



Theoretical Perspectives and Explanations of Political Corruption in Ghana

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Abstract

Ghana is brandished as one of the most politically stable democracies in Africa. The country has conducted eight successful elections without any upheaval. There have been various policies and strategies to combat corruption since the country assumed its democratic status. Corruption has been one of the significant developmental challenges to democratic stability and legitimacy, social and economic development of the country. Undoubtedly, somewhat attempt to understand completely the development problems facing democracy especially in emerging countries (including Ghana), must confront squarely with wanton corruption problems. Efforts to tweak the budding contagion by successive administration have become moribund. With hindsight, practically and with no exception, political heads who have assumed office and claiming as surgeons have left the office as patients. What are the dynamics triggering unbridled political corruption and why becoming pervasive and intractable? The article grills political corruption in Ghana in the context of Soft State theory, Clientelism, Prebendalism, and Patrimonialism. The paper contends that these theories are not only credible for understanding the predicaments of African countries however it also provides relevant justifications for the ravaging and unbridled political corruption, particularly in Ghana. The paper clinches that to address the problem of political corruption in Ghana concrete actions which is probably one of the ways to go is to strengthen legislation -working according to the stipulations of the constitution with regards to avoiding conflicting legislation, and stopping the appointment of cronies to head business institutions and this will go a long way to reduce corrupt tendencies.

Keywords: *Corruption, Clientelism, Prebendalism, Patrimonialism, Neopatrimonialism*

1. Introduction

Somewhat any analysis or experiment to completely understand the growth and development problems bedeviling emerging democracies (including Ghana), must confront squarely with wanton corruption problems and inexplicable economic management. It does not suggest that political corruption is peculiar to only third world countries. Undoubtedly, it could be argued that corruption syndromes are not limited to specific societies or cultures but it is a global phenomenon. On the other hand, the severity and its calamitous damage are different from one region to the other. Certainly, the devastating impact is more severe in the emerging democracies whose political institutions are flimsy, weak economic systems as well as inadequate control mechanisms.

Ghana is brandished as one of the most politically stable democracies in Africa (ACBR, 2018). But today sixty-three years after independence and twenty-seven years since the transition to multiparty democracy corruption remains one of the significant developmental challenges. The socio-economic developments of the country have been hampered by pandemic political corruption and hence becoming a mockery in the political arena. The manifestations of the contagion are apparent as many people including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for example, Afro-Barometer, Imani-Ghana, donor partners' state officials, and foreign diplomats among others have expressed their deep worry. For a country flaunted as the beacon of democracy in West Africa, the pervasiveness of corruption poses greater challenges. Undoubtedly, corruption is seen as the bane to Ghana's democratic stability and survival since the country assumed its democratic rebirth in 1992. The Corruption news is stunning no longer in the country. The consistent rating of Ghana among the corrupt nations in the global corruption perception index vindicates Transparency International. For instance, in 2018 Ghana was rated eighty (80) out of the one hundred and eighty (180) countries. Again the 2019 corruption perception index by Transparency International, a global anti-corruption watchdog released in 2020 placed Ghana eighty-one (81) out of the hundred and eighty(180) countries. Accordingly, the Afrobarometer survey (2019) indicates that corruption permeates all the sectors of the economy and significantly, the Courts and the Police are seen as the utmost corrupt institutions in the country. There have been a significant number of political institutions meant to fight corruption, notably the establishment of the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO), among others. As an addition to the already existing political institution to fighting corruption, the current government has established, in 2017, the Office of the Independent Special Prosecutor – a prosecutor whose major function is to investigate government appointees who have been accused of corruption. This institution is yet to give optimism to the Ghanaian citizens. Accordingly, one

would have expected that the numerous established political institutions should have contributed immensely to the fight against political corruption in Ghana. Yet, political corruption keeps on soaring under democratic Ghana. At this point, the argument is that development cannot encompass any political milieu where corruption is palpable and entrenched. The neurotic repercussions of corruption in any democratic milieu include lack of recognition of governmental legitimacy, democratic instability, and electoral fraud, rapacious poverty, deterioration of infrastructure, contract killing, insecurity, and general developmental problems. In Ghana, those who claim to be right surgeons have regrettably become patients in previous and current revelations. The question enduring now is how can the endemic political corruption be expounded in Ghana? What factors triggering endemic political corruption in Ghana? And why has all efforts encapsulated to pinch the problem failing? The objective of the paper is to discuss some of the major theoretical explanations for the pervasive political corruption in Ghana.

2. Defining Corruption

Corruption is subject to different interpretations and meanings. In other words, it is a multifaceted concept. Indeed there is no general or acceptable delimitation constituting corrupt behaviour (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002; Aye 2016). The definition of corruption however is premised on abuse of public power or position for private gains. Corruption is defined by the Oxford Unabridged Dictionary as a distortion or destruction of integrity in the discharge of public duties by bribery or favour. The Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2006) also explains corruption as an enticement to wrong by improper or unlawful means (as bribery). Accordingly, a laconic delineation used by the World Bank is the abuse of public office for private gain. This definition is analogous to the one used by Transparency International, a foremost Non-Governmental Organisation in the global anti-corruption to encompasses the behaviour in which public officials whether politicians or civil servants improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves or people close to them, by abusing the power entrusted to them. Morris (1991), defined political corruption as the unlawful use of public power for one's private interest. Kaufmann (2005) expounded the corruption concept to encapsulates "legal corruption" where power is misused within the purviews of the law for the reason being that those often in authority can make laws to suit their whims and caprices or for their protection. The Ghana National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) also share similar perspectives on the topic of corruption and defined it as the misuse of the power entrusted for personal gains. It further expounded the definition to include bribery, embezzlement, misappropriation, trading in influence, abuse of office, abuse of power, unlawful enrichment, laundering of

proceeds of crime, concealment, justice obstruction, patronage, nepotism, and conflict of interests (Republic of Ghana, 2011).

However, Peters (1978), for diagnostic and clarity purposes identified and delineate political corruption into three approaches (dimensions). These delineations are engrained in legal principles, public interest, and public opinion. From a legal standpoint, political corruption connotes any behaviour that violates the acceptable or laid-down rules enforced by the political system to regulate the conduct and behaviour of people holding public office. Nye (1967:419) furthermore, defined political corruption to encapsulate any behavioural action that diverges any acceptable and recognised obligations of a public role due to private concerning (own, family member, individual elite group) monetary or status advantages; breaches norms contrary to the exercise of certain types of personal responsibility vis-à-vis influence. This analytical point of view has not escaped vehement denigrations. Jackson et al (1994) have therefore discoursed that illegality may not constitute corruption. They further underscored that; even worse, expending the law as the basis of measuring corruption presupposed the affirmation that everything that is not legal is permissible. The legality underpinning political corruption is simultaneously too constricted as well as too comprehensive, excluding too much (the immoral but lawful) and including too much (the unlawful but not immoral). Peters and Welch (1978) vehemently criticise and argue that in many cultural societies the laid-down rules lack legitimacy and reliable denotation, which legalisms demonstrate little about the social significance of behaviour, and public opinion or cultural standards are the ultimate for mounting concrete delineations of corruption.

In the purview of the second perspective, when public opinion perceives that there is corruption then one can say that a political system is corrupt. This analytical viewpoint is additionally fraught with certain defects because one must be able to establish the frontier between elite opinion and public opinion. In many societies, what is considered to be public opinion is oftentimes taken to be the opinion expressed by political elites groups. Therefore, since the opinion of the public defines the outcome of the law and what dictates the interest of the public, it is justified to be the ultimate test for corruption (Jackson et-al 1994). This is a laudable idea for the reason being that corruption like “obscenity is more strongly eschewed than defined or delineated” (Robert 1987).

Rogow and Lasswell (1963) also provided another idiosyncratic insight into corruption. For them, corruption means the abuse of the public interest. This delineation moreover is fraught with vagueness, the reason being that the interest of the public like public opinion is difficult to define. Some critics contend that “although in agreement that the interest of the public plays a pivotal function in cognisance of any political establishments, it is therefore

not the sharpest mechanism for identifying wrongdoings that constitutes corrupt act". Brinkerhoff (2000), in a wider viewpoint, sees corruption as "integrating an extensive multiplicity of unlawful, illegitimate, crooked, and/or dishonest deeds and behaviours". Corruption then from this perspective can importantly be viewed as an ethical/moral, political, as well as legal problem.

Gyekye (1997) defined political corruption as moral contamination which is a result of manifestation and the influences of African customs and beliefs on modern activities. In contrast to the justifications proffered by other scholars expounding the political, economic, and legal consequences of corruption (neglecting the moral consequences), he argues that political corruption is essentially a moral predicament that needs serious cognizance and resolution. In his view, a "commitmental moral revolution" requiring attitudinal and behavioural change and responses of members of the community to their societal beliefs, arrangements, and norms are paramount for combating corruption.

In this background, corruption can be viewed as a multidimensional concept encompassing social-economic, political, legal, and moral denotations. It is multifarious –having many various kinds and measurements. Corruption in this paper is therefore considered to be an abuse or wrongful use of power and influence, intentionally and wilfully for selfish, individual puffery or small group gain. Fundamentally, corruption entails the abuse of public responsibilities or funds, as well as the use of proscribed practices of power politics and influence by private groups. Like this, corruption is inseparably knotted (though unrestricted) to the political activity of governments, in particular, if Harold Lasswell from traditional purview defined politics as "who gets what, when, and how" and possibly in which manner.

The struggle for political power in the Ghanaian society has taken a demoralising height allowing all categories of corrupt tendencies. Every single political activity is connected to who gets what, when, and how. Therefore the idea of participating in the political environment has allowed the various political groups that constitute Ghanaian society breeding ground for looters (thieves) and political groups who are fanatical with pilfering the state's revenue. In Ghana, the easiest way to get wealth is politics. Many politicians have been indicted for corruption and misappropriation of funds. For example, a former deputy minister was caught in a conversation that she came to make money through politics. This position cannot, therefore, be established without an appropriate understanding of the theoretical discourses and nexus between the nature and character of the state of and political corruption in Ghana.

3. Theoretical Explanation of Political Corruption in Ghana

Any corruption analysis in Africa should be the focus of the central authority of the state. Undeniably, there is no issue confronting the Africa continent without emphasising the role of the state. This assertion is true because not only that the state leads, however it epitomises African society. For example, one may see endemic corruption in one country and conclude that entire Africa is corrupt. Fundamentally, it should be noted that Ghana as a nation just like most African countries, and emerging democracies is a colonial establishment. Accordingly, unsurprisingly that the problem of political corruption has been associated with the debauchery of colonialism by many scholars (African political theorists and pundits). Many theories have helped to comprehend the quandaries of Africa, especially the colossal pervasiveness of corruption. Among the theories include soft state theory popularised by Gunnar Myrdal, and Prebendalism theorised by Richard Joseph. Other theorists have branded Africa continent as rentier states, Patrimonial, and Neo-patrimonial states. The theories are not only credible for understanding the predicaments of African countries however it also provides relevant justifications for the ravaging and unbridled corruption in African countries.

For example, the Soft state thesis postulated by Myrdal is appropriate in the Ghanaian context. The soft state thesis was used by Myrdal to expound on the social indiscipline that has engulfed some countries in Asia. The theory can be explained as the one in which codified laws promulgated by the legislative body which are copiously applied but in a soft approach instead of robustly and consistently. In such situations private individuals can have an advantage, businessmen can bribe tax officials and also favour the superiors (Goldthorpe, 1975). For a better understanding of the theory, Myrdal (1970) therefore explained soft state as a type of social indiscipline which emanates as a result of a legislative deficiency, law observance and enforcement in particular, and inexorable non-compliance of state officials, and, often, their collaboration with the big men and their apparatchiks whose conduct they should have regulated. Within the theory of soft states belongs as well as corruption penchants (p. 208).

The paradox of countries that were colonised and its dilemma particularly relates to soft state theory with its corruption problems. Consequently, the post-colonial state be it democratic or undemocratic is saddled with the inability to enforce social discipline or institute reforms. It is, therefore, a situation where the legal system and its paraphernalia become moribund or at best unsuccessful. Even when outlining programmes and policies, the bureaucratic authorities (that is the politico-bureaucratic elite) are apathetic to make the people responsible, particularly in matters of corruption (Myrdal 1968: 101). Corruption in Ghana is therefore linked to the soft state argument that has existed after colonial rule. This has culminated in the development of

an attitude of disobedience to any authority after independence. In 1960 decision was made by the parliament of Ghana to criminalise corruption. For example, section 239 of the Criminal Offences Act (Act 29) of 1960, prohibits corruption. However, according to (Le Vine, 1975: 48) weak legislative systems and law enforcement were factors that contributed to corruption in the country. Thus one of the justifications for the overthrow of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1966 and Prof. Kofi Abrefa Busia in 1969 was on the ground of combating corruption. Briefly, the incessant military interventions of both constitutional and unconstitutional governments in Ghana are due to penchants of corruption (Republic of Ghana, 2011).

Probably few scholars will disagree with Joseph's relating to the corruption issue in Ghana's Fourth Republic to the prebendalisation of state power. The political competition over resource allocation sometimes referred to as 'the national cake' mostly has its calamitous repercussions as state offices are transformed into prebends. Prebendalism theory holds the view that public officials are considered as prebends that can be usurped by political elites who use their position to accumulate wealth for themselves and their clients, co-religionists, and members of their ethnic groups. Although clientelism and Prebendalism might be collectively buttressing, however, they have distinct connotations. Clientelism delineates individual nature and relationship groups that are within the wider societal and political milieu, on the other hand, Prebendalism is fundamentally a competition function and the arrogation of political offices within the state. Thus, clientelism helps to fathom the apparatus by which the political apparatchiks legitimizes the skewed distribution of the country's wealth among social groups and augments the position of the big men or the elites (Seteolu 2005: 36). The culture of politics in Ghana is therefore knotted on clientelism and Prebendalism that further encapsulates our understanding with regards to the pervasiveness of political corruption. The ultimate purpose of the pursuit of political affairs is envisioned to usurp the political environment and wealth amongst some segments within the political elites groups (Seteolu 2005:36).

Moreover, Ghana as a state is characterised by patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism (Yankah, 2008; Brobbey, 2016). Patrimonialism is a form of governance or governmental system whereby the powers of the state directly emanates from the top hierarchy of the political leadership. In this case, there exists no difference between the public and private purviews. The essence of Patrimonialism conceives the notion that the whole governmental powers, authority, and the socio-economic rights which correspond to it, tend to be treated and clandestinely arrogated for pecuniary gains (Medard, 1996). Within this context of the study, the political social class or elite behaviour is concomitant to the traditional value system of Africa. Traditional Africa in nature is conceived as a patriarchal form where the control of political power is tailored, and the direction of governance and leadership is perpetual within

the framework of an oligarchical self-recruited manner (Seteolu, 2005). These mutually assimilated standards are simulated in the political milieu where competing alliances amass wealth to balance side disbursements necessary to maintain or broaden followership within the framework of political power distribution. The ferocious tussle in the political domain is connected to skirmishes depicting the succession of leadership in the traditional political systems and the magnetism of politics where political activity guarantees the opportunity to clutch material wealth and economic dominance (Seteolu, 2005).

The political leadership class, therefore, uses social identity, for example, an ethnic group for particularistic intention. Thus, the ethnic group persona eventually becomes a marshalling tool for political power, consolidate hegemony as well as economic dominance (Dudley, 1973; Osaghae, 1995). Accordingly, it is surmountable that power can be used for individual or class braggadocios. Corruption inherently appears to be an integral component of the political culture in patrimonial societies. Therefore, corruption in Ghana is mainly fostered and motivated by the patrimonial behaviour where family associates and social exchange reflects in stratum of nepotism, cronyism, and favouritism. The net upshot of it is the creation of a situation characterised by a lack of commitment to change the status quo or to deal with the underlying causes of political corruption in Ghana.

Neopatrimonialism, a concept connected to Prebendalism as well as a novel system of patrimonialism is expounded to mean the failure of African states. It is used basically to designate a system whereby the resources of the state are used by patrons to shelter the loyalty of party supporters or clients of the citizenry. It is an indication of an informal patron-client rapport from state bureaucratic structure down to individuals in the districts, grassroots, or small communities. Due to this kind of patron-client relationship politics, Ghana has often been listed on Transparency International (TI) corruption perception index as a corrupt country. With such politicisation of primeval rivalries, the political elite and unscrupulous officeholders found a safe refuge to misappropriate and squander the resources of the state. Therefore, the problem of corruption is inextricably knotted to the citizenship identity problem and it is rooted in history (Werlin, 1972). Consequently, one of the destructive effects of identity politics is that it has the propensity to render the state soft. Legislations are discriminatorily reinforced and anti-corruption legislations are not exempted. Accordingly, the character of a soft state is that it's habitually or characteristically tolerant of corruption and corrupt acts.

In a nutshell, corruption in Ghana cannot only be associated through the dimensions of soft state, prebendalism, clientelism, Patrimonialism, and Neopatrimonialism. Nevertheless, the argument is that burglary and reckless extravagance in the public sector have further impoverished primordial

society instead of fattening it. The misappropriated resources or wealth flows amongst the bureaucrats and the elite groups regardless of their district, religion, and tribal affiliates. The outcome of this is ludicrous and detrimental.

4. Other Dynamics Factors Explaining Political Corruption in Ghana

Corruption is hydra-headed and multifarious, so there are several dimensions. According to Klitgaard (1991), some scholars and authors in ancient times have ascribed political corruption to greediness. For example, Ibn Khaldun, an Islamic scholar who lived during the 14th century attributed it to the desire for a flamboyant lifestyle within the ruling group. A survey by Afrobarometer in 2017 indicates that greed for money is one of the factors explaining endemic corruption in Ghana. Others have also attributed corruption to some individual values and beliefs (whether autocratic, personalistic, giving of gifts) or peoples (Yankah, 2008). Others, still have demonstrated that corruption becomes pervasive when there is a breakdown of societal norms, and in the course of booms and busts. There is also blame on both the excesses of capitalism and competition and on too little; on colonialism and the removal of the colonial powers; on traditional regimes as well as the disintegration of traditional institutions have further ignited corruption.

Several dynamics nurture political corruption in Ghana. They include nepotism and cronyism where material wealth and power become substitutable and the differentiation between the business world and the political spheres is less clear. Some political office holders treat public resources as their personal property and distribute them to their families and cronies at will. Many public officers, after performing a public duty expect expressions of gratitude in material form from the persons on whose behalf they are appointed and paid to serve. The service recipient who fails to say “thank you” with a gift in cash or kind at the time of service, or who fails to give a hamper at Christmas, may in future receive poor quality service or suffer delay, a rebuke, or outright denial of the service. Corruption is ubiquitous with a minimal system of accountability and transparency, poor salaries for public workers, and the remuneration and incentives package for different groups of workers or professionals are unbalanced and unfair. There is also an administrative form of corruption that takes the form of sexual harassment or the extortion of sexual favours and services-sex is exchanged for jobs, good grades in examinations, or other desirables (Republic of Ghana, 2011, p.34). Corruption in Ghana has long been fortified by absolute impunity, non-enforcement of laws, and selective enforcement of laws and regulations against particular persons and groups. The failure to punish corruption and economic crimes has also expedited corrupt behaviour in Ghana.

5. Cases of Political Corruption in Ghana

Conspicuously when mentioning corruption and politics in Ghana incidents, surprisingly the executive level, have had the chunk of it. Removals or politically enthused firings have been obvious in the past and present, particularly relating prospective competitors for the presidency. There is widespread impunity often enjoyed by the incumbent and their loyalists (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018). Political corruption remains a fundamental impediment, notwithstanding the legitimate and institutional structures design to combat it, in addition to the role of the media and anti-corruption initiatives of the government (Freedom House, 2018). The political corruption game saw many regimes overthrown in Ghana. For example, President Kwame Nkrumah administration in 1966, Gen. Ankrah regime in 1969, Dr. Kofi Busia/President Edward Akuffo-Addo administration in 1972. Gen. Kutu Acheampong regime in 1978. Gen. Akuffo and Dr. Hilla Liman regimes in 1979 and 1981 respectively. Gen. Acheampong was killed for having just US\$300 in his foreign accounts (Akosah-Sarpong, 2008; Republic of Ghana, 2011).

There have been several allegations of corruption of former presidents since the country gained its democratic rebirth in 1992. Former for example President JJ Rawlings is alleged to have abused his office. It is alleged that a gargantuan amount of US\$7 million cash got missing from a total of US\$10 million that was meant to refurbish the Tema Food Processing Factory. It is also alleged that most of the state-own companies that he sold were not transparent. For example, the former president's wife, Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings bought Nsawam Cannery Company- a state-own company. This is a clear case of the politics of Prebendalism and Patrimonialism where resources of the state are shared among the political elite groups. (Akosah-Sarpong, 2008). Other appointees of former President JJ Rawlings government were jailed for causing financial loss to the state. The former head of Ghana National Oil Company, Tsatsu Tsikata, was jailed for financial crimes. He was jailed for willfully causing a financial loss of GH¢ 230,000 (about US\$40,000) (GNA, 2008; GBN, 2009). Dan Abodakpi, a former Minister of Trade and Industry was found guilty and jailed for ten years for willfully causing a financial loss of \$400,000 to the State (Myjoyonline, 2007). Ibrahim Adam, a former minister of Food and Agriculture, George Sipa-Adjah Yankey former director of the legal sector, Private and Financial Institutions division of the Ministry of Finance, Kwame Peprah, former Finance minister - all politicians under the NDC administration were jailed for political corruption. These public officials were accused of causing financial loss to the state for giving over US\$22 million sovereign government guarantee loans (BBC News, 2003; Benson, 2003).

Again, political corruption under former president John Agyekum Kufour cannot be ignored. Kufour was also alleged to have abused his official power.

President Kufuor while in office supervised his son, John Addo Kufuor to buy a hotel at the cost of US\$3.5 million (Apaack, 2009). The hotel was funded by Prudential Bank, a Bank part-owned by SSNIT, a state-owned enterprise, and by the National Investment Bank (NIB), another state-owned bank, and by the ECOWAS Regional Investment Bank (ERIB), which advanced US\$1 million to the Hotel. At that time, President Kufuor was the Chairman of ECOWAS and Mr. J. S. Addo, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Prudential Bank, was President Kufuor's representative on the ERIB and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of ERIB. A clear conflict of interest, prebends, and patrimonialism yet, the President was found to be clean (Daily Graphic, 2006; Apaack, 2009). Many appointees of his government also abused their powers. For example, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) recommended the former President Kufuor to relieve Dr. Richard Winfred Anane, Minister of Transportation of his post following findings of abuse of power and conflict of interest made against him by the Commission during an 18-month investigation. Hitherto President Kufuor saw nothing wrong with Dr. Anane and went on to again nominate him as Minister for Transportation (Apaack, 2009). A popular cocaine trade scandal was more disturbing in his government. For instance significant amounts of cocaine worth 77 parcels vanished from police surveillance, and a member of his government and parliamentarian, Eric Amoateng went to jail in the US for heroin trafficking (BBC News, 2005; Apaack, 2009). According to the CJA, eight ministries under Kufuor's administration misappropriated GH¢ 440,814,014,679 (that is about US\$77,000) which belongs to the state in 2005 as a direct result of a combination of factors including corruption, maladministration, ineptitude, and sheer laxity (Apaack, 2009).

Moreover, the erstwhile administration led by late President Mills and Mahama-Amisah-Arthur faced some important and intolerably publicised corruption cases during the presidency which dented its public image and culminated in its defeat in the 2016 elections. Worsened by the fundamentals of economic glitches during the three last years, political corruption appears to be escalating and Ghanaian perception of how to deal with the cases have become steadily undesirable and remains a political football. Accordingly, these purported political corruption outrages have enfeebled the acceptability and legitimacy of the independent democratic establishments amid the wider populace (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018). In the 2016 electioneering campaign, a video was extensively circulated showing ex-president (Mahama) supposedly "buying votes" by doling money to market women (Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis 2016). On the other hand, the troubling aspects of it were the results published in 2015 by Washington Post, a project relating to the impact of elections in Africa, 43% of the Ghanaians responded that votes buying were either "not wrong at all" or was "wrong but should not be punished". Likewise, 76% of the Ghanaians were of the view that when politicians direct

development projects towards their constituencies or areas they support them, they should not be castigated (Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis 2016). Vote buying is a prevalent manifestation and with many discarding that political activists from the various political parties, in many years during electioneering campaigns have habitually given sums of money (Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis 2016). Again in September 2016 barely three months to the election, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) dismissed and cleared bribery allegations levelled against the former president Mahama over a Ford Expedition vehicle the president received from a Burkina Faso construction firm bidding on a lucrative government contract in Ghana. However, the construction firm subsequently was awarded the contract to construct a road. The corruption allegations were denied, the president claimed that the Ford Expedition car was given as a gift but later added to the Presidential Pool as state property. Even though the CHRAJ dismissed and cleared the president of corruption, it found him guilty of flouting state laws (Business Day, 2016; GAN Integrity, 2018).

In 2017, later, one of the political establishments of the state; the National Youth Employment Agency publicised payroll fraud of approximately GHc 50 million (US\$11.1 million) discovered by the internal audit of the agency. Yet, as the year passes by, there was no evidence of the government holding anyone accountable for the payroll fraud. In February 2018 Member of Parliament Abuga Pele was convicted and charged with a six-year jail term for wilfully causing a loss of GHc4.1 million (that is about \$714, 000) to the state of Ghana. Likewise, the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana, in 2017 was intertwined in a corruption outrage, as some high-ranking members of the commission castigated each other of fraud and maladministration, including awarding illegal contracts, embezzlement of funds, and perceived political favouritism (Freedom House, 2018; Koswe 2018). After a thorough investigation conducted by the Economic and Organised Crime Office probing contentious allegations that some high-ranking members of the EC had embezzled state funds between 2012 and 2013, the chairperson, Charlotte Osei, and her other two deputies were removed by the president in 2018 charged with corruption and incompetence (Koswe, 2018).

Furthermore, there have been corruption allegations in the past involving office holders of the state (government appointee) for instance, In June 2009, a Member of Parliament and Minister of Youth and Sports Mubarak Muntaka was ordered to step down by the late President Professor Evan-Atta Mills following investigations into dozens of allegations levelled against him including financial negligence and abuse of power. The latter was asked by the Commission on Human Rights to refund the embezzled funds however, indications are that more 'can of worms' could be opened again on this matter (Kojo, 2017). In November 2013, a former deputy communication minister, Victoria Hammah was relieved of her position after she was recorded allegedly

saying that until she made \$1million (USD) she would not leave politics. Since then she has not commented on the tape or her sacking (BBC News, 2013; Kojo, 2017). There was also a bus branding scandal in which former Minister for Transport Dzifa Attivor spent a whopping sum of GH¢3.6 million on re-branding 116 buses. The matter angered many Ghanaians questioning how that outrageous expenditure could be approved under the watch of the President. Before the investigation could carry out she has already resigned after some seven Ghanaian citizens instituted a court action against the government over the controversial contract. Today details of the investigative report have not been made public yet (Kojo, 2017). In September 2019 the acting Board chairperson of Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) Adelaide Ahwireng was entangled in a conflict of interest scandal involving the rental of two of her commercial properties to the GRA. It is alleged that the two buildings were rented out at an annual charge of GH¢ 1.4 million, an amount sources say is exorbitant, particularly considering the location of the properties (Daily Guide, 2019).

Presently, the former Boss of the Ghana Cocoa Board (a government-controlled institution) Dr. Stephen Opuni is charged with 27 counts of causing financial loss to the state (Torny, 2018). The former COCOBOD CEO is alleged to have been wilfully causing financial loss to the state to the tune of GH¢2.1billion (about US\$364,000) in three separate contracts for the supply of fertilizers from Germany (GII, 2017). The charges levelled against include; money laundering, violation of procurement laws, and defrauding by false pretences. It has been established that he may face 25 years of jail term if found guilty.

6. The Magnitude of Corruption in Ghana

In Ghana, corruption is one of the significant developmental challenges and permeates all the sectors of the economy. Corruption is undeniably seen as the foremost justification for ostensibly insurmountable problems such as poverty, ailments, hunger, and overall critical development disaster in Africa. It has moreover “extremely obstructed development and the efficient utilisation of resources in the region” (Egbue 2007). According to the US Department of State (2017), women and children are frequently abused in Ghana not forgetting clitoridectomy and human trading. This is because there is a lack of accountability in the political systems. In 2012, Ghana was ranked 64th and scored 45 in the corruption table. It again in 2013 ranked 63rd out of 177 countries. Similarly, the 2017 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index ranked Ghana 81 out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2018). In the 2018 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index out of 180 countries, Ghana was ranked 78th (Transparency International, 2019). The latest survey indicates that Ghana has fallen and

ranked 80 out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2020). Reports have claimed that Ghana was losing US\$4.5 billion every year from (Nominal GDP) growth due to corruption and economic mismanagement under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government of Ghana led by the former president, John Dramani Mahama. It is also on record that Ghana lost an additional US\$2.5 billion from nominal gross domestic product (Nominal GDP) growth from January 2013 to October 2013 through economic malfeasance. Moreover, Ghana is an entry point for trading and transshipment of illicit drugs, essentially cocaine from South America, and heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan (US Department of State, 2017). Ghana currently loses more than \$3 billion (USD) annually to corruption (OCCRP, 2019). The police and the judiciary are seen as the most corrupt institution in Ghana. The current administration is bent to fight corruption by some government members, and a fellow politician of an opposition party, after ordering investigations into scandals. Nevertheless, these actions are not sufficient to fight corruption. There has been little determination within the political leadership to punish corruption at the various levels of government and excessively cosmetic shrugs such as creating powerless anti-corruption institutions. There is evidence that before corruption can be dealt with effectively it has to be supported by strong political will on the part of the ruling leadership willing to make reforms that are technically and politically practicable and adopt credible sanctions, and allocation of resources, including expertise, to a campaign (Smith, 2007).

Table 1: Shows Ghana Corruption Ranking (From 2010-2019)

Year(s)	Score	Rank
2010	4.1	68
2011	3.9	69
2012	45	64
2013	46	63
2014	48	61
2015	47	56
2016	43	70
2017	40	81
2018	41	78
2019	41	80

Source: Transparency International

Table 1 indicates the corruption ranking in Ghana by Transparency International. From the table, in 2010, Ghana scored 4.1 and 3.1 in 2011 out of a score of ten (10) and ranked 68 and 69 positions. Similarly, Ghana scored 45 in 2012 and 46 in 2013 out of the possible of 100 and ranked 45 and 46 respectively. Moreover, in 2014 Ghana scored 48 and ranked 61 in the world.

In 2015, Ghana scored 47 and in 2016, came down to 43. Again Ghana scored 41 out of the possible score of 100 in 2018 and maintained the score again in 2019. This indication shows the prevalence of corruption in the country. This also divulges the continued failure on the part of the political leaders and bureaucrats to significantly control corruption thereby contributing to a crisis in democracy. The data shows that despite some progress Ghana is failing to make serious progress against corruption.

Table 2: Shows Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) in Ghana

Indicator	2016 Percentile rank	2017 Percentile rank
Corruption control	59.1	49.0
Government effectiveness	45.2	49.0
Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism	41.0	49.5
Regulatory quality	45.7	49.5
Rule of law	55.8	59.1
Voice and accountability	67.5	67.5

Source: World Bank (2016 cited in Rahman, 2018)

Table 2 shows the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) by the World Bank and accord the following scores in percentile rank to Ghana. The percentile rank indicates Ghana's rank among all countries covered by the aggregate indicator, with 0 correspondings to the lowest rank, and 100 to the highest rank (World Bank, 2016 cited in Rahman, 2018).

Besides the data obtained in 2016 and 2017, Ghana's percentile rank has witnessed the ensuing tendency in relation to the WGI control of corruption indicator: 1. 2008-55.3, 2. 2010-57.6, 3. 2012-55.0, 4. 2014-52.4 (Rahman, 2018).

7. Anti-Corruption Institutions and Problems

From 1957 to date numerous actions and policies have been adopted to eradicate political corruption. They include the institutional approach, constitutional or legal approach, the use of propaganda, and the public education approach. There have been several anti-corruption institutions since the country gained its democratic rebirth in 1992. Like most Government departments, however, they are faced with financial constraints and are also understaffed (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018). Among some institutional framework assigned to combat corruption are as follows:

1. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) is one of the foremost anti-corruption establishments in Ghana. The institution under one umbrella consolidates the work of the ombudsman, human rights commission, and an anti-corruption agency (Kukutschka, 2014; ACA 2018). The powers of the commission are enshrined in Articles 216, 217, and 218 of the 1992 constitution. The powers of the commission are to investigate as well as works to combat corruption (ACA, 2018). However, the problem of the commission is that it does not have the power to take legal action, nor does it have financial independence (ACA, 2018). The CHRAJ is under the influence of the executive since the president appoints commissioners on the advice of the Council of State (Global Integrity, 2011; ACA 2018). The Website of the CHRAJ usually keep informed activities of corruption-related issues and also offers research publications on the topic. The commission makes available a nexus on how to channel complaints, for example, three forms of complaints-normal, whistle-blower, and discrimination reporting, to the public (CHRAJ, 2018). Moreover, the ombudsman cannot initiate its investigation as ruled by the Supreme Court. A complaint must be made by someone otherwise the commission cannot begin with any investigation (Global Integrity, 2011). Also, it is important to note that, though the commission synchronizes and supervises the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), the implementation agency role is done by the presidency (Boateng, 2018).

2. Economic and Organised Crime Office

The EOCO started operation right after its establishment in 2010 as a specialised agency purposely for crime monitoring and prevention, detection, and investigation. Based on the mandate of the Attorney-General the agency has the power to prosecute offences as well recovering proceeds of crime and provide for interrelated issues (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018; Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice, 2018). Primarily, the bureau function to investigate and prosecutes wrongdoings that seriously implicate woefully monetary loss to the country or any state entity or establishment where the financial interest of the state is concerned. Besides, the commission is authorized to recuperate the proceeds of wrongdoing. The office specifically has some target areas such as money laundering, human trafficking, prohibited cyber activity, tax fraud, and other serious offences (EOCO, 2018; Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice 2018). Like the CHRAJ, EOCO is bedevilled by a myriad of challenges in discharging its functions, including executive interference. This palpable interference is as a result of the fact the executive appoints the director and board members of the OEEO and then gives a report to the attorney-general (Kukutschka, 2014).

3. *Office of the Special Prosecutor*

The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) was approved by the parliamentary act in 2017. The OSP is therefore charged with the responsibility to investigate and prosecute allegations of some sorts of corruption and other criminal offence. The office also has the power to prosecute those involved in suspected infractions of the Public Procurement Act as well as cases implicating officeholders and especially political figures (Osei-Amoako, 2018). There is great optimism in the OSP by the ordinary Ghanaians since it is the first time in the history of our democratic dispensation that a position is created exclusively to investigate and prosecute public officials specifically government appointees (Okello, 2018). But fundamentally the office was established to fulfill an electioneering campaign promise of combating corruption by the President when he assumed office in 2017 (Okello, 2018). On the other hand, some scholars and Civil Society Organisations suggests that the establishment of the office may undermine the already existing institutions and actions currently in place to tackle corruption – including CHRAJ and NACAP. Others also posit that “NACAP” will be successful when state authorities champion and lead the process, at the same time as they championed the OSP (Boateng, 2018).

Notwithstanding the measures outlined above the country has consistently occupied one of the world’s corrupt countries. The tenacity of the problem shows a symptom that the laid down rules and institutional approaches, and the socio-economic reforms are proven to be inadequate therapy. This necessitates some more elucidations apart from the hypothetical explanations that have been prior offered. Tackling political corruption is not a one-shot effort, however challenging lasting responsibility, demanding advanced commitment, and policy continuity (Brinkerhoff, 200:240). Politics in Ghana have provided the easiest way of getting affluence and prestige. Politicians in Ghana do whatsoever to obtain political power. This is done through vote-buying, the vilification of an opponent, and outright bribery of electoral management staff.

Anti-corruption strategies and policies in Ghana have faced grave discontinuity in policy arising from unremitting partisan-politics. Hence, the fights against corruption have not been fought on a justifiable foundation. Most significantly, anti-corruption strategies and policies in Ghana are utterly political entry premeditated to win the support and the favour of the masses.

8. **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Ghana (Africa) is far advanced in corruption. Lawbreakers are selectively put before the laws for justice. It is very difficult to prosecute heads of state after their term of office. This allows them to enjoy the stolen money and to

influence certain decisions of the state. In Ghana, influential people do not go to the EOCO, CID headquarters, BNI, and the likes, if it will affect our fortunes in elections. Anytime the law is about to work people go and render an apology. The culture of letting it go and begging is the one endangering the efforts to fight corruption in the country. Though, the current administration is bent to fight corruption by some government members, and a fellow politician of an opposition party, after ordering investigations into scandals. Nevertheless, these actions are not sufficient to fight corruption. There has been little determination within the political leadership to punish corruption at the various levels of government and excessive cosmetic shrugs such as creating powerless anti-corruption institutions.

Having therefore investigated corruption in Ghana through the dimensions of Soft State theory, Prebendalism, Clientelism, Patrimonialism, and Neopatrimonialism, the article contends that these theories are not only credible for understanding the predicaments of African countries however it also provides relevant justifications for the ravaging and unbridled political corruption, particularly in Ghana. However, as a point of departure, the scholarly further contend that burglary and reckless extravagance in the public sector have further impoverished primeval society instead of fattening and therefore the misappropriated resources or wealth flows amongst the bureaucrats as well as political gurus regardless of their constituents. The outcome is ludicrous and detrimental.

Moreover, it is contended that the corruption problem is closely connected to the idiosyncratic nature and character of Ghana as a country and on the other hand the question of nationality. The paper concludes that to address the problem of political corruption in Ghana concrete actions which is probably one of the ways to go is to strengthen legislation -working according to the stipulations of the constitution with regards to avoiding conflicting legislation, and stopping the appointment of cronies to head business institutions and this will go a long way to reduce corrupt tendencies. In this sense, effective and strong political drive are needed within the political environment and leadership supports guaranteeing long-lasting and single-mindedness towards the fight against corruption. Essentially, the magnitude and the danger associated with corruption should be extremely emphasised in the political discourse instead of the gains that would destroy the foundations of the country's democracy. A Severe and stringent punishment must be devoted to corruption in high public offices. Empirical evidence shows that institutional buildings such as efforts to strengthen rule of law can be more effective in combating corruption in emerging democracies. Besides, reducing the cost of running an election, there must be an immediate effort to deal with issues relating to cronyism and nepotism in politics and with dispatch. It is imperative to add that corruption in Ghana is essentially a moral problem. Therefore, there is a need for attitudinal and behavioural change in Ghanaian politicking. This requires changing societal beliefs, arrangements, norms, and

values. Hence, because the status quo and the problem is hydra-headed, multifaceted, and colossal, the solution may conceivably appear unbounded.

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