

# Politics and Development Pathway Dynamics of Ghana's Fourth Republic, 1992-2023

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## Abstract

This paper analysed the politics of the development trajectory of the Fourth Republic of Ghana. The political economy of development planning posits that every development decision is a political decision. The impact reality of politics and development policies on Ghana's economy of the Fourth Republic which began in 1992, thus underpins the analytical relevance of the paper. Informed by the emerging political and economic crises in the country, the discussion is situated within the context of the theoretical framework of political rationalisation. Employing desktop study design, we draw mainly on textual data from multiple data sources. The results of the analysis and discussions revealed that the problem of Ghana's socioeconomic issue is leadership failure. Also, the nature of the political democracy in Ghana, in particular, the "winner-takes-all syndrome" coupled with massive corruption and political vendetta is the crust of the matter confronting the pace of the country's development. It concludes that the country's fragile democracy may be further jeopardised if not managed with circumspection. Based on this conclusion, we developed an agenda for the future to avoid the pitfalls of the recent past. There is also the need for an entrenched clause for national development in the constitution to bind successive governments for the continuity of state ongoing projects. Finally, development-planning process should be widened to allow for broader political and economic participation in governance.

## Keywords

Development, Politics, Leadership, Democracy, Economy, Ghana

## 1. Introduction

Development is a complex issue with several pathways, varied conceptualizations,

and sometimes contentious. A basic perspective equates development with economic growth. Broadly, development leads to long and healthy lives by being knowledgeable, having access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and being able to participate in the community's life (Thomas, 2004; Chukwu & Eziakor, 1989). Achieving human development is linked to a third perspective of development which views it as freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to develop their own lives and communities (Hickey & Mohan, 2003). Development is about local people taking control of their lives, expressing their demands, and finding solutions to their problems. Development just like politics has no universally accepted definition. Miller (1987: p. 390) said, "Politics presupposes a diversity of views, if not about ultimate aims at least the best ways of achieving them." Also, Leftwich (1984: p. 64-65) argues that "politics comprises all the activities of co-operation and conflict, within and between societies, whereby the human species goes about organizing the use, production, and distribution of human, natural and other resources in the production and reproduction of its biological and social life."

In society, politics determines how society makes choices about how people live together, how competing interests are mediated, and how available resources are allocated. Politics touches many aspects of people's lives, not only through government but also in areas of co-operation, collective action, and the provision of public goods. This is just as relevant at the household level in relations between men and women as it is at the national level among politicians (Gore, 2000; Thomas, 2004). Politics transcends all aspects of life spanning from the household level to the national level, and therefore makes it impossible to engage in development without engaging in politics. Politics in this sense refers to the management of the affairs of the city-state or what concerns the state (Aristotle, 1996; Heywood, 2007). Man's desire in society conflicts with those of another. The relations of the individual members of society with one another, therefore, need regulation by the government. When we observe life in society, we cannot fail to be struck by two facts: as a rule, every person desires to have his or her own way, to think and act as he or she likes; and at the same time everyone cannot have his or her way because he or she lives in society (Appadorai, 2004; Adesina et al., 2006; Heywood, 2007).

Moreover, when a body of people is clearly organized as a unit for the purpose of government, then it is said to be politically organized and may be called a body politic or state (a society politically organized). The essence of such a society is that a group of people called the government are clothed with authority to make laws and enforce them; they claim obedience from the members of the society whom they govern. Politics then deals with the state or political society organized within a definite territory (Hickey & Mohan, 2003). Politics in this sense, therefore, has two main subdivisions: political theory and political organization (Appadorai, 2004). Politics is concerned primarily with the purpose(s) that man proposes to himself as a moral being, living in association with other moral beings. It

thus, concerns the formulation of the ends and limits of state authority (Nyerere, 1974; Gore, 2000; Thomas, 2004).

Ghana transitioned to democratic and constitutional governance for the fourth time on 7 January 1993, following the promulgation of the 1992 Fourth Republic Constitution of Ghana, and the conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections the same year. Thus, the first government of the Fourth Republic was inaugurated on 7 January 1993. Government is the instrument by ends of which the purpose of the state is realized. Development and political interface should naturally include an analysis of government and its workings (Gore, 2000; Thomas, 2004), and this is the subject matter that underpins the relevance and analytical framework of this discussion. In a democratic system, politicians have different visions they seek to achieve as they vie for political or public office so, they have their supporters. They do not all think alike or share the same vision. This makes the whole “process political”. The politics at the national level is not diametrically different from the one that takes place at the sub-state or local government level. Based on this, politics can be classified into macro and micro-politics (Hickey & Mohan, 2003; Heywood, 2007). The macro-politics take place at the state level, while micro-politics take place at the sub-state levels such as the district, and unit committee/community levels. In this paper, we focus on politics at the national level and how governments’ policies and practices influence Ghana’s socio-economic development. The quest for socio-economic development is most desirable as political leaders were trapped in a dilemma of choosing between the endogenous agenda which they could not find the means to implement and an exogenous agenda which they could not bring themselves to accept, between what they wanted to do and what they must do (Ake, 2001). What accounts for this conundrum in Ghana under the Fourth Republic? The rest of the paper is organized as follows: The next section after the introduction is the methodology. Section three is the theoretical framework of analysis. Section four is the results of the analysis and discussion, and this is followed by the conclusion, policy recommendations, and references.

## 2. Methodology

This paper employed a desk-based research design and interview data from a few participants. We draw data for analysis and discussion from multiple data sources. The analysis began with the review of policy documents on democracy, politics, and development in Ghana from academic journals and papers, published books, policy reports, and relevant documents explaining politics and development under Ghana’s Fourth Republican democratic dispensation. We also relied on the data provided by some political actors we conducted interviews with. These participants included Coordinating Directors, officers from the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), District Chief Executives, and some Members of Parliaments. The aim of the review of the literature and policy documents was to identify gaps in scholarly debate and discussions on

politics and development interventions during the period under study. Consequently, the information gathered from the earlier works and the relevant documents was used to establish the theoretical and empirical connections of politics and development pathways dynamics under the Fourth Republic of Ghana, 1992-2023.

### 3. Theoretical Basis

The discussion in the paper is situated within the context of the theoretical framework of political rationalization by Weber (1922). Others such as Riggs' (1964), the concept of differentiated societies, and Parsons (1944)'s pattern variables are all important concepts considered in this paper. This theoretical framework is used because the lack of strong bureaucratic systems allows politics to influence the nature of our development policies. So, this theory is also interested in the general issues of why institutions in the Western world had grown progressively more rational, while powerful barriers seemed to prevent a similar development in the rest of the world especially Africa, and Ghana in particular. Weber developed his theory in the context of a large number of comparative historical studies of the West and other regions of the world. We are interested in a rational-legal authority system of governance out of the three types he espoused. This is because it is only in the modern Western world that we have a rational legal authority system, and only within that system can one find the full-scale development of modern bureaucracy. The rest of the world according to Weber remains dominated by traditional and charismatic authority systems, which generally impedes the development of a rational-legal authority system and modern bureaucracies. Even though today a majority of nations have espoused rational-legal authority systems and Ghana is no exception, the full-scale modern bureaucracy is yet to be attained thereby, depicting some of her characteristic features as that of the traditional authority system that Weber attributed to the rest of the world. This is because nepotism and cronyism in the governance system are just too much. These features are indeed strong pillars fostering political expediency. Rational-legal authority system calls for complete functional autonomy of institutions, and the authority does not pay lip service to the doctrines of the separation of powers. In differentiated societies, Riggs (1964) described a rational-legal authority system of polity as follows:

“Political leaders are reluctant to interfere with judges’ legal decisions, and do so very seldom...indeed, political doctrines have been established in many of these societies asserting the separation of church and state, the distinction between the privy purse and public revenues, the independence of the judiciary, private property rights, academic freedom and independence of the universities, freedom of the press and so forth.”

Talcott Parson’s pattern of variables and differentiation explains the economic and political rationality of industrializing societies like Ghana. The process of so-

cial change that accompanied industrialization can be characterized in terms of shifts in the prevailing choices, which are made of the five pattern variables. Rational industrialization involves a shift from “affectivity to affective neutrality; from particularism to universalism; from ascription to achievement; collectivism-individualism and from diffuseness to specificity”. Affective neutrality is shown when the actor, for that matter the state postpones or renounces immediate gratifications and this relates to capital formation in industrialising societies, which involves decisions to save and invest rather than expend resources on current frivolous consumption. Particularism is inefficient and leads to an under-utilization of resources. Indeed, the most highly industrialized societies, whether capitalist or communist, are those in which universalistic patterns prevail and careers are open to talents. In the same way, achievement rather than ascription tends to be the basis for recruitment in a fully industrialized society. People in less industrialized societies indulge in cronyism, recruit workers, or admit pupils based on kinship, which is regarded as nepotism. In the foregoing scheme of events, the ideas elucidated by various authorities are used to guide the analysis and discussions in this paper.

## 4. Analysis and Discussions

### 4.1. Current Political Dispensation in Ghana

Ghana attained political independence on 6 March 1957, though not an end in itself, but a means to an end (Okonjo, 1989). The country has for the past 30 years enjoyed relative peace and political stability beginning in 1993, after 27 years of intermittent coups and counter coups resulting in political instability between 1966 and 1992.

Generally, since the coming into force of the 1992 Constitution, the nation Ghana has traversed a path decently created by citizens to always select leading members to steer the affairs of the nation for all. The country witnessed three changes of government with smooth transitions from one leader to the other in 2000, 2008, and 2016 following presidential and parliamentary election outcomes. In a few instances of electoral misunderstanding, the court had been the deciding factor no matter how tumultuous the political situation has been. For eight different elections witnessed beginning in 1992, the political conditions have been the same in the country generally, except for a few pockets of violence registered in the countryside periodically (Bodea & Elbadawi, 2008; Bob-Milliar, 2014; Bekoe, 2019; Aning, 2021). The issue of bigwigs crisscrossing between political divides has been the norm. What troubles the minds of many according to data is the development trends and body politics. Many Ghanaians have expressed their misgivings about the heinous threats that are being issued by political leadership into whose hands the innocent youth of today have been entrusted. Threats such as “All Die Be Die”, “Ghana will turn to Kenya”, “Win or Die 2024”, “Boot for Boot”, and several other secret tapes purported to have been produced by opposition

parties containing these heinous threats targeting innocent citizens have faced the bluff of many Ghanaians. In this regard, a rational-legal system of governance is thrown to the dogs. It is alleged in certain quarters that there have been “political moles” in the various political parties in Ghana. These “moles” are political insiders, well embedded in the party, for reasons other than selfish gain might be the only motivation factor for them to shoot their party in the foot by leaking the party’s vital information to their opponents. This phenomenon is normal in modern democracy.

Arguably, the reason sometimes for this is “the within party”’s winner-takes-all dynamics’ in the Ghanaian body politics. So, all the threats that have been issued in the past in the political landscape by the opposition parties’ leadership on campaign platforms and audios and are still being issued by the same categories today are largely because of one thing; the effects of “Winner-Takes-All” in the Ghanaian politics.

#### 4.2. Political Violence in Ghana

There have been intra-party and inter-party disturbances in Ghana all the time and sometimes they degenerate into fierce violence. All political violence mostly occurs during party congresses to elect party leadership or during bye-elections during which time the social environment becomes more pressurized or overwhelmed as every party apparatchik is socially present to make sure that his or her candidate wins the election. This has contributed significantly to the occurrence of violence in these two situations. Also, the intra-party feuds have dire consequences to the party, and their resolution in the long-run is always problematic, especially if it is allowed to fester deeply. Another important feature relating to electoral violence in general is the existence of party vigilantism. Each party in this country had at one point in time recruited party thugs forced to terrorize opponents during electoral activities. The members sometimes are faceless individuals who engage in this atrocious act of vandalism. On this issue of political vigilantism, the various political parties are guilty under the circumstances. The Bamba boys, the Azorka boys, the Invisible Forces, and the Delta Force are among various vigilante groups of political parties in Ghana. As the data have revealed, the activities of these party terrorist groups are not widespread (Tonah, 2007; Aning, 2021). They are limited to some specific areas known to be the strongholds of various political parties. Training of vigilante groups to snatch ballot boxes during national elections and attack political opponents after the declaration of electoral results are all matters of public concern (Botha, 2015; Aning, 2021).

Generally, there have been incessant agitations between parties in opposition and the electoral commission of Ghana. Both the two major parties New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in opposition have had the worst view of the electoral commission, but when in power they see things differently. This kind of agitations against the electoral commission fuels the elec-

toral violence as party's supporters' mindset have been activated into thinking that the commission would at the end of the day do anything possible to favour the ruling government when the polls are conducted. Every opposition party thinks that the electoral commission is in bed with the ruling party in Ghana. That is, in recent times the opposition NDC party has suggested some electoral reforms to the effect that, the electoral commissioner in the future should be appointed subject to parliamentary approval among others.

### 4.3. Political Partisanship in Ghana

In Ghanaian public workplaces nationwide, partisanship “sweeps” through all the structures of society, “who you know” syndrome comes first before experience of job and paper qualification, thereby denying career to open to talent. It will not be surprised to find that there are very many “square pegs” in round holes across all the ministries, departments and agencies in our beloved nation called Ghana, all in the name of politics. Corruption by public officials today is an “eye-saw”, whereas else where it is a disease, it is considered a new normal in Ghana for one to be involved in corrupt acts because of the polarized nature of the political system. It is often observed as a practice in Ghana that, only areas where “by-elections” are supposed to be held hastily see development projects and programs taking effect timely even if this is not captured in the national development planning. “Jobs for the boys” so popularly called, is often created purposely to satisfy a certain political wing for political perpetuity. Some verbal reports have it that, there are some tertiary institutions and organisations in Ghana, where admissions and employment opportunities are the preserved for the supporters of the ruling government and sympathizers of a particular royal sect (nepotism), a deliberate hidden policy to prepare grounds for political perpetuity. The “winner takes all syndrome” has often been used to facilitate the agenda for political perpetuity. The minority is often told by the majority to “have their say, and they will have their way”, political and economic governance has become the slogan that has characterized all the political regimes in Ghana. The worry now is that the cumulative effect of all these issues raised or as entities on their own, could lead to serious political jeopardy in future if nothing else is done now to avert the situation. Partisanship in Ghanaian society today has found its way into every facet of life with little can do spirit, every issue in Ghana today has become a political issue, e.g., chieftaincy, religion, including national events such as sports, the Independence Day celebration, state of the nation's addresses and other legally recommended public holidays. Gerrymandering of political land space and alleged manipulations of electoral results by electoral stakeholders are loud in public domain. The question today confronting the Ghanaian is what is the political and economic future of Ghana?

### 4.4. Ghana's Development Pathways and Their Problems

Ghana has also become a political beacon, as it is known in Africa, but still, strug-

gling to put in place appropriate mechanisms to enhance peoples' welfare because of political rhetoric and vile propaganda. It was expected that, having emancipated from the political tutelage of the colonial power, plans for social and economic development could be taken more forcefully in hand. However, Ghana as a nation is still on the bewilderment. Careful assessment suggests that the nation is on a dangerous political path, which can plunge the nation into political suicide if immediate intervention is not sought. This is because the country development path is anchored in party manifestoes. Thus, schematic analysis of this model of development under the Ghana's Fourth Republican constitutional rule worth consideration. The manifestoes and economies of the various governments of the period under analysis are indicated in **Table 1** below.

Based on the table above, Ghana is on party manifestoes development trajectory. Since the dawn of the Fourth Republic a number of development policies have been introduced in the country, all with the hope to improve the socio-economic well-being of the Ghanaian. These include social and economic policies, which hitherto were merely sloganeering. Arguably, those policies formulated and implemented in Ghana by successive governments are policies formulated to induce Ghanaians for political perpetuity. Thus, development interventions or paths of the country since the dawn of this Fourth Republic are as follows. First, Vision 2020 development plan was formulated in 1995 (1995-2020). From the year 2001 onwards, a number of policy frameworks and interventions are introduced in Ghana by successive governments with the view to reducing hardships of the masses and to improve welfare. The key to the policy framework poverty reduction strategy I and II (between 2001 and 2008). There were other policy frameworks such as An Agenda for Shared Growth and Accelerated Development for a Better Ghana I and II (between 2009 and 2016), and Ghana's beyond Aid beyond (for the period 2017-2024).

Successive governments have introduced various social interventions such as, youth employment, National Health Insurance, Free Senior High, among others to propel economic growth, but the story of our development trajectory remains the same, as a result of over politicizations and vile propaganda in our body polity. Even though many of these social interventions which more or less got stranded and abused somewhere along the line, have nevertheless continued to survive. Ghana as a nation is not poor, but a poorly managed country. Affectivity-affective neutrality idea lacks here. The frivolous spending and limited investment in the Ghanaian economy point to poor management. This issue is discussed severally in the media and various other platforms by civil society organisations (CSOs), academics, technocrats and the public at large. The reality is that; Ghana is endowed with abundant natural resources to make its citizens have their well-fare guaranteed. Ghana is the leading producer of gold in Africa and second producer of cocoa beans. Ghana also produces crude oil in commercial quantity, bauxite, manganese, timber, diamond among others. With all these resources in place, majority of Ghanaians still wallow in poverty. The right

**Table 1.** Ghana's development paths.

Government	Years	Party Manifesto Agendas	Development Path
Rawlings I	1993-2000	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b> Continuity &amp; Stability</p> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Economy.</li> <li>• The Social Contract.</li> <li>• Mind Body &amp; Spirit.</li> <li>• Security.</li> <li>• Ghana and the World.</li> </ul>	Vision 2020
Rawlings II	1997-2000	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b> Always for people, always for development</p> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Economy.</li> <li>• The Social Contract.</li> <li>• Mind Body &amp; Spirit.</li> <li>• Security.</li> <li>• Ghana and the World.</li> </ul>	Vision 2020
Kufuor I	2001-2004	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b> Agenda for Positive Change I</p> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Change Now.</li> <li>• The Economy: Building Prosperity for all.</li> <li>• The NPP's Policies for Selected Areas of the Economy.</li> <li>• Developing and Managing Human Resources.</li> <li>• Ghana and the world.</li> </ul>	Poverty Reduction Strategy I
Kufuor II	2005-2008	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b> Agenda for Positive Change II</p> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievements.</li> <li>• The Economy: Building Prosperity for All.</li> <li>• The NPP's Policies for Selected Areas of the Economy.</li> <li>• Developing and Managing Human Resources.</li> <li>• Ghana and the World.</li> </ul>	Poverty Reduction Strategy II
Mills	2009-2012	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b> • A Better Ghana Agenda</p> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance.</li> <li>• Economy.</li> <li>• Investing in People.</li> <li>• Infrastructure for Growth.</li> </ul>	An Agenda for Shared Growth and Accelerated Development for a Better Ghana I
Mahama	2013-2016	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b> • Advancing the Better Ghana Agenda</p> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting people first.</li> <li>• A Strong and Resilient Economy.</li> <li>• Expanding Infrastructure.</li> <li>• Transparent and Accountable Governance.</li> </ul>	An Agenda for Shared Growth and Accelerated Development for a Better Ghana II

Continued

Nana Addo I	2017-2020	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda for Jobs</li> </ul> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Strong Economy Matters</li> <li>• Trade and Industry</li> <li>• Energy and Petroleum</li> <li>• Agriculture and Rural Development</li> <li>• Growing Together</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Natural Resources: Land, Forestry and Mining</li> <li>• Science, Technology, Innovation and Environment</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Social Development</li> <li>• Governance, Corruption and Public Accountability</li> <li>• Local Government</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• Youth and Sports</li> <li>• Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts</li> <li>• Chieftaincy, Religious Affairs and Civil Society</li> </ul>	Ghana Beyond beyond Aid I
Nana Addo II	2021-date	<p><b>Manifesto Theme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>LEADERSHIP OF SERVICE:</b> Protecting Our Progress, Transforming Ghana for All</li> </ul> <p><b>Manifesto Highlights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting for our stewardship</li> <li>• Cleaning up the Financial Services Sector Mess</li> <li>• A Government Machinery That Works/Digitising Government Services</li> <li>• Trade and Industry</li> <li>• Energy and Petroleum</li> <li>• Agriculture and Rural Development</li> <li>• Growing Together</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Natural Resources—Land, Forestry and Mining</li> <li>• Science, Technology, Innovation and Environment</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Social Development</li> <li>• Governance, Corruption and Public Accountability</li> <li>• Local Government</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• Youth and Sports</li> <li>• Tourism, Chieftaincy, Culture and Creative Arts</li> </ul>	Ghana Beyond Aid II

Source: Authors' Construct based on party Manifestos, 2023.

calibre of management to harness these resources to benefit majority of Ghanaians is lacking. Economic development plans and policies like vision 2020 and pov-

erty reduction strategies have been all formulated, but these plans were not adhered, and those that implemented are not achieving targets. For instance, the [National Development Planning Commission \(2014\)](#) opined that the key national development issues to be addressed over the medium term in order to sustain gains made during the implementation of the Ghana share growth and development agenda (GSGDA) II, 2014-2017 includes.

1) Large fiscal and current account deficits, which has become cyclical; Inefficiency in the use and management of public funds and other public resource; 2) The low growth of agricultural sector, which employs some 45 percent of the country's labour force; 3) Weak linkages between agriculture and industry; slow pace of job creation and the persistence of graduate unemployment as a critical socio-economic issue; 4) Slow progress in addressing issues of sanitation and the provision of social housing; 5) Low application of science, technology and innovation among others were key national development issues to be addressed prior to 2017; none of them was achieved according to their own estimates.

On the basis of this [Benneh \(1987\)](#) has this to say:

“One of the reasons for the crisis in development is that policies have been formulated on incomplete knowledge of the existing situation. Several decades after Stolpher's book, planning without facts, this situation has not much improved.” As Onyemelukwe and Mabogunye have observed: “Our problem about the development planning is that the sufferings of the poor are heard or read, but hardly ever observed or experienced by those well placed to bring the badly needed change. Thus, short of comprehensive evaluative studies that can provide the requisite information especially in terms of the location specifics of problems and social injustices, it would be in the best interest of the nation if part of the pre-plan and pre-implementation exercises of the officials involved, includes period of participant observation especially in those ecologically most trying parts of the country.

Coming from another angle to profess our development problems, the multilateral institutions of the World Bank and the IMF have consistently maintained that the persistent economic backwardness and the current economic crisis of the poor countries are due purely to internal factors. Various World Bank papers have identified such disabling factors as corruption, human rights violations, economic mismanagement, and the absence of democracy and institutional inefficiency, marginalization of women and lack of popular participation in development” ([IMF, 2004](#)).

The structure of the national economy of Ghana reflects the structural picture of a third-world economy. It is characterized by raw material export, capital import, and the importation of large quantities of finished goods mainly food, absence of heavy industry, undeveloped light industry, foreign capital dominated, extractive industry, and peasant economy involving about 70 percent (on the average) of the sub-Saharan African (SSA) population ([Asamoah, 2001](#)). A country

of this status would need a comprehensive and entrenched national development plan for all regimes instead of the manifesto-development plans that every political party comes out with. Also, a paradigm shift policy is necessary to move from particularism to universalism since well-developed economies in the world have adopted the universalistic pattern of development (Parsons, 1951).

#### 4.5. The Downside of Socioeconomic Expectations in Ghana

The problems facing the country are multi-faceted affecting the very basic mainstay of the economy. The agricultural sector for instance has not been in good shape for some time now, despite the glamorous policy of planting for food and jobs. The importation of rice into Ghana takes a huge toll on our national revenue (Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), 2017). Hundreds of millions of dollars spent on the importation of rice alone from Europe and Asia on yearly basis since at the turn of the millennium, helping more job creation for foreigners in their own soil, whilst same job creation could be possible on our own, if right buttons pressed. With a very large arable land, that nature has endowed Ghana is enough to produce more food for export, not to import if collective ideas are considered and proper checks and balances adhered. Common tomatoes are at all-time imported from the neighbouring Burkina Faso, a land lock area. Attempts have been made on several time periods by successive governments to rigorously sustain the cultivation of this crop in this country without success, due to the lack of political commitment.

As common knowledge as it is, today regarding worldwide human population trends that increases at such alarming rates and begging for consideration in every development planning, our policy makers don't seem to be thinking "generationally." Obviously in the area of land use for infrastructural development in particular, a lot of gaps are still left unfilled, because the existing infrastructural facilities such as schools, roads and highways, hospitals, recreational facilities, market centres and utility facilities from onset in most places in the country, were not taken into consideration regarding future population increases (Town and country Planning). Those that were factored in, in our latest development plans waiting for execution; the power brokers in various communities invade the land secretariat to appropriate the lands for their personal use instead of its original purpose, simply because the laws are not being enforced (Tamale lands issues in 2015 between State and traditional chiefs).

The flooding in towns and cities during torrential down pour becomes an annual ritual. The poor drainage system couple with indiscipline nature of town dwellers has exacerbated the situation, all because the by-laws are not working. This is so because, the political party in government always wants to govern for long and therefore would not want to crack the whip. Illegal mining or "Galamsey" as it is popularly known in Ghana for instance is a cancerous and disastrous activity to the Ghanaian society in every facet of life. This phenomenon poses serious danger to the environment and water bodies in the country. Despite its dev-

astating effect on the environment, for political perpetuity's sake, governments over the years are afraid to strictly enforce the laws. No party in government is ready to pay strict adherence to these laws in order to be "paid the price" at the polls (Election 2020 NPP Post election report).

High rates of road accidents in Ghana are one too many and usually attributed to the narrowness of our roads and highways (Ghana Police Service, 2018; Ayawaso violence, 2019). The promises governments have made in the past to widen and "dualize" major roads linking district capitals and every regional capital have not been heeded to. In addition, Ghana in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is yet to enforce the by-laws that require house owners to construct toilet facilities in their residences in cities and towns. This trend does not depict the kind of fame and good name that Ghana enjoys among the comity of nations. Poor management skills and lackadaisical attitudes towards state property have led to a perpetual facility failure in the utility production industries giving rise to frequent power cuts popularly known as "dumso", water shortage and poor communication networks have become the new normal.

Ghana National Fire Service is consistently blamed for the lack of enthusiasm in response to fire outbreaks in our cities, but the difficulty associated with their operation lies in the manner in which our towns and cities are planned. Another issue that we must avert our minds to is the lack of strong institutional frameworks to deal with matters of bribery and corruption and high budget deficits, ostensibly for spending that only satisfies the whims and consumption patterns of the smaller minority. There exists also a systemic failure generally, in other words, the general system is porous and susceptible to manipulation by some members of the sectors of the economy. For instance, there are ghost names and ghost institutions in the government's payroll, and free money from the state's purse is used to run these ghost institutions and paid to ghost people. Impersonations and dubious payments have become easy by this systemic failure where the controller and accountant general's department serve as a conduit through which state funds are doled out to undeserving persons.

Illegal job recruitment goes on in the Ghana police service and other security agencies, and "cooked" certificates from public educational institutions at the blind side of the authorities are clear testimonies of a general systemic failure of the system. Political party "fatefuls" such as market women, party foot soldiers, religious clerics, and some ward representatives of political parties are said to be receiving pay monthly from the state's coffers for apparently no work done. It is purported that Jobs at the seat of government, are sold to people who can pay for them without the knowledge of the high authorities.

## 5. Conclusion

To conclude, the political campaign promises, and rhetorical statements contained in the party's manifestoes to achieve political ends do not give the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) the needed financial assistance and

space to implement National Development planning. This also leads to targets sometimes not being met.

What is indeed so intriguing about Ghana's current pace of socio-economic development is the comparative historical analysis one will make of the developmental trajectories between the current and that of the 1950s. It is on record that in the 1950s, Ghana was the world's leading exporter of cocoa. Cocoa production accounted for as much as 50 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), thus providing national wealth, and improving the living standards and welfare of many farmers in the cocoa-growing areas (Rimmer, 1992: p. 2; Stiglitz, 1998). According to Dzorgbo (2006), Ghana possessed some material and human resources, which accorded her, a privileged position among the so-called developing nations. For instance, Ghana had more stock of educated and skilled workforce, more schools, health services per capita, and a better road network than any other British territory in Africa. Hill 1963, on his part indicated that Ghana could also boast of a prosperous emerging middle class and rural capitalists as well as a distinguished history of higher education, administrative elites and widespread respect for representative institutions. Using the criterion for per capita income, according to Okonjo (1989), Ghana was considered a middle-income country, judged the richest or at least one of the richest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. With all these achievements and success chalked in the past, it is difficult today to feel the impact, or see the reflection of it in the lives of Ghanaians. Costs of living today are still worsening and standards of living for most Ghanaians are deteriorating seriously (2023 March inflation figures of 53 percent suggest that), graduate unemployment is widespread, leading to a high rate of armed robbery and cyber-crimes. In fact, we now have graduate unemployment association in Ghana due to lack of jobs. Poverty levels do not depict the kind of economic success Ghana had left behind for Ghanaians in the late 50s, all because of propaganda effects on development policies.

However, the new policy frameworks in recent times present some hope, but as hopeful as some of these policies and interventions may appear to be, their success or failure largely depends on the competence, sincerity, honesty and above all, truthful adherence of the Ghanaian to the NATIONAL PLEDGE that each and every one has been committed to. It is our hope that they will not remain a "nine-day" wonder show. As Franz Fanon, an Algerian Social scientist is purported to have said, that Ghana had attained a mere flag Independence leaving behind the colonial political, economic and social structures and processes intact (Shaw, 1960; Ninsin, 1989; Kiggundu, 2002). With this lamentation expressed by Franz Fanon, the millennium crop of leaders, by their initiative abilities must endeavour to change the narrative and to achieve what their predecessors had failed to achieve that warranted the statement made by Franz. Ghanaians are keenly observing, as these projects and programs have started to appear nationally in character, they should not be turned into propaganda slogan for political perpetuity. The under lying question still remains that, are we

committed as a nation to depoliticize national events, policies and programs for national development?

### Some Policy Recommendations

Promulgation of a Constitutional Instrument (CI) to bind successive governments for the continuity of state ongoing projects in order to curtail the propaganda effects on development projects.

The constitutional review committee should re-look at the tenure of office of the president. Many politicians are of the view that the four-year period is too short for any meaningful work to be done. Because of this short period, very ambitious leaders would want to rush to execute more of their programs on their campaign promises thereby overlapping essential projects. Before any incoming government can start serious government business, it has to mobilize funds from various sources, sometimes resorting to borrowing from external sources or waiting for grants. It takes almost a full year for every new government to be able to set up a working team and mobilize reasonable funds to do any meaningful Government business. On behalf of all these excuses, strict conditions should be attached to the extension of the governance period from four to six years in the following ways.

The ruling party is given a six- to six-year first term period subject to the understanding that certain thematic areas of the economy be tackled within a certain time. Even, if need be, corresponding percentages be attached for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The ruling party can as a matter of priority mortgage some of our natural resources for the ideal purpose of national development or look for funds within a given period to execute the thematic projects that the nation as a whole has put before them. In all these cases, a nonpartisan commission be formed to monitor these processes. At the end of the first six-year term, a criterion will be used to assess the performance of the government to determine whether to contest the next election or not. In this case, a pass mark would be set regarding the percentage of work the government in power has achieved in policy implementation. There shall be no room for shenanigans to woo sympathy from the general public. If you pass, you pass, and no corner-cutting whatsoever.

If a ruling party qualifies by its reasonable percentage to contest again, all other opposition parties per the criteria of the Electoral Commission, will also contest the elections. If the ruling party fails to contest because of its poor performance, the parliamentary members of that party can still contest the election in their party's name. This new development if considered, would become the NEW INTERNAL POLITICAL ORDER (NIPO), and will subsequently become the NEW INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ORDER (NIPO) in the future. This is to ensure that, all vibrant political parties in Ghana will be put to test and all the useful human resources with rare talents, who have all these years been dormant, and at the same time idle, will be revived and activated to work. For instance, there is a large intellectual pool lying outside of governance because their parties are not in power

and for which reason, they hold to themselves useful ideas. These intellectuals think that others cannot “operationalize” their ideas even if they give them out, or because every party belongs to a certain tradition or philosophy, the ideas of one party may not fit into the tradition of another, for which reason, this vital piece of information is shelved.

Given the chance for “collective” political participation in governance will first reduce the pressure of “Winner Takes All” syndrome in our political system, which carries along with it certain socio-political disorders. Finally, to win election at all cost syndrome in our political system will be minimized. Party preparedness and its past records in governance will determine its participation and success in the general elections. It will also help to awaken the consciousness of Ghanaians on real national development and various political parties’ capabilities. Vote buying and vile propaganda that have characterized our voting pattern in Ghana would change. Party vigilante groups should be banned completely in our body polity to allow free expression of views and allow peace to prevail. Finally, the development-planning process should be widened to allow more women to participate and to wipe out the feeling of marginalization accompanying “Winner Takes All” politics.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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