

Identity Politics in Ghana

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Abstract:

This is a review of identity politics in the context of Ghana as binary phenomenon promoted by the two dominant political parties, namely: the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party, which undermines nationalism as enunciated in the 1992 Constitution. I relied on empirical data, and conducted desk-top literature review and content analysis of printed public statements leveled against either party by either political party for practicing identity politics. I also analyzed conflict of interest issues arising out of identity politics. The goal of this paper was realized by demonstrating the gradual replacement of nationalism with intersectional and tribal conglomerations held together by identitarian ideology. It also showed how identity politics robs individuals excluded by identity politics, of their dignity and merit in favor of nepotism and consanguinity. It tends to render the poor invisible, and promotes corruption in the competition for economic opportunities. The final outcome showed how identity politics undermines democracy; how it emasculates the Rule of Law; the administration of justice and fairness. This research is likely to inform policy in the context of Ghana.

Keywords: Identity Politics; Party Politics; Constitutional Rule; Rule of Law; Nepotism, Conflict of Interests

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I. Introduction:

The history of Ghana provides the narrative for the general developments and attempts at the administration of good democratic governance and the rule of law under the 1992 constitution. Ethnographically speaking, it can be said that many Ghanaians appear to be satisfied with the personal freedoms they enjoy with respect to Chapter Five protections of the 1992 Constitution. Chapter Five of the Ghanaian Constitution, sort of the "Bill of Rights", provides; *inter alia*; for both positive and negative fundamental human rights and freedoms of the people. Some of these are to be moderated by the people and; others; by the State (See; *Juxtaposition of Hohfeldian Rights, Principle-Based Ethics, Functionings, and the Health-Seeking Behavior of Sub-Saharan Africa, (2016)*). Caution is, however, aroused when one conjoins Chapter Five with Chapter Six, Articles 34 through 50, with respect to the level of individual happiness and satisfaction with the political system since these normative values appear to diminish, and in some cases, evaporate. Those provisions deal with other positive and negative rights such as the political rights and participation mechanisms in the political processes that give the material essence to the freedoms under Chapter Five. The diminishing returns or dividends on the exercise and enjoyment of political rights in Ghana, is caused by the frustration of purpose by political parties' disconnect with their constituencies (Straus & Taylor, 2012; Staniland, 2014). For example, Chapter Six of the Constitution, "The Directive Principles of State Policy", Article 34(1) states "The Directive Principles of State Policy contained in this Chapter shall guide all citizens, Parliament, the President, the Judiciary, the Council of State, the Cabinet, political parties and Constitution or any other law and in taking and implementing policy decisions, for the establishment of a just and free society". The society of Ghana is only just with respect to the low hanging personal freedoms such as the right to marry, to religious practices, to assemble, and to pay taxes. When it comes to competitive, higher order freedoms and ontological security, such as freedom from unemployment, freedom from poverty, freedom from political and social exclusion, the situation is discouraging. It boils down to identity politics with respect to whether you have a job, whether you are promoted, whether you are assigned meaningful tasks at the office, and whether you are a man or a woman. Systemic discrimination on the basis of tribe, religion and gender is rife in both public and private businesses,

organizations and entities such as universities as well as in the Ghana Armed Forces, though just about every director in charge of such outfits are quick to prevaricate and even deny the existence of discriminatory management practices (Adu-Oppong, 2015; Baah-Boateng, 2012). This is further exacerbated by electioneering immaturities displayed by political parties and their aspirants, executive actors' financial shenanigans and malfeasance, and the apparent collaboration of the judiciary with the political actors in ways that undermine the rule of law, the separation of powers and the inherent checks and balances contained in the constitution (Spencer & Moraro, 2017; Bofo-Arthur, 2003; Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). Though the observation on the happiness index of Ghanaians is made with no empirical data in relation to the conduct of political parties, when it comes to the conduct of popular elections, or the modalities for the selection of elected representatives, there is copious literature to show deep disaffection and resentment towards politicians and political leadership of both dominant Parties, namely: National Democratic Congress, NDC and New Patriotic Party, NPP.

The causes of the disaffection and resentment of the electorate includes election violence, instigated; by and large; by political parties, their employment of vigilantes against their opponents as well as intra-party estrangement of members against the creeping determinism of official corruption during each of the administrations of the two dominant parties since the commencement of the Fourth Republic (Afrobarometer Corruption Survey, 2022; CODEO, 2017, 2019; Gyampo *et al.*, 2017; Staniland, 2014; Straus & Taylor, 2012; AU Panel of the Wise, 2010; Awuni, 2019).

In a number of instances, there have been blatant abuse of the rule of law by the party in office with respect to election violence such as Ayawaso-West Wuogon By-election violence in 2019, or the appointment of children, ex-girl friend, and relatives of the sitting President of Ghana, Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo Addo. Human rights abuses have occurred in Ejura where government operatives killed social activists for exercising their right to resist illegal order in 2021, or the denial of the basic needs of the people such as basic classroom blocks for district and rural basic schools, and the promotion of preferential treatment by the political elite and their cronies (Ejura Commission of Inquiry Report, 2021; Agomor, 2019, p. 54-58; Osei, 2013; Agambila, 2012).

The political party elites appear to have concluded that most Ghanaians are weak souls morally and actually, or drunken on pretention and religiosity, and on the belief that their political representatives are still heroic, still motivated by honor, altruism and public service and still care for the constituencies, even if the communities have no social amenities; no good and motorable roads; no garbage collection system and waste disposal ritual to keep the environment clean (Kobina-Kennedy, 2009, p. 170 - 171). Some even believe that if they actually pray incessantly, go to fellowship all-night and pay their tithes, the international liquidity of the nation would improve; the devaluation of the national currency, the cedi would be arrested; and prosperity would return to them. In 2014, the Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams "commanded the falling Cedis to rise" (Duncan-Williams, 2014). He is the Presiding Bishop and General Overseer of the Christian Action Faith Ministries, with headquarters in Accra.

In all of such fruitless political noise, nationalism is being pushed to the brink of extinction and creating cognitive dissonance in the minds of the people leading to individual frustration, confusion, and the lack of national identity (Kobina-Kennedy, 2009, p. 170 -172). Since 1957 when Ghana attained independence, no political party has ever received the mandate of the people to govern, without riding on the wave of populism, couched in nationalistic fervor particularly when it comes to the floating voters (Ibid, 2009, p. 171 - 172). There have been military takeovers that had no legitimacy from the sovereign people of Ghana, except, perhaps, endorsement from a few interests groups, elite politicians and civilians (Agomor, 2019, p. 54-58; Bofo-Arthur, 2003, p.210). This is not the kind of legitimacy that this paper is about, but one obtained out of competitive politics and elections and the seduction of the people into ethnic and political party nationalism which emphasizes identity politics. Howbeit, as soon as power is won through open, fair, and credible elections and the new parliamentarians are sworn-in on the 6th January of every four years and on 7th January of the same year, the President, these two sets of politicians become the new "political establishment". Individual parliamentarians and political appointees immediately shed off traces of populist and communitarian leanings towards the love and devotion to the nation, in preference for elitist, self-imposed social exclusionary restrictions, and identitarian cloaks and jackets (Osei, 2013; Agambila, 2012). Often times, the justification of the politicians for building silos around themselves when they become the "political establishment", are motivated by considerations of providing protective opportunities to those with consanguinity; tribal and ethnic antecedence; political affiliation; and religious connections; filial, sexual; professional and other affiliations, by limiting access the access of unrelated persons (McCauley, 2016).

There has been growing concerns over identity politics and the apparent entrenchment of identity politics within the nascent development of democratic governance in Ghana with a long history of military interventions, particularly because some of such military takeovers were justified on the basis of the elimination of identity politics (Hutchful, 1979; Williams, 1998). Gone are the days when national unity was being forged

on the commonality of goals and aspirations of the people but not on the economic aspirations of the president and his family, those of his cronies, and others of his Political Party (Amoah, 2021; Tsikata&Seini, 2004).

This paper reviewed identity politics as practiced in Ghana under the 4th Republican administrations of the National Democratic Congress, (NDC) (Circa: 7 January 1993 to 7 January 2001 and 7 January 2009 to 7 January 2017). It also interrogated the tapestry of identity politics practiced by the New Patriotic Party, (NPP) (Circa: 7 January 2001 to 2009 and 7 January 2017 to the present). This is to understand the pervasiveness of the phenomenon of identity politics and how it undermines nationalism and nation building.

First, I will discuss what is meant by identity politics on the international level and situate the discussion within the context of politics in Ghana, by relying on documented incidence of the practice of identitarian proclivities by either of the two dominant political parties of NDC and NPP. Such an approach seems to be in line with Erik Erikson's definition of "Identity Crisis". Erikson's theory on identity crisis maintains that "one cannot separate the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crisis in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other" (Erikson, 1968, p. 23). By 'crisis' he meant 'opportunity'. Consistent with this viewpoint, it has been noted that, to do justice to the discussion of political party identity matters, one has to approach the issue from intersectional angle and also assess the conduct of the personalities and groups making up that unit of analyses. Such an approach would help to demonstrate the on-going drive of the NDC and NPP, which the political parties may not even be aware of the potentially harmful consequences of their actions on nationalism and their members. The push for identity politics by Political Parties, poses existential threat to nationalism and patriotism being devalued as the most hallowed national normative values worthy of pursuit, and being replaced with partisan political ideology or identity.

It is not gainsaying to register here that, the political ideologies of the NDC and the NPP in Ghana today is under-developed. It appears most of their members, including some of the educated ones, are unable to articulate a cogent presentation or summary of the alleged political philosophy of any of these two parties, except spurts of unintelligent slogans with no coherency or maturity (Agambila, Ghanaweb, 2012). Agambila's self-critical observation of how the NPP lost power in 2008 National Elections, and under the caption which first appeared in the Chronicle Newspaper of January 13, 2009: *NPP as a Party without an Ideology or National vision* proffered that "The New Patriotic Party lost power because its leadership desired money first, and power second". That, "the National Democratic Congress, by contrast, pursued power first, and money second." The information provided by Agambila is critical because Dr. G. A. Agambila was the former NPP Deputy Finance Minister under J. A. Kufuor. From it, one could conjuncture that not even all of the collective members of Parliament belonging to either of these political parties know the ideologies of their parties. All that most of the party members can provide is that, the NDC is a so-called "Social Democratic party" and the NPP would recite that they are a "property owning political party". These are a series of views which are not sustained by many other researchers on Ghana's democracy. For example, in Anja Osei's 2013 paper: *Political Parties in Ghana: Agents of Democracy*, she reported after conducting a qualitative research on the issue of whether political parties have cogent ideologies that,

"Although ideological competition is not very much in the foreground, all parties were able to give a clear outline of their political objectives in the qualitative interviews. Throughout the interviews, the NPP was remarkably coherent. All interview partners stated correspondingly that their party stands for the rule of law, (liberal) democracy/good governance and freedom (of business, of the individual). Whether or not such objectives are put into practice is yet another question but what can be safely argued is that the NPP has succeeded in giving itself a distinguishable image that is well communicated to the grassroots" (Osei, 2013, p. 549).

Osei appears to have confused the terms "ideology" with "aspirations". Being able to articulate ones goals for the future is done every day by individuals and organizations, even nations without a systematic ideological dogma. After mauling over the ideological inclination of the NPP for a while, Anja Osei (2013) came to agree with Agambila that,

"Around the year 2000, the NPP shifted a little more to the left, 'that the party started to exploit the sense of malaise in the cities and transformed its image of the 'the party of the patricians to a party which is at home with the plebeians' (Nugget, 2007, 263), and 'that, there was a constant rise in left-wing statements in the party manifestos' (Elischer, 2008). In fact, some of the social policies, namely the school feeding program and the National Health Insurance Scheme bear more resemblance to social democracy than to radical market liberalism. Yet, in the 2008 elections, the fault line between the liberal, 'elitist' NPP and the pro-poor NDC re-emerged. Once again, the NPP was unable to counter the image of being a party of Akan elites. The failure to address the problems that arose from the price increases in fuel and consumer products and the display of

extraordinary wealth by many high-ranking NPP officials alienated the urban poor especially and cost the NPP important votes (in 2009)' (Osei, 2013, p. 550).

Today, Ghanaians do not identify with their nation the way they used to, leading up to independence in 1957. The citizens appear to have become disenfranchised and disconnected from the places where their umbilical cords were buried, so to speak, but live in Ghana as strangers with the determination to move to better nations soon. International migration, arduous desert crossings and dangerous stowaways in cargo ships by a significant number of Ghanaians and others in order to get to Europe is an unacceptable epithet on the leaderships of Ghana and other nations in Africa (Kobina-Kennedy, 2009, p. 172; Arthur, 1991). If such a goal is not realistic for the adults, the parents, they do all they can to send their children away to greener pastures. After they place their wards in the Western Industrialized nations, they literally begin to purge Ghana from themselves, their dreams and aspirations and surrender it with wanton disregard to whosoever wants it. They have become clock-watchers, marching time in their officers until the closing bell and jump out of their office buildings exactly at five o'clock (AkufoAddo, 2017). The citizens do not support the nation in exclusion or detriment of all other interests, because individual interests trump the national interests. In a 2021 study which aimed to *Assess the Perception of State and Individual Security in Ghana*, with a sample of 1000 respondents which was spread across the then 16 administrative districts. When respondents were asked "if they were willing to die for Ghana if absolutely necessary", "53.02% of the people sampled said "No, they are not willing to die for Ghana", with "another 9.9% saying they do not know if they are willing to die for Ghana". Only 37.08% said "Yes, they are willing to die for Ghana" (Norman & Jatuat, 2021).

Nationalism is an ideology that promotes individual loyalty, devotion, or allegiance to the nation, which is expected that such consideration would outweigh even personal interests and comfort (ibid, p. 56). Once the political parties receive legitimacy from the electorate after general elections, they devise ways and means to undermine the trust reposed in them by the sovereign people of Ghana (Grossman & Helpman, 2021, p. 1102-1104). They appropriate all public assets, jobs, economic opportunities, allocation of infrastructural services as belonging to their unique political party, and with the false impression that, because they have legitimacy from the electorate, they also are the owners of all national assets which they can create, loot, share, and distribute to their numbers on identitarian and partisan principles (Salih & Nordland, 2007; In Agomor, 2019, p. 60). Such actions are taken as a show of control, redistribution of wealth and recognition.

Writing on *Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition and Participation*, Nancy Fraser, (1996) opined that "identity politics appear to promote "false consciousness: since it takes a bifocal approach to social justice through claims of either redistribution as the remedy for, example, male domination in the case of feminism or claims of recognition of the differences between the sexes". She saw "economic egalitarianism to assure justice for minorities and women as part and parcel of an outdated materialism that can neither articulate nor challenge key experiences of injustice", in the absence of integrated approach to problem solving (Fraser, 1996, p. 4-6). While such actions may be the result of ignorance, intentional distortion of political reality, or subterfuge, it demonstrates the lack of clear working understanding of democracy or failure of democracy and the rule of law, and how these concepts are supposed to work within a political system (Norman, 2017, p. 3-4). This paper would also show how these two political parties assiduously seek to supplant nationalism with "Partisan identities" and "associations" of their members as well as potential beneficiaries of public assistance and government employment. The third part of this discussion would focus on intra-party discrimination, disenfranchisement of the grassroots and alienation due to considerations of consanguinity, filial associations and ethnicity. The fourth part of the party would focus on how identity politics leads to disrespect of constitutional law and the rule of law, two events that are inversely related to economic impunities in the general stream of commerce, official corruption and the lack of professionalism in the public spaces. The fifth installment of this paper would focus on the consequences the perceived social exclusion creates, partisan identity politics against civil disobedience as well as worker demonstrations and agitations.

The final focal theme would be on the assessment of the effects of identity politics on conflict of interests, the lack of professionalism and institutional dysfunction or public corruption. In summary, the following effects were culled from the literature review on Identity Politics as practiced in Ghana for further content analysis and assessment of the normative values of the nation, the encroachments on human rights, the rule of law and specific constitutional provisions implicated. The effects are listed as follows:

- i. *Effect of identity politics on nationalism in the context of Ghana;*
- ii. *Effect of identity politics on government appointments, Board memberships, promotions in the public sector;*
- iii. *Effect of identity politics vis-à-vis intra-political party alienation and disenfranchisement;*
- iv. *Effect of identity politics on constitutional law, the rule of law and human rights*
- v. *Effect of identity politics on corruption under NPP and NDC government*

I. Assessing the Effect of identity politics on nationalism in the context of Ghana

As a working definition, identity politics in the context of the Ghanaian political landscape and to help focus the discourse on the effects of identity politics on nationalism, is defined as distribution of wealth and demand for recognition for members of a given tribe, filial relations; associates from prior relationships either through work or marital affairs; consanguinity; sexual friendships and dalliances as well as affiliations of prior collaboration; common social and economic antecedence and religious; regional; political and ethnic groupings within a given political Party at the expense of all others. Notice that although Ghana practices identity politics, the intellectual understanding of the concept is rather crude and in its nascent stages of appreciation and rational development. The author's definition of identity politics in this paper is informed by the historical documentation of the conduct as practiced by the two competitive political parties during their various tenures of offices since the commencement of the Fourth Republican era. This is an exposition of the intersectional nature of identity politics practiced by the two dominant political parties with particular focus on their historical and publicly available information on recruitment, appointments, retention and promotion of individuals to key public service positions such as Heads, CEOs and Deputies of public institutions, Board Members of public corporations and entities and other government employment opportunities. It is also presumed that such appointments were made with or without regard to the appointees' prior training or experience, skill and competencies, provided there is any or a combination of these attributes:- direct or distant consanguinity, prior affiliation, friendship, and influential association through political party membership, tribal and religious affiliations, beneficial dependencies and social indebtedness demanding for wealth distribution and cultural (in this case, tribal) recognition. This investigation does not cover occupants of purely political positions such as executive officers of district and municipal assemblies, ministerial appointments or presidential staffers to avoid the conflict of laws arguments in support of "executive privilege", "presidential prerogative", and any such labels that may detract from the focal themes of this paper. The issue here is not about procedure for the appointments but the relationships between the appointed and the appointing authority. Where the relationship between the appointing authority and the appointed influenced by consanguinity and filial considerations, such an appointment may not be made since it runs counter to the spirit and substance of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

i. Application and Definition of Identity Politics and Social Movements

Identity politics has deleterious effect on nationalism and patriotism because it promotes bigoted group interests over the national interests and disincentivises volunteerism, altruism and the pursuit of supererogational initiatives, all of which are dimensions of nationalism. Fukuyama's thesis in his book, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and Politics of Presentment*, (2018), talks about the apparent decay of American institutions due to the fact that major parts of these institutions have been "progressively captured by powerful interest groups and locked into a rigid structure that (is) unable to reform itself" (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 6). Though he was speaking about American society, probably more specifically during the administration of Donald Trump, it resonant with Ghana's political portraiture under both the NDC and NPP governments but more under the NPP's Akufo Addo's administration, in terms of the systematic destruction of nationalism in favor of tribal identity politics. This is because of the undue attention these two political parties pay to special interest groups or party members, issues of consanguinity and the doling of opportunities and contracts to affiliates and associates, including ex-lovers. Both the NDC and NPP understand democracy from the viewpoint that, the winner takes all. These two parties are also guilty of "populist nationalism", where "the leaders seek to use the legitimacy conferred by democratic elections to consolidate power", "by claiming direct charismatic connection to the people, who are often defined in a narrow ethnic terms (of being either Ewe, during J. J. Rawlings' NDC administration; Ashanti, during J. A. Kufuor's NPP; Gonja, during John D. Mahama's NDC administration or, Akyem during AkufoAddo's NPP administrations respectively) that exclude big parts of the collective nation" (ibid, 2018, p. 7). Political parties self-describe as social movements with the aim of changing the status quo through new approaches, but they have each failed to achieve under each change of government.

In Ghana, most movements are not really "social" as in cross-sectional, community-based approaches, but insular, and unique to a particular political group or trade union or commercial association. The motivations for most of such activities with respect to identity politics, borrowing from Fukuyama's work (2018) is influenced by three attributes of leadership, namely: *Thymos*, *Isothymia* and *Megalothymia*. He defines "thymos" as the part of the soul that craves recognition of dignity. It appears Ghana has been ruled largely by men who, recognizing their own inadequacies as leaders, or that of their not too illustrious families, craves for

acclaim and recognition of greatness, even where they are not deserving of such approbation. They engage in grandiose national projects or make grandiose promises to pursue developmental projects which they know they could not possibly achieve during their terms of offices. For example, during the Covid-19 outbreak, when Ghana was still managing to come to terms with the ravages of the Pandemic, President Akufo Addo, in his eighth address on the 27th April, 2021 to the nation on television and in print, disclosed that, “there are 88 districts in our country without district hospitals; we have six new regions without regional hospitals; we do not have five infectious disease control centers and dotted across the country, and we do not have enough testing and isolation centers for diseases like Covid-19. We must do something urgently about this. That is why Government has decided to undertake a major investment in our healthcare infrastructure, the largest in our history. We will, this year, begin constructing 88 hospitals in the districts without hospitals”. This promise came as a shock to the population and the world because almost all knew instinctively that that promise was political puffing. And true to history, it never happened that the NPP government under President Akufo Addo was able to execute even third of this outrageous promise and what Fukuyama calls Isothymia.

“Isothymia” is the demand to be respected on an equal basis with other people. “Megalothymia” is the desire to be recognized as superior.” “Megalothymia” thrives on exceptionality by taking big risks” such as undertaking the construction of a national cathedral in the middle of seeking USD\$3bn bail-out from the IMF, which is about 4% of GDP, with public debt now above 100% of GDP. Local and foreign interest payments alone eats 70 – 100% of all revenue and there is 50% national inflation, with the Ghana Central Bank raising the main interest rate to 27%, and a slow recovery from Covid-19 (Economists, 20/12/2022). All of such activities are meant to “lead to self recognition as superior to others” (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 9). Similarly, it is the same as building an airport in Ho, Volta Region when the road to Ho from Accra is in deplorable state and which the average Ghanaian uses. Although many scholars and researchers see identity politics as expressions of power and a desire for social re-alignment, including researchers as Fraser, (1997); Bernstein, (2005); Lichterman, (1999), Fukuyama sees it as concept that goes beyond the mere expression of power. Identity politics is widely used to describe phenomena as diverse as multiculturalism, women’s movement, civil rights, lesbian and gay movements, separatist movements and violent ethnic and nationalist conflicts in parts of independent Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe (Bernstein, 2005, p. 47). Lichterman (1999) labeled identity politics as “a slippery term” (ibid, p. 136; In Bernstein, 2005, p. 48). Fraser alleged that it is an expression in “derogation of feminism, anti-racism and anti-heterosexism” (1997, p.113). To Fukuyama (2018, p. 18) identity politics is about “the inner self, as the basis of human dignity”. “The inner sense of dignity seeks recognition”. “Self esteem arises out of esteem by others”. Because human beings naturally crave recognition, the modern sense of identity evolves quickly into identity politics, in which individuals demand public recognition of their worth” (ibid, p. 18). Therefore, “identity politics encompass a large part of the political struggles of the contemporary world from democratic revolutions to new social movements and Islamism to politics on contemporary university campuses (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 18-19). This is consistent with how Erik Erikson first defined identity crisis in 1968 to encompass the totality of the actions and conduct of the youth in their relationships with others and the establishment in society.

Ghana’s political landscape is fraught with social identity politics. According to Grossman & Helpman (2021, p. 1102), social identity situation “is where the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership” overrides his commitment to, for example, the constitution, rule of law or normative ethical values deemed as acceptable in the Ghanaian society. In Ghana, President Akufo Addo, more than the others, appears to have embraced his commitment to his family and friends in terms of placement in job opportunities than probably any other President in the history of Ghana.

ii. Government leaders and Appointments, Identity Politics, Consanguinity, Tribal Identity

Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, (2004) agreed in their paper: “*Ethnicity Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Ghana*” which was a United Nations Research Institute for Social Development’s project, that Ghana is “a multicultural, multi-ethnic, religious and political society represented by majority of its tribal make-up of the Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbani, Guan, Ga Adangbe, Grusi, and the Mande-Busanga (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000, 2010, 2022). Ghana also boasts of inter-ethnic, inter-tribal marriages, cooperation and co-existence that projects strong inter-tribal bonds despite the heterogeneity of the nation. However, they asserted that “ethnic rivalries during the colonial era, the effect of colonialism on different groups and regions, coupled with the uneven distribution of social and economic amenities in both the colonial and post-independence period, have all contributed to the inequalities, and to some extent, some of the present day ethnic tensions within and among the various ethnic groups in the country” (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004, p. 7). To these researchers, nationalism, perhaps, has never been part of the cognitive awareness of the people of

Ghanaians when it comes to their collective sense of statehood. If so, this renders the whole concept of sovereignty dating back to the Treaty of Münster and Osnabrück, and simply known as the Peace of Westphalia some sort of accidental notation in the annals of world history, due to identity politics being instigated by ethnicity and tribal culture (Croxtton, 1999). The Peace of Westphalia ended the religious-based Thirty Years' War which had been fought between the years of 1618-1648, and more crucially, it has established the legal basis of modern statehood and put out the fundamental rules of the modern international politics (ibid, 1999). Such thinking is certainly not borne out by the narrative of the independence struggle.

Asante & Gyimah-Boadi further alleged that the Akans in the South appear to have overwhelming economic and resource advantage over the Northern sector. In addition, there exists the perception that there is "a divide in Ghanaian politics between the populist and the elite strands in society and between the rural and urban populations" (ibid, 2004, p. 7). Their argument continues thus, due to the apparent superior resource and material advantage, the South appears to have over all other parts of the nation, there has been seemingly constant North-South flow of migration. "The North-South flow of migration is emblematic of the ethno-regional inequalities that have developed in Ghana since colonial times when infrastructural development and productive projects had been concentrated in the South and left the North relatively underdeveloped" (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004, p. 8). But the north-south flow of migration is independent of infrastructural development in any nation because migration is part of the inquisitive impulses of man (Arthur, 1991).

Note that the view expressed by Asante and Gyimah-Boadi in 2004 was the prevailing perception of researchers and scholars in discussing the differential disparities among the regions in Ghana. The reality is that, there are many swaths of the South that also suffer from differential inequalities such as those communities in the South of the Volta Region. Kwabla, Norman, Kweku, *et al.*, (2015), conducted *Investigation into the Perceived Neglect of the Volta Region, Ghana, under Millennium Development Goal #7*. MDG goal #7 had four dimensions, which were: the integration of the participation of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. The second goal was to reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss. Third goal was to halve by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The final goal was to achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers in the respective countries. Water and Sanitation considerations fall under Goal # 7.

In that study, the authors found that, "many households in the region at both rural and urban places and spaces had no in-door, built-in toilet facilities. Waste management at the municipal and household level was a challenge. Open defecation and reckless discharge of domestic waste were twin threats to the public health in the region. This study validated the earlier suspicion that the Volta Region was being neglected in terms of the lack of the provision of basic social and communal amenities. The MDG goal #7 was not attained with respect to the Volta Region and most of Ghanaian communities with similar vulnerabilities by 2015 due to the actual neglect of the region" (ibid, p. 3-5). These challenges are identical to the sanitation and environmental neglect of the Northern Region as evidence in the South. Similar findings have been noted in the Central Region, Western Region, Ashanti Region and Bono, Ahafo and other regions, (Kwabla, Norman, Kweku, *et al.*, 2015, p. 6-7). Although on paper, the government of Ghana produced flowery achievements reporting that it achieved most of the targets, it also at the same time reported that, the country is still faced with series of problems towards actualizing these goals in some parts of the country most especially in the rural areas" (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). In addition, government was not able to eradicate extreme poverty, "that the chance of improvement in the three Northern regions that are below the target is high due to the review of poverty in the regions, (Olasupo, &Plaatjie, 2016, p. 628).

Additionally, Asante and Gyimah-Boadi (2004, p. 11) appear to have anchored their paper on conflictual internal disconnection with the exposition that, "four decades into independence, inequalities are still pervasive in Ghana society". That, "the Akan dominance of the political system has largely persisted from Nkrumah's time to the present, notwithstanding the perception that, the Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council, (PNDC) had ushered in a new period of Ewe predominance, especially in politics and in the public sector" (ibid, p. 9 – 10).

The trouble with their paper is that, it appears to have lost its focus or the right nomenclature to characterize the nature of identity politics in Ghana and the key actors that play defining roles in a political system designed by default or with intentionality to benefit first the political elite and subsequently, symbolically benefit the vulnerable and the economically disenfranchised members of society. The first section of their paper concluded that, "even if the claims of an emergent Ewe dominance were valid for the 1980's and 1990's, the pattern appears to have been reversed with the coming into power of the New Patriotic Party, (NPP) government, which is largely perceived as a pro-Akan government" (Asante &Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). How?

Among some of the things the Rawlings government was accused of, was the alleged creation of the "Ewe Mafia", which was alleged to have rigged the economy and employment opportunities in Ghana in their favor, till the end of the Rawlings' administration. The reality of this assertion, however, cannot be proven by

the level of progress in the Volta Region as a whole during and since the Rawlings' administration. There are many parts of this noble region with systemic, if not endemic poverty as reported by the needs assessment research of the southern part of the region by Kwabla, Norman, Kweku, *et al.*, (2015, p. 1-7): - no public toilet, not even bole holes to provide potable water, no schools, no roads, no clinics, and no trickle-down progress from the perceived Mafioso of the Rawlings' entire 18 years of governance of Ghana: - which may debunk the alleged existence of a Mafioso of any kind under Rawlings.

The persistent allegations of the existence of Mafioso was extended once again to Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, ex-President of Ghana, who once described himself as being easily recognizable to voters because he had the sexiest eyes among all the presidential contestants in the 2000 general elections that brought him into power. This cast him into a Fukuyamian trap of being a charismatic leader of some sort with populist appeal. From that moment on, he earned the moniker, Mr. Sexy Eyes. During his administration, it was alleged that he arrived together to the seat of government with the (Ashanti) "Manhyia Mafia" (Manhyia is Kufuor's political constituency, a suburb of Kumasi), who bought and sold some of the lands of State in the city, including the alleged illegal acquisition of the African Reagent Hotel, at Airport Residential, a suburb of Accra. Agambila, a former deputy finance minister under Kufuor reported in 2012 that "the NPP leadership has since 2001 (through 2008) become wealthy. Don't ask me to bring the evidence, ask the 17 presidential aspirants how much their campaigns cost, and where they got the money to finance them. So long as the NPP leadership is motivated first and foremost by money, and the NDC by an unquenchable thirst for power, the NDC will govern, and the NPP will pursue private business interests" (Agambila, 2012). While the statements by or attributed to Dr. Agambila via the Chronicle Newspaper publication may be harsh, going by how other high ranking members of the party have been treated in the past, it is fair to accept that, perhaps, Dr. Agambila is probably more on point than not, since similar sentiments have been expressed by Dr. Arthur Kobina Kennedy, and author of *Chasing the Elephant to the Bush, 2009*. He wrote that "Ultimately, however, what ails the NPP is not a crisis about our constitution or about elections. It is crisis of spirit. The party that had grown accustomed to pulling itself up by its bootstraps suddenly became dependent on government (that is to say, access to government money and resources) (Kobina-Kennedy, 2009, p. 171). Speaking about the effect of identity politics on the NPP, he added, "We need to move away from judging people in our party based on what their fathers and grandfathers did and let everyone make their own way in their generation" (Kobina-Kennedy, 2009, p. 172). While the following personalities have not made public statements to being badly treated by the NPP, in private circles, Mr. Boakye Kyeremanteng Agyarko, former Minister of Energy; Jake Lantei Otanka Obetsebi-Lamprey, former Chairman of NPP; Mr. Paul Afoko, former NPP Chairman who took over after Jake, and a long list of previously powerful NPP insiders, have all disclosed their displeasure towards the party due to the negative effect of identity politics on their roles and conduct. For some strange reasons, and at some point, they were not considered as being part of the Akyem Mafia and relegated to the back burner of the NPP affairs and decision making processes. It appears the NPP's internal politics is fraught with many fractured fractals in a network of forces that end up in isolated silos of power bases within the party due to intra-party 'fratricide', 'sororicide', and 'awunculicide' as well as the death of nationalism. The allegations of Akans being in superior economic position continued unabated until the arrival of Prof. Evans Atta Mills.

Professor Evans Atta Mills' government came with him the "Fanti Mafia", who, it was wildly alleged, owned the big houses in East Legon, also an influential as well as affluent suburb of Accra. His government came with, probably, the most innocuous Mafioso Ghana has ever been fortunate to have. The gossips did not link this group of 'made men and women' to East Legon but to new settlements off the Spintex Industrial road and in gated communities such as the Regimmanuel Estates. During his tenure, not much scandal was linked to him personally, since he was generally perceived to be clean and abhorrent of such vices. Prof. John Evans Atta Mills died in office half way through his administration and this misfortune paved the way for the emergence of the alleged "Gonja Mafia", led by Mr. John Dramani Mahama as the President of Ghana with his brother, Ibrahim Mahama, as the alleged de facto, howbeit, unofficial, Minister of State-at-Large. When Mr. Mahama left office, he allegedly left with the Gonja Mafia. But his too was accused of buying up the lands in East Legon and building large multileveled buildings to display their new found wealth in the armpit of Burma Camp as well as the questionable acquisition of the Merchant Bank, once a public bank owned by the government of Ghana and the loss of millions of dollars earmarked for Savanna Accelerated Development (SADA), where some GHS 32.4 million was paid to ACICL to plant five million trees in the Savanna ecological zone which never materialized but could only account for 700,000 trees. The Mahama government was also accused of stealing through over-invoicing some USD\$600 million from the Ameri Power deal to provide a 10 turbine, 230-250 MW capacity electricity power to Ghana on built, operate, own and transfer deal in 2016. They were other allegations such as Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Agency (GYEEDA) Scandal.

Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo became the President of Ghana on January 7th, 2017 on the wave of populism, which began to wane within the first hundred days of his elevation. With this august, almost surprisingly astonishing defeat of John Dramani Mahama that ushered in Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo into

the Presidency, came also, the “Akyem Mafias” (Kobina-Kennedy, 2009, p. 4). Dr. Kennedy discussed the dynamics within the NPP political party under several leaderships in 2009 his book: *Chasing the Elephant into the bush*. Even here, it was vehemently alleged, without an iota of proof that the Gate-keeper of this Mafioso was the handsome and dapper lawyer cousin of the President. AkufoAddo’s team includes names that invoked power, money, power and vindictiveness even today: Ken Ofori Atta, (Cousin and Minister of Finance); Lawyer Gabby Okyere Darko, (Cousin but with no portfolio); Presidential Secretary and lawyer, Asante Bediatuo, (Cousin); Samuel Atta Akyea, (President’s cousin and Minister of Works and Housing); Virginia Hesse, (Ex-lover and Baby Mama of President’s daughter, now Ambassador to Czech Republic); Eno Ofori-Atta (Sister-in-law of Finance Minister, and appointed Deputy MD for Finance of the State Insurance Company); Alhaji Ramadan (Father-in-law of Vice President Dr. Bawumia and Father of Second Lady Samira Bawumia appointed Ghana’s Envoy to UAE); Abu Ramadan (Brother-in-law to Dr. Bawumia, and brother of Second Lady Samira Bawumia, Deputy Director General of National Disaster Management Organization); Gina Blay, (Wife of Freddy Blay, NPP Chairman till 2022, appointed Ghana’s ambassador to Germany) and many others of consanguinity and direct family relationships that were appointed during Akufo Addo’s administration from 2017 to date. Others have accused the Akufo Addo’s government for being a blatant abuser of the 1992 Constitution with such appointments of his blood and NPP blood lines as the criteria for qualification.

As a general fact of life, Mafioso, like criminal gangs, do not simply emerge and die off with the passing of one presidency to the next. They continue in the fringes of power and in the corridors of money, because they tend to be well entrenched, well-imbedded in the political system and in the stream of commerce. But considering the wide-spread allegations and actual records of the sheer number of related persons employed in the Akufo Addo government, the quantum of his relatives in his government, raises serious questions of the abuse of office, nepotism, conflict of interests, discrimination and a classic portraiture of identity politics (Grossman & Helpman, 2021; Fukuyama, 2018; Osei, 2013; Bernstein, 2005; Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak & Giugni, 1995). “Identity predicts attitudes towards activities such as trade”, employment opportunities, access to finance, and so on, “with different salience in different political, economic and cultural environment”, “after accounting for a host of other individual-specific, economic variables” (Grossman & Helpman, 2021, p. 1102 - 1103).

II. Assessing the Effect of identity politics on government appointments, Board memberships, promotions in the public sector;

In a study conducted by Bauer and Darkwah (2021): “*The President’s Prerogative?*” *The Cabinet Appointment Process in Ghana and the Implications for Gender Parity*”, they found that “Who is Eligible and Qualified to be a Minister In Ghana?” was influenced by “affiliational, representational and experiential criteria” as well as ‘reward for prior commitment and contributions to the party’ (Bauer & Darkwah, 2021, p. 14-15). What the Bauer & Darkwah finding boils down to, is that to be selected from among the party members, controlling for similar qualifications, if one has been noticed by the Flag-bearer of the party during the campaign or the lead up to the election victory to have campaigned, worked hard for the party, or contributed large sums of money to the party, then one stands a better than null chance of being placed in a good position. This narrative provides a telling reason why most party members are neglected by the two dominant parties when power is won. It does not matter how hard one works at the constituency, grassroots level. That appears to be almost a waste of precious time. It is better for one to work with the national executives, to be noticed not only by a few but as many as possible with the Flag-bearer of the party being the most important attention one needs to attract. When the flag-bearer subsequently wins power, there is a high probability of being relegated to the back, way back of the political party in power, if he had not noticed you before for helping out for him to win power. If your ground-father was not a friend of his father or mother. If you were not classmates, or even professional acquaintances of the president, you will be ignored. This is irrespective of whether the President uses terms such as running an “all inclusive government” as Presidents John A. Kufuor and John D. Mahama did but failed, if he had never seen you, your work and commitment (Bauer & Darkwah, 2021, p. 17). This renders identity politics even more of a slippery collection of people with common interests, but who are willing to walk over his party member for the attention of the man who becomes or is becoming the President.

In Ghana, partisan political identities are not invoked against migrants or immigrants, whether legal or illegal in Ghana, nor are they invoked against those perceived to be sabotaging the fortunes of the nation. Partisan politics in Ghana is invoked intra- and inter-political party, as well as intra- and inter-ethnic identity against members of the same or other tribes in the same political parties or not and that are perceived to have been or belonged to the tribe or ethnic group that may have helped to create negative narrative for the members of the political party in power now. As alluded to by Besley & Persson, (2021, p. 1), “the two motivating factors of identity politics particularly in the Western Industrialized nations are, “a group of angry citizens, who identify with the nation and are suspicious of immigration as well as political establishment”. The other facet is “a

populist, radical-right politicians, who have shaken up existing party system and push an anti-immigration agenda” (ibid, 2021, p. 1).

Ghana’s Political Parties do not espouse angry anti-immigrant political doctrine as part of mainstream party political thought, although there have been instances of such xenophobic tendencies demonstrated by central government (Romola, 2015). “In recent times, politics in Ghana has become the politics of personal attacks, vilification and insults,” (Amo Ofori, 2015, p.1). Certain leaders of the two dominant parties, NDC and NPP at the regional levels have had occasion to deliver disparaging speeches against members of their opponent’s political party.

The kind of identity politics Ghana espouses can be described as Afro-xenophobia and Vigilantism, or Inter-Political Party Phobia. Generally speaking, Afroxenophobia (the fear of other ethnic black or foreign person and his way of life), can be expressed intra-country starting with the ethnic Biafra war in Nigeria (1966-1970) (Goetz, 2001; In Norman, 2022, p. 2). In a recent paper under the title of “*The Axis of Hate: Identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and Vigilantism*”, (2022) that compared Identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and Vigilantism in Africa with what pertains in the Western Industrialized nations, it was stated that,

“Afroxenophobia can also be outwardly displayed as in the case of Ghana’s expulsion of Nigerians, (1968-69) and Nigeria’s retaliatory expulsion of Ghanaians, (1984-85). It can be expressed covertly as in tribal Identity Politics in African democracies, or violently as it was in Eastern Africa in Rwanda and Burundi. The Rwanda Genocide of 1994 was an intra-country Identity war, while the Ugandan expulsion of Asians under Idi Amin, 1972, or, Kenya Asian attacks of 1982 were outward expressions of the hate of foreigners (Romola, 2015; Aremu, 2013). Tanzanian’s Sungu-Sungu or vigilantism against Nomadic herdsman, or Libyan enslavements of migrants from other African nations (2013-2018), and the South African hate attacks of Nigerians in Johannesburg and Durban, (2014-2019) or the socio-political vigilantism directed at foreigners and migrants in other nations in Continental Africa are all well documented incidence of African nationalism or Identity crises (Oni and Okunade, 2018; Hanekom and Webster, 2010; Oppong, 2002; In Norman, 2022, p. 3)”.

Intra-Political Party Phobia goes hand in hand with “vigilantism as the vehicle or the means of execution of the philosophy of exclusion, in order to realize Identitarian goals of a group or a community” (Norman, 2022, p. 3). Although Xenophobia is a common feature of human societies and has recently been experienced in the major commercial centers of Ghana as exhibited by the national Spare Parts and Electrical parts dealers in Kumasi and Accra against Nigerian and Chinese traders in such markets, the agitation has not received political party tacit endorsement, though there has not been a public condemnation of the agitation against the foreign traders by any of the Political Parties (Miller and Rensmann, 2010; Horowitz and Noiriell, 1992). Besley & Persson, (2021), used political-economic models to explain how identity politics evolve overtime, at least in the Western world. The triggers for the tension arousing political identity thoughts are the clash between the socio-economic classes on one side and the competition for recognition and cognitive control of the public between liberals (NDC in the case of Ghana) and conservatives (NPP). “The cleavage is largely seen to follow people’s identities, rather than socio-economic fundamentals.” Whereas pre-independence struggles were motivated by class and income dynamics in Ghana and elsewhere, the post-independence triggers for identity politics have been largely due to assertions of “belonging” or “not belonging here” syndrome. Although the NPP is a nationally constructed political party, there are significant swaths of its members that believe that the NPP Party belongs to the Akans of Ghana, while the NDC belongs to the Ewes of Ghana. At some epochal periods, depending on the leaders of the respective parties, even the Akan label, in the case of the NPP being an Akan party, gave way to a different shade of Akaness.

At the commencement of any new political administration in Ghana, there is a certain amount of inter- and intra-Political Party purging against the members of the previous party’s members still at post within the various government ministries and in strategic as well as well-paying jobs within the bureaucracy. Internationally, it has been noted that, the sub-set of “angry political groups” towards government inclusive immigrant and foreign assets, form new advocacy groups such as Generation Identitaire, Alt-Right groups in the U.S.A and in other nations. In Ghana, however, those “angry groups” in the various political parties, exert a different kind of pressure. They either demand or forcibly remove from government offices those they perceive to be belonging to the other party such as the National Democratic Congress, NDC, when NPP has the reign of government. The reverse is true when NDC has the reign of government. In some instances, the Central government would issue letters or directives asking the particular individual, board members of government institutions, to proceed on leave, which is a euphemism for either termination from employment or demotion from the post of a director to senior manager or deputy director, with the corresponding reduction in salaries, status, fringe benefits and recognition as well as esteem. As we have noted from Fukuyama (2018), self-esteem arises out from the esteem of others or once peer. In the national situation, the collective national focus in supporting a given political party is not motivated by building a strong civil society, or creating a responsible nation where rights based society of everyone is equally cared for and he or she is able to have agency, capabilities and functioning. It is not about egalitarian principles, but rather about how we can exclude others

from participating in the national cake so that those excluded would suffer, become vulnerable and invisible. It is about the promotion of devaluation of a portion of the population so that the part that rises to fame and fortune would enjoy the highest esteem of their peer. Most Ghanaian politicians have recognized that those without higher academic credentials, money and influence can be ignored, and are being ignored. To compel the political parties to pay attention to them, to the poor, the vulnerable and lower classmen and women, they join forces with each other and become power brokers but only for limited moments of time (Besley & Persson, 2020, p. 11). The rise of Identitarian groups in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Eastern Europe, UK and other places like Argentina moved the discussion from classic economic equity and re-distribution of income as well as other social assets “towards a more divisive politics which fractures cohesive elements in society.” In Ghana, however, there are no discernable labels for this shift, other than a series of visually unconnected acts of political party vigilantism, violence and disruption of general and by-elections, which are, in fact, connected as part of a grand scheme to divide the nation into political gated suburbs and enclaves with no chances of conflation or deep collaborations. Some of these apparently unconnected events are the rise of national commercial traders against Nigerian commercial traders and Chinese shop keepers in Accra and Kumasi. Others have not only risen against the foreign shopkeepers but have forcibly locked those shops and parted with the keys. Several Trade Unions have backed their members that had engaged in such vigilantism and xenophobic attacks (Norman, 2022). A long standing, quasi-state sponsored vigilante and xenophobic activity in Ghana, in this case in the Afram Plains, is the violence against Fulani herdsmen which occurs under the watchful eyes of the District Chief Executives, the District Security Councils manned by government security and intelligence operatives and political opinion leaders. There are Vigilante Groups with deep affiliations with, or sponsorship of national political parties within Sub-Saharan Africa such as those of Ghana (Norman, 2019, p. 3; Gyampo *et al.*, 2017), South Africa (Theodore Petrus, 2015), and in Nigeria (Spencer & Moraro, 2017).

III. Assessing the Effect of identity politics on constitutional law, the rule of law and human rights

Constitutional rights are today the universal norms of individuals in most nations whether those nations operate under the written constitution or not, particularly in what can be described as liberal democracies with pluralistic political party systems. Ghana’s 1992 Constitution provides for the legislature, the executive, and judiciary, within a system of checks and balances among the three branches, with the further fragmentation of power in each of these branches. It appears the delineated roles of the three branches of government are not enough for the executive branch of the government of Ghana and usurp the orderly integration of the system with purposive appointments to the judiciary of party supporters, or those sympathetic to a particular political party, and diabolically influences the outcome of cases, sometimes at the highest courts of the land under the allegations of money bribes, promises of improved fringe benefits, influential post-retirement contracts and many other shenanigans. The Constitution itself granted the power of interference to the presidency to appoint ministers from the parliament under Articles 76 through 79. These provisions formalize the executive interference in the matters of parliament through the ministers who are members of the Parliament, and the control of the Parliamentarians through the ministers. Other developments which allow the executive interference with the judiciary is during the adjudication of cases and judicial interpretation of the laws in Ghana, where government was a party. In those situations, government was often favored over and above the adversaries of government in the courts. This led the Minister of National Security, Albert Kan-Dapaah to caution Ghanaian Judges to stop taking “one-sided approach” to justice administration. This observation too is evidence of political identity politics. This caution was issued at a meeting with the judiciary to discuss the role of the judiciary in Ghana’s national security architecture. The Minister added, “if you [judges] are going to be able to address security challenges that we have, especially the domestic ones, we need to ensure that there is a judicial system that works. If you do not have a judicial system that works, many people will simply take the laws into their own hands and misbehave and do what they want”. He added that, ‘if the interpretation of the law is tilted in our {government} favor all the time, people will start accusing the judiciary and will not have the confidence that they need” (Kan-Dapaah, personal communications, 12/08/2022). By this admonition, the Minister of National Security was appealing to the judges to respect the constitutional order and not devotion or adherence to Political Party aspirations and ideologies. While this admonition is damning, it also reveals a painful truth about not only how political opponents and those not aligned with the government or the party in office have experienced the judiciary but how the general public perceives the judiciary to be. Despite the risk the Minister of National Security took to speak truth to power, some leading members of the New Patriotic Party, including former Attorney General Nii Ayikoi Otoo and the head of the New Patriotic Party legal team, Frank Davis, condemned the Minister (Ghanaweb, 12/08/2022). While such defense was expected from some members of the NPP, the judges did not react negatively or in denial of that ministerial caution. It is well known that ‘all politics is identity politics’. ‘All politics requires that we build coalitions around a shared picture of reality, a shared image of the future, deeply rooted in our image of ourselves, and what justice or progress might

look like. Racial or ethnic background shapes how we experience the criminal justice system”. In Ghana and in Africa proper, Political Party affiliations shapes how one experiences justice, whether in a criminal or civil matter. ‘Gender shapes how we experience work, or how we experience violence. If one were disabled, one would be more likely to be at the frontline of austerity’. Political and economic demands that bind interest groups together, whether it is the demand for greater public transparency and accountability or it is about the equitable distribution of the national cake, ‘are not indulgent departures from real politics. They are rooted in concrete realities of who has power? Who has resources? Who is exposed to violence and who is sheltered from it? They are cultural frameworks for understanding, organizing and indeed changing the world’ (Eleanor Penny, 2019, In Norman, 2022, p. 45 - 48) “Part of an individual’s selfhood can be explained by membership in specific groups”, according to social identity theory of group behavior (Handler, 2019:1; Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Wiarda, 2014, In Norman, 2022, p. 46). “In a recent paper, *The Axis of Hate: Identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and Vigilantism*, it was reported that in Ghana, identity politics is defined by one’s affiliation with a Political Party more than one’s ethnicity, although the mainstream Political Parties’ memberships tend to be skewed to one ethnic group or the other in terms of percentage representation. For example, due to the extreme politicization of the mundane activities of the society, in Ghana, each man or woman is what he or she makes himself or herself to be: - Either a member of the Political Party (A) the New Patriotic Party or, Party (B), the National Democratic Congress. Man is reduced to a political equation: NPP or NDC. Beyond such labels, politically unaffiliated men and women are simply not as important entities in the apportionment of the national cake, jobs, opportunities and justice as those, who are credentialed members of a given Political Party. For this reason, they become invisible, denied jobs, promotion and even succor” all of which are abusive to specific provisions of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Norman, 2019, 2022). ‘Nationalism’ or tribal politics as practiced even today in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and many other African nations, ‘is indeed, a form of identity politics’ or patriotism and branding (Nagashima, 1970; Fan, 2006; Ishio, 2010; Hakala et al. 2013). The promotion of political identity politics have been used to flaunt anti-graft legislation, undermined public procurement regulations, distort competition for employment of citizens on objective, merit-based standards in preference for the placement of related persons such as daughters, cousins that are senior citizens, nephews, children, brothers, octogenarian in-laws, hexagenarians, septuagenarian and nonagenarian party supporters, tribal men and women in disregard to all other considerations such as prior experience, professional and academic qualifications, skills, knowledge and abilities of all others: - all of which are present within the Ghanaian national public employment space, particularly during the Akufo Addo administration (Addison, 2007, p. 320 – 321). The Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwah, criticized the Akufo Addo administration for engaging retirees in the public sector while qualified young persons were being overlooked (Ablakwah, 2022). In Ghana, the compulsory retirement age is pegged at 60 years; this was at a time when the average life expectancy was 57.4 years. Today, life expectancy has increased to 64.4 years, while the compulsory retirement remains at 60 years (Addison, 2007).

IV. Defining the Rule of Law:

The word ‘democracy’ connotes intersectional concept to describe the political and social aspiration of a community or a system of government based on rule of law and the observance of civil liberties, where decisions after the state are subject to the deliberations of a majority of the citizens or elected representatives (Desai & Woolcock, 2012; Dworkin, 1988; Sen, 2002; 1986). Desai & Woolcock’s systematic review of the rule of law, detailed discussion on what the term means in governance and the confusion surrounding the definition and the practice of the rule of law in various jurisdictions (ibid, 2012; In Norman, 2019). Borrowing from the previous paper, *Democracy and Choice: Do these mean anything to the average Ghanaian (2017)*, democracy is defined as: “*a government by the people where the supreme power of the nation is vested in the people, which is exercised directly or through their elected representatives in a free electoral space and processes, without coercion, intimidation or fraudulent inducement or vote buying, but sustained on a formal principle of ethical governance, equality, civil rights and liberties, justice, autonomy, choice and privileges, with formal system for the administration of justice, retributive justice and reward against deprivation of civil and administrative rights and other forms of punitive reward and recompense*” (Norman, 2017, p. 119). “The rule of law within a democracy includes the various norms and conduct as well as the freedoms such as; the freedom of worship, of association, of speech, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures, choice and general functioning of human beings as autonomous bodies (Dworkin, 1988; Gearey et al. 2009: 5-21).The paper borrows the definition for the rule of law from the World Justice Project due to its specific approach to the concept as its working definition as well. This is articulated as thus:

1. The government and its officials and agents as well as individuals and private entities are accountable under the law.
2. The laws are clear, publicized, stable, and just; are applied evenly; and protect fundamental rights, including the security of persons and property and certain core human rights.

3. The process by which the laws are enacted, administered, and enforced is accessible, fair, and efficient.
4. Justice is delivered timely by competent, ethical, and independent representatives and neutrals who are of sufficient number, have adequate resources, and reflect the makeup of the communities they serve.

The definition of the rule of law by the United Nations General Assembly is, " the rule of law and democracy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing and that they belong to the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations"(UN Chronicle, Vol. XLIX No. 4 2012). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana and its several amendments still maintain the citizen's right to universal freedoms as articulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. It was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected (UDHR, 1948). Implicit in the concept of the rule of law, is the ability of the individual or a group of them to make rational choices, to possess the ability to decide for oneself what one wishes to do, so long as one's choice does not interfere with the right of another person. "In principle-based ethics, 'choice' may be analysed under the Hohfeldian incident of 'rights', 'claims', 'power' and 'privilege' as well as 'immunity', to determine the modalities of exercising or not exercising one's choice in relation to those of others (Norman, 2016a; Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; CSLI, 2016, In Norman, 2016, p. 348 - 350). Due to the scarcity of available jobs, the average Ghanaian employee, whether she works for the government or in private entities lacks the ability to objectively evaluate their conduct and those of their superior for fear of reprisals. The few brave ones that have found themselves pitted against the interests of the collective workers against the parochial interest of their superiors have either been terminated from their jobs, transferred to nondescript, uninspiring and desolate outpost with no performance objectives or even duty assignments. The job becomes a salary collection vehicle and their new desolate locations salary collection centres. Identity politics has been used to recycle under-performing middle to upper managers to critical functions and positions leading to organizational waste, corruption and overall national economic morass. Today, the nation's leadership including the Presidency, Judiciary and Parliament, is considered corrupt, and its people, from the lowest employee on the totem pole to the highest at the level of Chief Executive Officers of State corporations, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, are corrupt but no staff member, no one appears to speak to such criminal conduct except a handful of Civil Society Organizations (Afrobarometer, 2022; CHRAJ, 2022; Transparency International, 2018).

V. Assessing the Effect of identity politics on corruption under NPP and NDC government

Of all the segments of this paper, perhaps, this section is the most challenging due to the potential conflict the narrative is bound to generate. The thrust of this section is to respond to the inquiry as to the correlate between, for example, employment of relatives by the President of Ghana, Akufo Addo in his government and corruption? Does the President have the moral or ethical ability to control his family and friends when they go wrong? What are the qualifications, abilities, skills and knowledge of those friends and family that have been appointed to offices under Akufo Addo, compared to others available in the open market of labor? What criteria were used to advertise, collate, audit curriculae vitas of those recruited as against the available stock of labor similarly situated but who were not recruited? It is quite challenging to rationalize how such recruitment practices at the Presidency of Ghana meet good practices under the rule of law requirements, controlling for presidential privilege, or prerogative. The responses to these questions are in the 1992 Constitution, Article 284: "A public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts or likely to conflict with the performance of the functions of his office". The controlling idea in this constitutional provision is: "shall not put himself", which makes it quite simple to understand and work with the provision. The constitution is not concerned about the interest or pre-existing obligation Akufo Addo may have had that could potentially be conflicting or not with his duties to the State. Even under the most conservative and charitable interpretation of *Realism*, the President is not the State. The constitution of Ghana straddles the intersection between *Realist* and *Liberalist* forms of government. The Constitution also frowns upon identity politics because it is inimical to the spirit of diversity and nation building which are values well documented in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana under the Fourth Republic. Under either arm of political philosophy espoused in the Constitution, i. e: Realism or Liberalism, Article 284 is only concerned with the processes that would inform Akufo Addo or any president or public official putting himself in the position which has the likelihood to compromise, conflict, or advantage him, his self-esteem, his social acceptance among his family and friends. It implores public servants to adopt the Kantian "No Harm" principle, which is the crystallization of ethical values such as "beneficence" and "Non-maleficence" in their dealings, or "categorical imperative" that we are each other's keeper (Kant, 1879, p. 55). Kant's philosophy of universalizability demands that for an action to be permissible, it must be possible to apply it to all people without a contradiction occurring. It appears such egalitarian values were not part of the intrinsic moral fiber of the presidency or those who pursue identity politics. He probably saw the admonitions for justice and fairness in the allocation of public opportunities, as noise or anti-NPP propaganda. Beneficence in its simplistic fervor means the public servant would respect the

electorate that he serves with regards to his decisions and deeds and to protect them from harm as well as promote their well-being. Non-maleficence enriches the operationalization of beneficence in that it admonishes the public servant that his primary moral and ethical duty to the electorate in the rendition of performative functions is to “do no harm”. President Akufo Addo is reported to have hired over a minimum of 50 members of persons that are his cousins, uncles, brothers, sisters, nephews, children, in-laws, friends, ex-girl-friend previous law firm associates, sons and daughters of senior ministers and other associates, which on the face of their engagement in his administration, places him under Article 284 without more (NDC’s List of Family and Friends Appointees of President Akufo Addo, accessed (10/12/2022)). The likelihood that such appointees would create conflict of interest challenges has been amply demonstrated during this NPP government (circa: 2017 to 2023) in a number of corruption assessments, cases before the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice. One of such cases is that of Francisca Oteng-Mensah, MP for Kwabre West, the daughter of the owner and Chief Executive Officer of Adonko Bitters Limited, a subsidiary of Angel Group of Companies, Mr. Kweku Oteng Gyasi. Incidentally, the wife of Mr. Oteng Gyasi, Ms. Barbara Oteng Gyasi has served in Akufo Addo’s government as Minister of Tourism since 2019. Ms. Francisca Oteng-Mensah, the daughter of both Gyasis’ of the NPP, was accused of awarding a contract to her family company she is a director and shareholder of, while serving as a Board Chairperson of the National Youth Authority. She is alleged to have supervised the payment of GHS700,000 (approx. \$150,000) to Adonko Company, which is part of the Angel Group (Bokpe, *The Fourth Estate*, 2022; Chraji Investigation into Dep. Gender Minister, 2022). There was also the famous case of corruption against the former boss of the Public Procurement Board, Mr. Agyenim Boateng, who as Chief Executive Officer of the Procurement Board, set up companies to bid for tender before the Board where he worked, most of which competitive tenders, he won. The most recent corruption event occurred in the last quarter of 2022, when a Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Charles Adu Boahen, the son of NPP hero, was caught on tape for accepting bribes in Dubai. He resigned from his post, but it led to speculation that not only he was corrupt, but the entire administration too was. As reported in another paper, which questioned as to who was to lead the shift in paradigm to cure Ghana of corruption in a corruption endemic nation, the jury is still out. In *“Setting Thomas Kuhn’s Paradigm Shift against Dunning-Kruger Effect on the Eradication of Corruption in Ghana”*, it was realized that every time one corrupt Ghanaian is removed from office, he is only to be replaced with an equally corrupt Ghanaian (Busia, 1972; In Norman, 2022). We have also realized that “Ghana is a nation of clock-watchers and afflicted with various forms of corruption” (Akufo Addo, 05/01/2017; Afrobarometer, 2022; CHRAJ, 2022; Transparency International, 2018, In Norman, 2022, p. 1). Such widespread perception of corruption as an intersectional adversity facing the nation fouls patriotic incentives of the people, and with that, the death of nationalism and potentially, nationhood. It seems from the Presidency to the average man on the street that, everyone expects the nation to dole out largess and favors in a endless fall of manna from the sky or the International Money Fund.

VI. Conclusion

It is interesting to note throughout this paper that, identity politics is a complicated social phenomenon which appears to be employed by both political parties in ways that the average voter or party supporter may not probably ever understand how it works against his or her interest, without more. It appears to be a diabolical approach to party politics within the same party and against the members of the same party. When it comes to the effect on non-party members, or the members of the opposition, it is a concept that is used in both reprehensible and unconstitutional way to intimidate, and frustrates the individual goals of others and to starve of competition, opportunity and equal rights and justice. Identity politics diminishes patriotism over time, even among party supporters who feel neglected and devalued due to exclusionary tactics and erection of silos to limit the exposure of the political leader of the party to as fewer group of people as possible in order to ensure the redistribution of wealth, jobs, positions and opportunities to only those recognized by the Flag-bearer or the President of the Party. This development makes mockery of the so-called pluralistic political party system being run by Ghana, and the deepening of democracy in Ghana. To a large extent, Ghana’s acclaim as a democratic nation is based on unexamined notions of democracy or, at best, on tokenism:- Ghana is a black African nation, so treat it or praise the nation with paternalism and positivity without critical appraisal for fear of discouraging Ghana’s democratic drive.

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