing to take action against illicit mining practices and being complicit in the galamsey.

---

[17] DCE-District Chief Executive, MCE-Municipal Chief Executive: —a nonprofessional bureaucrat with political overlapping functions to perform the political, executive, and administrative functions of the DA (see Debrah, E. (2016), Decentralization, District Chief Executives, and District Assemblies in Ghana's Fourth Republic).

> What is the DCE/MCE in charge of the area around Prestea doing? As you enter the town, you clearly see Galamseyers at work. #StopGalamsey (MCAG, Facebook)

> The leadership of the Forestry Commission have been accused of complicity in engaging in illegal mining under the pretext of reclaiming degraded lands. The Forestry Commission issued a press release on the 24th of July 2018 alluding to abuse of reclamation permits, and some unscrupulous persons resorting to selling copies of the permits to foreign nationals, with these persons claiming to have been given permits by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Forestry Commission to reclaim degraded lands while they engaged in illegal mining. All the Forestry Commission did was to suspend the reclamation permits (MCAG, The Role of the Media).

The Forestry Commission[18] a leading institution with oversight of forest reserves in Ghana is indicted with corrupt practices and falsity. Thus, the institution under the pretext of restoring lands destroyed by galamsey operators further to perpetuate this illegality through connivance of officials infringing on the very laws that established this institution. Falsifying documents to circumvent the system and the inability to punish offenders is called out as an act of impunity which needs to be addressed.

The coalition establishes a sense of obligation towards its legal mandate to hold government accountable by exposing galamsey activities and lack of enforcement of mining laws. Those involved in such activities are recalcitrant who must be punished according to the law. Thus, galamsey, as the group states, threatens not just the security of

---

[18] The Forestry Commission of Ghana is responsible for the regulation of utilization of forest and wildlife resources, the conservation and management of those resources and the coordination of policies related to them" (http://www.fcghana.org/page.php?page=46&section=22&typ=1).

the state but deliberately exposes the state to dangers detrimental to current development and future aspirations.

Further, the coalition expressed disappointment at the government's omission of the media's role in a road map rolled out to serve as a guide and government action plan for combating galamsey. The road map did not acknowledge the coalition nor media's role in educating and informing people. It called out the lapses in the document and the possible conflicting and overlapping roles of institutions who are either to execute an action or prosecute an offender. As much as the road map suggests the government's commitment and adds to the list of successes chalked by the coalition, the publication of the road map is considered a misplaced priority. MCAG described it as "putting the cart before the horse." They were concerned about the vagueness and ambiguity of the action plan and lack of clearly defined timelines for the plan to take effect. The critique of government action serves as an example of the media holding government accountable for its actions and policies.

Thus, the coalition envisions the fight as a noble and worthy enterprise for the sake of the state. Accountability foregrounds the coalition's effort to drive home the point about their watchdog role which puts office holders under media surveillance and ensures checks and balances. They resort to the constitution as providing the legitimacy that empowers them to act without fear or favour and additionally shields them against powers that threaten the execution of their mandate. As such, the coalition recognizes its obligation towards the state, asserts its authority, defines their limitations and shows their commitment to the law.

50

3.5.2. Educational Function

The coalition identifies itself as educating and informing the public on the devastating effects of galamsey. The group's concern about providing information and educating citizens is centered on the destructive nature of galamsey to the state, environment, communities. They also seek to promote eradication of galamsey and sustainable mining as appropriate measures for preserving the environment. The coalition states that the role of the media in educating and informing the public on issues of national concern cannot be over-estimated" (MCAG, Press Statement) In addition, the coalition states that its job is to carry "out public education on the ills of illegal mining activities, advocacy with stakeholders to ensure the eradication of galamsey and to promote sustainable mining." The coalition, representing the media, places educational and informational functions as forms of empowering the public with knowledge that will lead to environmental preservation rather than exploitation that will affect the health of the people in areas where illegal mining occurs. Empowering people with information about the negative impact of illegal mining is a step towards inviting mining community members to partake in the galamsey debate and recognize that galamsey has a boomerang effect on mining communities. Similarly, making people aware of the hazards instigates a sense of ownership of the fight against galamsey and propel a collective action to end galamsey. By this the coalition shapes community or public opinion in light of its adverse effect creating a momentum of resistance towards illegal mining activities. By circulating information and educating communities, the coalition asserts itself as a guide to command common public action. Thus the coalition "functions as a social glue, constructing and holding together public opinion" (Louw, 2010).   To this, the convener of the coalition stated that "we need

51

to remind Ghanaians to stay as citizens and not spectators and bear in mind that just the cleaning up the Ankobra river alone will cost Ghana over $400 million." By contrasting citizenship and spectatorship, the coalition constructs citizenship as active participation in state affairs/welfare as against mere spectatorship. It is the duty of the media to investigate participation in citizens and awaken a renewed commitment of observers and co-opt them into becoming citizens. Such education by the coalition was limited to "galamsey endemic areas". Areas where galamsey activities are rampant and at its highest. They state that they shall hold

> Town hall meetings in selected districts in 8 galamsey endemic regions across the country in collaboration with the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE): to draw the attention of people living in the communities of the direct effects of galamsey on their Livelihood (MCAG, Brief Profile/Strategic Plan).

3.5.3. Media as a forum and mobilizing agent

MCAG presents itself as providing a forum for citizens and government (represented by state institutions) to dialogue and to rally support for the campaign. As a channel, the news media provide opportunities for the citizens and government to communicate effectively (Pippa, 2000). This function of the media is situated within the realm of the political since the news media mediate between citizens and government.

Labeled as community engagement, the fora organized by the coalition help make dialogue between state institutions and citizens possible through "stakeholder engagements, town hall meetings and editors' fora..." (MCAG). The dialogue creates an avenue for citizen participation in the debate on illegal mining. This exercise enables a collaborative effort to finding solution to and discourage the practice of galamsey. The

52

coalition through mobilization establishes collaboration with government through their declaration of support for the president's vision of "planting for food and jobs (MCAG, Strategic Plan) and partnership with government agencies. On the other hand, they seek to pressurize government to help combat galamsey and promote illegal mining. This presents a kind of relationship where the MCAG's commitment towards demanding government accountability is constrained. It is neither holistically or fully engaging government to critique, evaluate and access its actions on mining debate, nor is MCAG claiming unrelenting support for government. Hence, the advocacy is caught up in a web of negotiation between government and the coalition. The MCAG understanding that the onus lies on government to enforce the law has negotiated with government through collaboration to help curb illegal mining but at the same time be critical of government in order to act on behalf of the citizens as required by law.

For the coalition, the advocacy is an opportunity to educate citizens as well. The coalition as part of its achievements boasts of having successfully organized nineteen public engagements as part of its campaign activities. What this means is that coalition has created an avenue for national discussion to enable people air their views and engage with one another to help build a consensus and possibly avoid any potential further threat that the absence of such a forum may bring. The coalition identified 24 government institutions, departments and agencies to engage with community members (Ofosu-Peasah & Hiadzi, 2018). Establishing a link between ordinary citizens and government institutions allows for the exchange of expectations and ideas and also communicate issues of national interest, which is environmental preservation.

53

The goal of these engagements is to create understanding and make acceptance of the preservation of our environment and its resources a collective good rather than the selfish economic motives presented by galamsey. It also provides a forum for citizens in the areas where Galamsey is endemic to engage duty bearers to get their questions answered and put their grievances across (MCAG, For Immediate Release).

The coalition is not a neutral entity in their mediation role. Rather, they have a predetermined position that galamsey is not a legal means of survival and therefore must not be encouraged. The group's argument is seen as helping save the environment for posterity and this is in the national interest. Compromise and or negotiation is not solicited as appropriate for such engagement since that will undermine their advocacy. So even though a forum is an avenue for expressing multiple perspectives, the idea of national interest overshadows individual or minority concerns; therefore, the media as a civic forum become problematic. Through various strategies, MCAG seeks to make information available at different levels and ensure that different classes of people engage horizontally and vertically with one another. This strategy also helps MCAG to mobilize people for action, incite national interest and "stimulate community and institutional ownership of the sustained campaign against galamsey" (MCAG, For Immediate Release). MCAG considers this campaign to be for the national interest and therefore it should involve every citizen who cares enough about the survival of the nation.

3.6. Summary: Implications of the MCAG's Advocacy

The analysis reveals that, first, MCAG instrumentalizes galamsey to assert its position and negotiate its relationship with government in order to get government to recognize their constitutional mandate and privileges as the fourth estate. Due to the history of the media as important facilitators in the struggle for independence, this advocacy is an opportunity to assert their political and social functions as mandated by the constitution: as the fourth estate, a watchdog, civic forum/engagement (Pippa, 2000) and mobilization and education.

Also, it an avenue for the coalition/media to demand for legitimacy, recognition and inclusion in policy formulation. The coalition draws on the rule of law to negotiate for recognition and involvement in political processes, ie, to participate in decision making.

Additionally, the group's advocacy provides an opportunity to test their watchdog role by critiquing government for the lack of law enforcement and policy implementation, complicity and corrupt practices. By this, their allegiance to the citizens by acting on their behalf is reinforced. On the other hand, it calls into question what media objectivity and how media pluralism can in the absence of an alternative view benefit citizens in a democratic society. In this instance, MCAG, representing the media in Ghana, overshadows media pluralism or multiplicity creating a singular voice; thereby undermining a balanced and rich information in the debate about illegal mining. As such, media professionalism and objectivity is contested seeing that the issue of galamsey though is a law and order problem is also a morality issue, ie, what is wrong and right and good or bad. Hence, the absence of a holistic approach towards the debate about illegal mining in light of morality, though may seem justified, is an affront to media professionalism. It is also linked with small scale miners whether licensed or not. It thus renders the coalition's

55

argument as biased in favour of large mining companies whose activities also affect the environment. However, the openness of small scale miners' activities makes them prone to media scrutiny. Such targeted advocacy challenges the objectivity of the media.

As it has been established, if all Ghanaian media are involved in this campaign, then though there are many sources of information, there are no dissenting views. Consequently, this collective advocacy inhibits and stifles dissent. This is not to state that the destructive nature of illegal mining should be overlooked but it is to point out that media pluralism or multiplicity of sources may not necessarily always be an element of democracy or help provide rich and balanced information to citizens.

Second, impact of ownership on the coalition is minimal and almost zero. On a broader scale of the coalition's activities, collective action overrides individual interest of news media institutions largely because of the influence of association and professional bodies' influence. There is, on a higher level, difference in the aims and objectives of these associations and bodies which may consist of individual journalist participation like the Ghana Journalist Association and institutional level participation. While the analysis shows a sense of national solidarity and journalist-government collaboration, there is also the dimension of pressure placed on government to be forthcoming with enforcing the law and addressing the leadership crisis affecting the fight on galamsey activities.

Third, The coalition's invocation of the constitution presents tensions between legality and morality and the law as a construct of the people in the interest of the people as well as the law as an authority binding on all. While the coalition challenges the small scale mining law, it resorts to the instrument of the law to advocate against the illegality of galamsey.

56

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

4.1. Summary

This thesis examined how the Media Coalition Against Galamsey's anti-galamsey campaign help explain how the media conceptualizes their role. It examined the illegal mining campaign known as anti-galamsey in order to highlight the ways in which the coalition constructs its role in the fight against illegal mining. The thesis employed a historical approach of political economy of communication to explain the context within which news media evolved and operates. This approach helps to show the changes that has occurred in news media's role and journalist-politician relationships since the first establishment of a newspaper in Ghana and the various political regimes which have shaped the media. This approach, which emphasizes change, ownership, organization, power relations/interactions, is critical for unravelling the various political, social and economic discourses that intersect to constitute the foundational basis upon which the Media Coalition Against Galamsey advocates against illegal mining in Ghana. To be able to establish and explain how the media's role, through the discourses of the coalition, is constructed, media/journalist-politician relationships were analyzed. The news media's role in Ghana was explained using four of Louw's typology of journalist-politician relationship including media as a watchdog, fourth estate, lapdog and partisan journalism. It was found that Louw's typology of media/journalist-politician relationships are not distinct categories existing separating but are complicated by their coexistence. Thus, the role of the news media in Ghana in the current democratic dispensation constitutes serving as a lapdog and/or watchdog. The media are both supportive and adversarial. These

57

relationships and roles are impacted by media ownership systems which political economists emphasize affect production and reproduction as well as consumer choice.

The analysis shows that the Media Coalition Against Galamsey instrumentalizes galamsey in order to make other claims including to assert its position and to negotiate its relationship with government in order to get government to recognize the media's constitutional mandate and privileges as fourth estate and ultimately, fulfil its goal of ending galamsey. As such, the coalition uses the advocacy to demand media's inclusion, legitimacy and recognition in decision making processes. I argue that the history of news media's repression informs the actions and demands of the coalition to use this advocacy to assert its fourth estate role, which includes conducting checks and balances on the arms of government and civil organizations, serving as a mobilizing agent, educating the public and being a forum for debate. By identifying leadership and system failure as contributing factors which inhibit the eradication of galamsey, the coalition presents itself as holding government accountable and also, acting on behalf of the public. MCAG does not relent on criticizing stakeholders for their apathy towards the fight against illegal mining, lack of political will to enforce the law and corruption and complacency of government institution and their officials.

Similarly, the dark history of the media places them in a situation where they must ensure that such events do not reoccur. It is in the light of this that the coalition consistently invokes the 1992 constitution as an authority in order to demand for recognition as an independent entity with rights to freedom and the responsibility of evaluating and

58

critiquing the actions and inactions of those in power. It is also to assert this mandate and be acknowledged as an integral element for the proper functioning of the state. Due to the challenge of lack of enforcement and implementation of laws against illegal mining and a historical evidence of media repression, the constitution serves as a guarantee for media safety and freedom. It also provides legitimacy for media's fourth estate function.

Likewise, the coalition's emphasis on its political function relates to a nostalgia for journalists' participation in the struggle for independence. Thus, news media's involvement in matters relating to governance at the highest level is not new. This advocacy serves as an opportunity for the media to reclaim and remind government and the public about their importance in the political process.

This brings to bear the interplay of politics and market is an avenue for display of power. In the news media, market and politics interaction is organized around struggle over news and information since the person with power to control these has the power to govern. In light of the coalition's goal to see to it that galamsey is eradicated, issues of power and resources constraints the coalition's relationship with the government. It has been shown that the political history of Ghana reveals journalist-politician relationship has often been contentious and adversarial particularly in the case of government and private media relationships when private media coexist with public media. On the other, public news media has collaborated and supported governments. Hence, the coalition acting in the capacity of the media, is unable to exert its full adversarial role whether as a watchdog or fourth estate. It has to negotiate tactically to get government to act in the interest of the nation through partnerships with government agencies and support for the government's

59

vision of planting for food and jobs. Although the coalition is at the forefront of the anti-galamsey campaign, and therefore they seem to control the discourses on illegal mining, the efficiency of the anti-galamsey lies with government since they control the resources for law enforcement, policy formulation, prosecution of illegal miners, etc. Thus, government has the power and control, which affect the impact the advocacy has on the illegal mining campaign.

The case of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey presents a situation of a unified media, under a common umbrella, calling for the eradication of galamsey. The novelty of this unity and unanimous advocacy against illegal mining has implications on media ownership and professionalism. The advocacy suggests that the media's collective action inhibits and stifles dissent and alternative views; problematizes objectivity about illegal mining and media pluralism or multiplicity does not imply balanced and rich information. The multiplicity of news media organizations in Ghana presents diverse media-politician relationships including partisan journalism, watchdog, lapdog and fourth estate. However, under the umbrella of the Media Coalition Against Galamsey, such diversity is overshadowed when the coalition emphasizes the constitutional mandate of the media as the fourth estate. Fourth estate implies that news media act on behalf of citizens by holding leadership accountable. This implies that journalists must take a particular stance or position in order to fully commit to bringing government under media surveillance. In the discourse on illegal mining, the collective stance of the media is eradication of galamsey, leaving no room for differing views. The absence of alternative or dissenting views calls the coalition's objectivity into question. If objectivity is to be understood as a "balance of

60

expressing fairly positions on both sides of an argument" (Pippa, 2016), then the absence of alternative views undermine objectivity if journalists in their reporting do not present other arguments. With a collective voice and a common aim, citizens have no alternative source upon which to form judgements or make decisions. Though there is media pluralism and consequently diversity, this does not culminate into different views; there is only a single information about illegal mining as destructive and should not be allowed to continue.

It has also been shown that government's idea of national development means a full collaboration and unwavering support by the news media for the government and their policies. Although news media were regarded as developmental tool (and still is), I would argue that the government used the media to legitimize its power and maintain firm control over the citizens. The anti-galamsey campaign provides an opportunity for government and media to collaborate since the fight against galamsey is seen as a fight for national development. Again there are tensions arising from this collaboration based on the accusations of government functionaries as actively involved in galamsey activities.

The two types of media ownership, private and state owned media, since colonial times have coexisted in a checkered political atmosphere until 1992 when Ghana became a democratic country. MCAG does not only emphasize private-public media coexistence but reveals a higher level of unity and solidarity through the advocacy. However, while the private media have been seen to be adversarial towards government and may have a political leaning towards a political party, state or public media are often accused of supporting or accommodating the government in power. Though there hasn't been any

61

known animosity between state and private owned media, the history of the press in Ghana largely reflects both systems working separately and for the most part with the aim of demanding autonomy (freedom and independence). Largely, the advocacy is that instrument or means to make such demands and assert the constitutional mandate of the media being a fourth estate.

4.2. Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis has concentrated on some selections of discourses produced by the Media Coalition Against Galamsey to examine how they conceptualize media's role as a fourth estate in the fight against galamsey. Although journalists are responsible for carrying out their watchdog role, it is entirely not left to them alone, they need support from state institutions and a politically tolerant environment.

The following are suggested for future research:

- Future research can examine the level of media involvement in galamsey reporting prior to the formation of the coalition.

- Researchers can examine global influences on the discourses on resource extraction and their implication on countries with high incidence of illegal extraction activities.

- Researchers can investigate the larger contextual issues of colonialism and postcolonial land ownership to determine their impact on current mining activities.

References

Abissath, M. K. (n.d.) 'Operation Vanguard'—A timely saviour of our environment. Retrieved from http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/features/3966-operation-vanguard-a-timely-saviour-of-our-environment.

Adjei, S., Oladejo, N. K. & Adetunde, I. A. (2012). The impact and effect of illegal mining(galamsey) towards the socio-economic development of mining communities: A case study of Kenyasi in the Brong Ahafo Region. *International Journal of Modern Social Sciences, 1*(1), 38-55.

Afriyie, K., Ganle, J. K. & Adomako, J. A. A. (2016). The good in evil: a discourse analysis of the galamsey industry in Ghana, *Oxford Development Studies,* DOI: 10.1080/13600818.2016.1217984.

Alhassan, I. A. (2014). Galamsey and the Making of a Deep State in Ghana: Implications for National Security and Development. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 4*(16), 47-56.

Amoakohene, M. I. (2010). Ghana: Media and democracy in 50 years of independence. In Kobia Pupulampu & Wisdom J. Tettey (eds). *The Public Sphere and the Politics of Survival: voice, sustainability, and public policy in Ghana* (pp 21-37). Accra Woeli Pub. Services.

Andrews, N. (2015). Digging for Survival and/or Justice? The Drivers of Illegal Mining Activities in Western Ghana. *Africa Today 62*(2), 2-24. Indiana University Press. Retrieved August 27, 2018, from Project MUSE database.

Anokwa, K. (1997). Press performance under civilian and military regimes in Ghana: A

reassessment of past and present knowledge. *Press Freedom and Communication in Africa,* 1, 3-28.

Anyidoho, P. (2016). Ethnography of Print and Broadcast Media in Ghana. *Imperial Journal Of Interdisciplinary Research (IJIR)*, 2(7). 104-114. Retrieved from https://www.onlinejournal.in/IJIRV2I7/017.pdf.

Ansah, P. A. V. (1988). In search of a role for the African media in the democratic Process. *African Media Review 2*(2).1-16

Asante, C. (1996). The Ghana press in Ghana: Problems and prospects.New York: NY, University Press of America, Inc.

Bennett, W. L. (2016). *News: The politics of illusion* (10th ed.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Blay-Amihere, K. (2015). *I spoke for freedom*. Accra, Digibooks Ghana Ltd.

Cooper, M. M. (1996). Environmental rhetoric in the age of hegemonic politics: Earth First! and the Nature Conservancy. In Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (eds) *Green culture: environmental rhetoric in contemporary America Media (p 236-260).* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin

Cox, R. (2013). *Environmental communication and the public sphere* (3rd ed). London: Sage Publications Inc.

Chuhan-Pole, P., Dabalen, A. L., & Christopher, B. (2017). *Land Mining in Africa: Are local communities better off?* International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

Diedong, A. L. (2016). *Responsible Journalism and quest for professional standards in Ghana.* Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.

64

Hall, S. (1973). Encoding and decoding in the television discourse. Birmingham: Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Hasty, J. (2006). Performing power, composing culture: The state press in Ghana. *Ethnography, 7*(1): 69–98 doi: 10.1177/1466138106064591.

Hasty, J. (2005). *The press and political culture in Ghana.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Jensen, K. B. (ed). (2012). A handbook of media and communication research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies (2nd ed). London & New York, NY: Routledge.

Jones-Quartey, K. A. B. (1975). *History, politics and early press in Ghana: The fictions and the facts.* Accra: Assembly Press Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Jones-Quartey, K.A.B. (1974). A summary history of the Ghana Press, 1822-1960.

Kakari, K. (2007). Overview: African media since Ghana's independence. In Elizabeth Barratt & Guy, B. (Eds), *50 Years of Journalism: African Media Since Ghana's Independence* (pp 9-20). South Africa: The African Editors' Forum, Highway Africa and Media Foundation for West Africa.

Lahiri-Dutt, K. (2004). Informality in mineral resource management in Asia: Raising questions relating to community economies and sustainable development. *Natural Resources Forum* 28 123–132.

Louw, E. (2010). *The media and political process* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Media Ownership Monitor Ghana (n. d.). Political affiliation. Retrieved from https://ghana.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/political-affiliations/

Media Ownership Monitor Ghana (n. d.). Media consumption in Ghana. Retrieved from http://ghana.mom-rsf.org/en/media/

65

McChesney, R. W. (2008). *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

McQuilken, J. & Hilson, G. (2016). *Artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Ghana Evidence to inform an 'action dialogue'.* Country report. London. IIED.

Mosco, V. (2009). The Political Economy of Communication. Sage Publications

MCAG. (2018,). Multulateral Mining Integrated Project (MMIP). Retrieved from http://www.stopgalamsey.com/project/stop-galamsey-now/issues/29/

MCAG. (n. d.). Brief Profile/Strategic Plan: Media Coalition Against Galamsey.

MCAG. (n. d.). For immediate Release: Media Coalition Set to engage on the ills of Galamsey.

MCAG. (n. d.). Press Statemenr: The Role of the Media in the Fight against Illegal Mining Activities. Retrieved from http://www.stopgalamsey.com/project/stop-galamsey-now/issues/44/

MCAG. (n. d.). What You need to Know about the Media Coalition Against Galamsey. Retrieved from http://www.stopgalamsey.com/articles/71/

MCAG. (2018, September 6). https://www.facebook.com/Media-Coalition-Against-Galamsey-1790563404293951/?fref=mentions

MCAG. Retrieved from http://www.stopgalamsey.com/project/stop-galamsey-now/

MyJoyOnline TV (2017, April 4). Stop galamsey! Media Coalition launches campaign to

end illegal mining. Retrieved from

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ww38OywDHE

National Communication Authority (NCA), (2018). Our contributions in 2018 towards

Ghana's Digital Agenda. Accra: NCA.

NCA.https://www.nca.org.gh/assets/Uploads/Key-NCA-Projects-2018.pdf

NCA https://www.nca.org.gh/industry-data-2/authorisations-2/fm-authorisation-2/

NCA https://www.nca.org.gh/industry-data-2/authorisations-2/tv-authorisation-2/

National Media Commission (NMC). (2017). Medium Term Expenditure Framework for

2018-2021: Programme Based Budget Estimate for 2018. Accra: NMC. Retrieved

from https://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/pbb-estimates/2018/2018-PBB-

NMC.pdf

Obi, C. I. (2005). *Environmental Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa Apolitical Ecology of*

Power and conflict. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social

Development.

Ofosu-Mensah, E. A. (2011). Historical overview of traditional and modern gold mining

in Ghana. *International Research Journal of Library, Information and Archival*

Studies, 1(1) 006-022, Retrieved from http://www.interesjournals.org/IRJLIAS.

Ofosu-Peasah, G. & Hiadzi, G. (2018, August 22). Are duty bearers supporting the fight

against galamsey? Retrieved from http://www.stopgalamsey.com/project/stop-

galamsey-now/articles/76/

Ojomo, P. A. (2011). Environmental ethics: An African Understanding. *Journal of*

environmental   science and technology 5(8), 572-578.

Osafo, B. (2016). Colonial Origin of Press-Regulatory Laws in Ghana, 1857 – 1957,

International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2(4), 866-883.

Pippa, N. (2000). *A virtuous circle: Political communication in postindustrial societies.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Republic of Ghana (1992). *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Shardow, M. S. & Asare, B. E. (2016). Media Ownership and independence: Implication for democratic governance in the fourth republic of Ghana. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies, 9*(9), 179-198.

Sodjah, D. (2017 August 02). Government deploys 400 security personnel to fight galamsey. Retrieved from http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/news/3884-government-deploys-400-security-personnel-to-fight-galamsey?highlight=WyJvcGVyYXRpb24iLCInb3BlcmF0aW9uIiwidmFuZ3Vhc mQiLCJ2YW5ndWFyZCciLCJvcGVyYXRpb24gdmFuZ3VhcmQiXQ==.

Straubhaar, J., Larose, R. Davenport, L. (2012). *Media now: Understanding media, culture, and technology (7th ed).* USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

STAR Ghana Foundation. Our history. Retrieved from http://www.star-ghana.org/index.php/about-star-ghana/our-history

Wasko, J. (2005). Studying the political economy of media and information. Comunicacao e Sociedade, 7, 25-48.

World Bank & International Finance Corporation (IFC). (2003). *Mining Development: Mining Reform and the World Bank Providing a Policy Framework for Development.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Yakovleva, N. (2007). Perspectives on female participation in artisanal and small-scale mining: A case study of Birim North District of Ghana Resources Policy. *Elsevier, 32,* 29–41.