

NEOPATRIMONIALISM AND DEMOCRATIC STABILITY IN AFRICA: A CASE OF GHANA'S 1992 RE-DEMOCRATIZATION

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Abstract

By the mid 1960s, many African leaders had concluded that what Africa needed badly was rapid economic growth to catch up with the Western advanced global economy. In all too soon, changes in government began to occur via military putsch. Military coup more or less became institutionalized. Consequently, African states began to experience military, militarism and authoritarianism coupled with persistent economic policy failures. Africa's quest for rapid economic growth and development therefore became taunted and hence underdevelopment. As a result, two decades or less, African states focused on economic development strategies, nonetheless, both economic development strategies and regional integration idea failed to yield development dividend. Therefore, at the turn of the 21st century consensus emerged that the root cause of Africa's underdevelopment is 'bad governance.' Accordingly, many African countries including Ghana embraced liberal democracy and have since 1990s been democratizing state institutions. Few African countries including Ghana has more or less 'perfected' electoral democracy though, democratizing state institutions and deepening democratic culture remain problematic. What accounts for the difficulty in customizing and deepening democratic culture and values? Using in-depth interview with selected political scientists and few experts in democracy affairs, this paper explored the historical trajectories and validity of neopatrimonialism, as a partial explanation for Ghana's 1992 re- democratization nuances. Findings show that neopatrimonial rule is so pervasive in post-colonial Ghana in particular and Africa in general. This paper concluded that beneath what appears to be a successful case of democratic stability in Ghana lies sturdy neopatrimonial dysfunctionality that serve as counterweights to democratic culture. This paper is, thus, intended to augment the understanding of the theoretical versatility of neopatrimonial thesis as a clarification of the on-going discourse on democratic stability in Africa including Ghana.

Keywords: Economic development, Bad governance, Democratic stability, Neopatrimonialism

Introduction

At the turn of the 21st century, Africa was the only continent that did not register any significant development (Ake, 2000; Mkandawire, 1998; Thompson 2004). According to the World Bank's Reports (2009), per capita income on the continent is the lowest (an average of \$300), about 65% or more of the population is said to live on less than a Dollar a day, Africa's external debt is over \$600 Billion, and in recent times Africa has been the scene of ethnic and communal conflicts some of which are very destructive. Worse still, Africa is said to be emerging as the epicenter of HIV AIDS. So the question that is often asked is "why is Africa not developing?" Many reasons account for this underdevelopment problem.

According to Sawyer (1990) one of the problems is the nature of the African dependent state itself. He argues that the picture presented by independent Africa is one of an unintegrated collection of non-industrialized, undemocratic, non-self-sustained states. But, in

the mid 1980s the problem was seen as economic and this was captured by Claude Ake in his article, “Why is Africa not developing” where he argues that “nearly everywhere in post-colonial Africa, the tragic consequences of the underdevelopment has come home to us.” “Serious as it is however, the problem of post-colonial Africa underdevelopment is believed to be only a symptom, effect of deeper maladies, i.e. detrimental economic effect of colonization.”

In response to Africa’s ‘detrimental economic maladies,’ in the 1980s the World Bank and IMF prescribed multiple economic reforms measures to Africa (see for instance; Structural Adjustment program (S.A.P.), Economic Recovery Program (E.R.P.) and PAMSCAD). These economic reforms were intended to move Africa away from dependency and underdevelopment. In spite of the rapidity with which Africa pursued these reforms however, the development record of Africa indicates that the problem of underdevelopment and dependency still persists. Ake’s (2000) explanation of Africa’s persistent underdevelopment is that those economic reforms had not only been pursued with confusion of purposes and interest but also the policies and programmes themselves have been full of ambiguities and contradictions.

As a response to the multiple economic policy failures a new thinking emerged within the development community that Africa’s solution (last resort) for her development predicaments was developmental regionalism (Mkandawire, 1998). So, developmental regionalism was perceived to provide solutions to many development problems for the south. Nonetheless, in sub-Saharan Africa (S.S.A.) there has been little integration simply because there is little to integrate (Mkandawire, 1998). The argument was advanced towards establishment of corporate Africa for cooperation within African states hence the Omega Plan, the South-South Cooperation and the North- South among other development goals all of which has been characterized by various degrees of socio-economic and political challenges. In spite of all the attempts made by Africa in search of permanent solution to the development dilemma however, now, the picture which is presented by post-colonial Africa is one that is not only marred, but also wallowing in chronic food crisis, debt cancer, poverty and squalor. The failure of these economic reforms with their attendant predicaments has led many Africanist scholars to re-think Africa’s development agenda.

And today, the thinking within the development community is that, it is politics more than anything else that is underdeveloping Africa (World Bank and IMF Reports, 2008:2009; Ake, 2000; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). And hence political reforms have become critical on the agenda in most African countries including Ghana. Indeed, political reforms have not only replaced economic reforms but also become the new conditionalities for financial assistance from the Breton Woods Institutions and governments of the global north (World Bank and IMF Reports, 2008:2009; Gyimah-Boadi 2001; And hence Ghana in particular has since the early 1990’s been democratizing (Gyimah-Boadi, 2001, Ninsin and Drah, 1993).

In what follows, this paper analyzes the 1992 re-democratization wave by exploring the feasibility of democratic stability in Africa using the circumstances of Ghana.

The 1992 Re-democratization Tide

Before proceeding to analyze Ghana’s 1992 re-democratization tide, it is a point noteworthy that Huntington’s(1991;1996) first two waves of democratization which occurred around 1828-1926 and 1943-1962 respectively were each followed by reversal waves and hence Huntington’s democratization wave thesis has come under strong criticism by scholars including; Diamond (1996), Linz and Stephan (1996) and, Haynes (2003). Indeed, in this paper, we take issue with all of these authors’ (including Huntington’s use of a blunt dichotomous measure of democracy) which we believe creates the potential for analysis of democracy and seemingly democratic- autocratic transitions.

Here, it is significant to note that the issue of democratization is without the least challenges. As noted by Huntington (1991; 1996), the historical trajectories of democratization are not only a precursory but also, the present circumstance involving diverse set of structural factors are likely to affect its stability. Although, reasonably valid quantitative measures exist for each of these factors and are available for many countries and clearly, many studies have confirmed that the problem of instability is critical; however, this paper has not identified throughout the literature how neopatrimonial thesis (the tendencies of patronage politics or patron-clientelism), holding other factors constant, constitutes a doomed to democratic instability. Indeed, this is what my paper intends to address.

In the mean time, using a content analysis as a standard measure of democracy, this paper finds substantial support for Huntington's wave thesis; and little support for the position of his critics who argue that there are no democratic waves (Diamond, 1996; Bratton and van de Walle 1997). This paper finds clear identifiable trends in the evolution of democratic governance throughout the world during the past century that correspond roughly to the waves and reverse-waves identified by Huntington, but it fails to find any support for the explanation hypothesized by Huntington(1991: 1996). Again, using multinomial logic analysis of political transitions, this paper finds this waves-like pattern of global democratization as associated with shocks to the international system such as; world wars, domestic economic growth rates, political neighborhood effects, unequal exchange, environmental collapse, and Africa's global proportion of democracies (Diamond, 1996; Linz and Stephan,1996). Therefore, this paper maintains that democratic waves are not due to inherent aspect of democratization as theorized by Huntington.

Further findings show that in spite of the obvious challenges of democratization however, today, many agree that some democratizing states of Africa have reached the point of democratic stability (Abdulai and Crawford, 2008; Daddieh, 2011) and hence democratic stability has become the hottest issue in African politics of which Ghana is no exception.

This paper establishes that Ghana overwhelmingly embraced and joined Huntington's (1991;1996) 'Third Wave' of democratization with great enthusiasm and optimism (Joseph, 1992, Gyimah-Boadi, 2001) and that this same democratic optimism led many African states including Ghana to make concerted efforts to democratize state institutions and politics. Two decades or less of democratization of state institutions and its politics yielded significant democratic gains in Ghana among other African countries hence some scholars argue that Ghana has 'perfected' democratic rule at least, at the level of periodic elections and had even reached the threshold of sustaining electoral democracy(Abdulai and Crawford, 2008, Daddieh, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001).

Notwithstanding the unprecedented record of relatively successful electoral democratic gains in Ghana among other African states (Abdulai and Crawford, 2008; Daddieh, 2011); however, two decades or more of Ghana's democratic experience show rather, mainly cosmetic democratic gains. There has been an emergence of strong pessimism among Africanist scholars towards democratic sustainability in Ghana in particular. largely because of structural problems such as; weak institutions- lack of judicial independence and ineffectual legislature as well as pervasive electoral manipulations coalesced with widespread patronage politics, political corruption, violence and polarization of the state (van de Walle, 2002; Booth and Gyimah-Boadi, 2005).

Furthermore, the erratic and ambiguous nature of democratic practice in Ghana in particular has stimulated heated debates. This paper analyzes "The Controversial and Contradictory Debate," drawing lessons from the optimist and pessimist scholars' debate on the state of democracy in Ghana.

The State of Democracy in Ghana: The Controversial and Contradictory Debate

There are two main positions as far as democracy and its stability in Africa including Ghana is concerned. The optimist scholars (philosophers who support the success story of democracy in Ghana), including; Lindberg and Morison (2007) and, Daddieh (2011) hold the view that Ghana's relatively five (5) successful presidential, parliamentary and district Assembly elections held in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 are indicators of democracy progression and by the Ghanaian standard democracy is "matured" in Africa. The optimist scholars conclude that each of these elections show significant improvement in terms of "free and fairness" as well as successful transfer of powers signifying the passing of Huntington's' two turnover test. On the contrary however, the pessimist scholars (philosophers who oppose the success story of Ghana's democracy), including; Bratton and van de Walle (1997); Haynes (2003); van de Walle (2002) and Okechuku (2008) hold the view that 'more elections do not mean more democracy,' in other words, frequent elections do not necessarily produce democratic outcomes and that it only risks the fallacy of electoralism, that is, privileging elections over all other imperative tenets of democracy.

The pessimist scholars argue that by trying to showcase Ghana's seemingly electoral democratic gains for the entire African continent is a serious flaw. The pessimist scholars therefore maintain that Ghana's democracy is "merely surviving and may reverse to a form of democratic authoritarianism. They however, conclude that Ghana's democracy is suffering from critical institutional deficiencies hence sustaining Ghana's democracy becomes so problematic. Similarly, Jockers, Kohnert and Nugent (2007) advance the pessimist argument by contending that the periodic electoral democratic success in Ghana is a "convenient myth." Indeed, Jockers, Kohnert and Nugent' position does not only seem to be a repetition of Bratton and van de Walle's (1997) position which maintains that democracy in Ghana is just surviving and may reverse or at best remain stagnant but also, both positions really contradict Lindberg and Morrison's (2008) position that there are significant democratic gains. In fact, Lindberg and Morrison's position reinforces or emphasizes the fact that democracy is "matured" in Ghana. Interestingly, there is an emerging consensus that fit into the midstream position and which seems to depart from both the optimists and pessimists' positions. Indeed, midstream scholars' position constitutes a missing gap within the literature which this paper intends to fill. The position of this paper is that authors including; Diamond , Joseph and Gyimah-Boadi seem to remain uncertain or, for want of a better phrase, 'they are ambivalent' about the entire game of democracy in Ghana. This paper supports Diamond (1996) and others' positions and adds that democracy in Ghana gives impressive façade and hence it is a mere fantasy. Furthermore, this paper maintains that the erratic and complex nature of Ghana's democracy requires further interrogation to find empirical answers to whether or not democracy is really at work in Ghana and/or whether or not Ghana is in the era of "trial of democracy" or "triumph of democracy."

Indeed, these issues and few others have galvanized the attention of Africanist scholars and the institutions of democracy affairs forcefully on the erratic nature of democracy in Ghana. The seemingly erratic democratic outcomes coalesced with the diminishing returns in democracy in Ghana have more or less overturned the initial optimism of Ghanaians in particular and Africans in general towards liberal democracy (Haynes, 2003; Okechuku, 2008). In general, the record of Africa's more or less poor democratic performance according to critics, has been worsened for instance, by the military overthrow of constitutionally elected president Ndudaye of Burundi in 1993 (within three months), president, Jawara of Gambia in 1994, the military coup in Madagascar and the Republic of Guinea, and recently, Mali's political unrest coupled with democratic succession after the demise of Eyadema in Togo among other counter-democratic events in other parts of Africa (Daddieh, 2011; Gyimah-Boadi 2008). Indeed, this democratic dilemma in Africa prompted

Diamond to ask “Is the Third Wave over?” And perhaps also, motivated Joseph (1998) to conclude “democracy in Africa, from Abertura to closure....”

The critical questions then, are: ‘In reality, what is the reflection of democracy in Ghana in particular and Africa in general? Is it “Shock democracy,” “pseudo-democracy” or, “virtual democracy?” Do African states including Ghana have what it takes to democratize? This paper therefore teases out empirical responses for these questions.

Meanwhile, as part of the explanation of the erratic nature of democracy in Ghana, responses from interviews conducted with some selected staff of Center for Democratic Development (CDD), Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), political scientists from the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon and other experts of democracy affairs based in Ghana in November 2012 prior to the 2012 elections admitted that there is not even a single election conducted in Ghana in particular that has been free from allegations of electoral manipulations such as rigging, stolen of ballot boxes or electoral violence involving, intimidation of voters. And, hence the informants interviewed concluded that generally, electoral democracy in Ghana in particular and Africa in general lacks credibility. Evidence shows also that, unfortunately, in many cases, the Coalition of Domestic Elections Observers (CODEO) and the International Observers (IO) have been alleged to have falsely endorsed outcomes of elections in Ghana as “free and fair” (Daily Graphic December 28, 2012; Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012). Another empirical evidence is a case in contention in which Ghana’s 2012 election results is being contested by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) at the supreme court on the account of electoral manipulation by the Electoral Commission (EC) and the Incumbent (see Daily Guide, Monday, December 31, 2012). Also, evidential is several cases of election disputes including; Ghana’s: 1996, 2004 and 2008 and the case of Kenya’s in 2013, emphasizing rather, the “trial of democracy” (and also, introducing a new democratic concept such as “Judicial Democracy Test”), other than the “triumph of democracy.” In addition, there have also been several election boycotts i.e. Ghana, in 1992 and 2008 and, Togo, in 1993 by the seemingly non-favoured party. Indeed, the 2010 Ivorian crisis in Cote D’Ivoire involving the then president, Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouatarra also reinforces that all is not well with democracy in Africa. Findings of this paper confirm that there have been massive democratic erosions resulting from periodic election manipulations and engineered by neopatrimonialism. Thus, the emerging worry is that the current liberal agenda in most Africa including Ghana is facing a potential threat and if care is not taken, it may pin down the democratic credential achieved or recorded over the years.

Seeing the complex nature of Ghana’s ‘democratic dilemma,’ several attempts made so far by many Africanist scholars to address Ghana’s democratic refraction remain basically theoretical solutions or explanations. In other words, attempts to comprehend the impediments of democratic stability in Africa including Ghana proceeded via political participation and political culture analysis, political economy theory explanation, institutional approach as well as transitional analysis (see Ake, 2000, Huntington, 1991:1996; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Sandbrook and Oelbaum, 1999; Diamond, 1996; Joseph 1992; Aidoo, 2008). The point of departure of this paper is that neopatrimonial rule is not only so widespread in post-independent Ghana but also manifests itself in multiple dimensions. Hence this paper speculates that neopatrimonialism exclusively contributes significantly to democracy nuances in Ghana. This paper attempts at explaining not only why “Ghana’s democracy does not work”, but also why “disorders have become political instrument in securing political legitimacy,” using neopatrimonial thesis. This paper therefore interrogates first, the extent to which neopatrimonialism (patron –client network) is pervasive, second, the multiple forms of neopatrimonialism and its utility, third, the nexus between neopatrimonialism and democratic stability.

In what follows, the paper conceptualizes neopatrimonialism and explores its pervasiveness, its multi-dimensional framework, its utility and manifestations and finally shows how its co-existence with legal-rational democracy may turn to undermine democratic stability.

The Multiple Frameworks of Neopatrimonialism

This paper contends that the study of neopatrimonialism has a long tradition in area studies and comparative research as well (Mkandawire, 1998; deGrassi, 2008; Theobad, 1982; Aidoo and DeMarco, 2009). The conventional thinking is that African states are the most characterized by neopatrimonial rule (Sandbrook, and Oelbaum 1999, Joseph, 1998, Lindberg 2003). This assertion does not presuppose that neopatrimonial practice is limited to Africa. Indeed, it would be a flaw to draw such conclusion simply because neopatrimonialism is not limited to Africa; it is a global phenomenon (Theobad, 1982; Mkandawire, 1998; Erdmann and Angel, 2007). What is missing in the literature is that the application and manifestation of neopatrimonialism differ from continent to continent and perhaps from country to country.

Neopatrimonial thesis, the focus of this investigation, though does not rise above any analytical variety; however, it intersects various levels of explanations to a greater extent than other presumptions. Neopatrimonial thesis is therefore flexible and that theoretical flexibility is not a liability particularly when dealing with phenomenon so erratic and complex. Nonetheless, the flexibility of the thesis so attractive may turn to weaken the strength of the presumption if overstretched. Indeed, neopatrimonial thesis is probably less likely to producing testable hypotheses than any of its contesting presumptions. Unlike other theories, neopatrimonialism is capable of sustaining any theoretical breadth simply because it is not used as an explanation of political phenomenon however; basically, it depicts the nature of the African state. And that makes its application in the description of a varied political phenomenon and outcomes very easy.

Furthermore, neopatrimonialism has been used both as theory and concept by several scholars (Lindberg, 2003; Gyimah-Boadi, 2001; Aidoo and DeMarco2009). With regard to neopatrimonialism as a theory, scholars usually see it as being responsible for economic policy failures in Africa in the 1980s during which most African states pursued Western designed economic development strategies (e.g. Structural Adjustment Programme, PAMSCAD etc.) (Hayden 1985, Gyimah-Boadi, 2001). It has also been associated with informalization of politics, retraditionalization of society as well as a drive for disorders (political instrumentalization or disorders) (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). As a concept, neopatrimonialism has extensively been conceptualized to cover, the nature of African state including; level of authority, power politics, political legitimacy, elections, corruption, nepotism, paternalism, cronyism, privatization and presidentialism just to mention few of the contemporary rubric of neopatrimonial concept.

In this paper, I focus mainly on neopatrimonialism as a concept and this may detain us for a while. The most recent rubric of ‘neopatrimonialism includes a broad range of labels such as transfers neopatrimonialism and transformational neopatrimonialism. See Table1.0. below for the conceptualization of neopatrimonial transfers and transformational.

Figure 1.0. The Multi-Dimensional Framework of Neopatrimonial Logic

NEOPATRIMONIAL TRANSFERS (A)	NEOPATRIMONIAL TRANSFORMATION (B)
Prototype 1: Big men Syndrome Country: Ghana, Togo, Tanzania, Senegal	Prototype 1: Relatively Small Selectorates Country: Rwanda, South Africa
Prototype 2: Populist Politics Country: Ghana, La Cote D’Ivoire, Kenya, Zimbabwe,	Prototype 2: Relatively Large Selectorates Country: Ghana, Nigeria
Prototype 3: Programmatic Appeal Country: Ghana, Mauritius, Botswana	

Electores

Selectorates

Source: Author’s 2013

Table 1.0 above indicates two broad conceptual frameworks of neopatrimonialism. The transfers' neopatrimonial logic comprises of three prototypes namely; the Big men Syndrome (BS), the Populist Politics (PP) and the Programmatic Appeal (PA). The Transformational neopatrimonial logic also consists of two types namely 'Relatively Small Selectorates and Relatively Large Selectorates.

This transfer's neopatrimonialism type is prevalent in Ghana to the extent that it has stimulated heated argument in respect of which is the most dominant in Ghanaian body polity. While Keefer and World Bank (2006) describe Ghana's political system as being characterized by "pure neopatrimonialism," Booth and Gyimah-Boadi (2005) contend that Ghana is characterized by populist politics, others such as Nugent et al (2009) argue that Ghana's politics is the big men type, whereas, Lindberg and Morrison (2008) claim, Ghana is gradually embracing programmatic appeal. Interestingly, Whitefield, in a presentation made at the conference organized by Danish International Institute of Democracy (DIID) 2011, emphasizes that Ghana's is a competitive clientelism. But for Aidoo (2008), there is an alternation of neopatrimonial politics. To him politicians promise programmatic when out of power, because they are not obliged to implement it, however, when in power they turn to pursue populist, after all, they have access to the means and the resources.

Meanwhile, with the Big men Syndrome, the political elite or leader is elected through mass adult suffrage and he /she is seen as a patron or transfer pump to distribute incentives, social benefits, favours in an exchange for political legitimacy. The political elite or leader establishes what Richard Sandbrook called 'patron-client network.' In this case, the sustainability of political legitimacy depends to a large extent on the continuity of this patron-client network relationship. For the patron to be able to entrench neopatrimonial rule requires his or her ability to maintain frequent supply of neopatrimonial incentives- favours, money, roofing sheets, jobs and contracts kickbacks etc. however, as Chabal and Daloz (1999) put it, a neopatrimonial regime which exhausts resources turn to face institutional crisis, in that, when there is no longer funds to distribute, the next option is 'disorders. An informant interviewed confirmed the scenario by saying, : when politicians are 'broke' they often overlook some illicit, disorders and resort to pejorative activities such as ethnic mobilization or clashes and often endorse and normalize illegal activities such as 'garamsay' operations etc. " The informant cited classic Ghanaian example to be "where some supporters of the ruling National Democratic Congress party seized public toilets at Ashiaman, a suburb of Tema in the Greater Accra Region and also toll booths on the principal routs or highways within the country." As shown in Table 1.0., Ghana is characterized by Big men Syndrome (see van de Walle, 2002, Lindberg, 2003). This paper will address other practical manifestation of big men syndrome in the course of the discussion.

Furthermore, with the populist appeal, the political elite deliberately, design a policy and programme be it economic or social in outlook with the intension to canvas for or mobilize political supports. Usually, such policy, project or programme is tailored to the particular need of the people within a particular geographic coverage. Such policy, project or programme is purposive one and it is normally designed to satisfy ethnic, religious or regional consideration. Here about 69.0% of Ghanaians interviewed agreed that typical examples of such populist policies include Rawlings and the NDC's Rural Electrification project executed in the mid 1990s, Kufour and the NPP's rice importation policy in 2004 as well as Mills and the NDC's policy which sought to impose heavy tariff on rice importation. This paper discusses further other manifestation of populist politics.

In the mean time, programmatic appeal concerns with national programme usually meant to alleviate particular problem affecting the general populace or citizenry. Such programme is considered vital and so, may serve as a drive to induce the citizens to vote in a particular pattern. In other words, although, such programme is not particularly designed to attract the electorates' votes however, in the end, it seems to be the ultimate goal. The

majority about 75.0% of the Ghanaians interviewed confirmed for instance, that Rawlings and the NDC regime's programme of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), Kufour and the NPP government's programmes such as; National Health Insurance Scheme, School Feeding and Capitation Grants and National Youth Employment Programme; and then, Mills and the NDC administration's programme involving granting of subsidy on local rice production to specific local rice farmers and distribution of free school uniforms are form of programmatic appeal. This paper will further indicate how programmatic appeals contribute to entrench neopatrimonial exigencies in Ghanaian body politics.

With the transformational neopatrimonial logic, it involves either a relatively small or large selectorates respectively, who usually constitutes the powers that 'make' or 'unmake' the political leader. In the case of the relatively small selectorates as seen in countries such as Rwanda and Tanzania and in South Africa in the case of ANC (African Focus Vol. 6 :24), the Electoral College consists of few critical mass of potential challengers or strong political elites who is the repository of powers that decide who becomes the political leader or not. Often, these few selectorates are resolute in decision making process and that once decision is made it becomes irreversible. Indeed, responses gathered from the majority 81.1% indicated that Ghana under Rawlings and the PNDC and NDC1&2 regimes was a classic example.

In respect of the relatively large selectorates, the system allows quite a large number of the selectorates to exercise their franchise in the process of selecting political elite as a party leader. According to a political analyst interviewed at the CDD, all political parties in Ghana are characterized by transformational neopatrimonialism (i.e. they all engage relatively large selectorates). The difference between the two forms of transformational neopatrimonial logic however, is that decision- taking processes as in the former is resolute and absolute whilst the latter is relatively flexible and subjectively contingent. The two have some basic characteristic such as; they are both inherently transformational. In other words, they possess the powers to 'make' and/or 'unmake' political leaders. It is also important to note or emphasize that 'leaders' are not 'elected' but 'selected.' How do these multiple forms of neopatrimonialism pave the way for democratic practice and its stability? This paper analyzes the relationship between neopatrimonialism and democratic stability in Africa using Ghana's case study.

Neopatrimonialism and Democratic Stability

In sub-Saharan Africa, neopatrimonialism has been employed extensively to explain Africa's internal politics. And as such, its focus exclusively on internal dynamics of African politics serves as the basis for externalist linking neopatrimonialism and Africa's political troubles just as the dependency theorists have linked Africa's underdevelopment with dependency syndrome (Aidoo and DeMarco, 2009). Broadly speaking, this paper outlines two ways by which neopatrimonialism could produce democratic instability.

First, neopatrimonialism may produce democratic instability when the neopatrimonial regime fails to rise and fall on its capacity to convince a critical mass of potential challengers that they are better off feeding at the government's trough than searching for the keys to the silo (Aidoo and DeMarco, 2009). In other words, if the regime fails to satisfy the critical mass or, if circumstances change such that the regime is unable to support the critical mass, political instability is likely to happen. Most authors do, however, claim that the short-term logic of neopatrimonialism leads to long-term instability, first by undermining economic growth and secondly by preventing the democratization of state institutions. These two assumptions are modifications of political economy explanations which are logically sound but difficult to verify empirically.

Second, neopatrimonial leaders manipulate their public office for private gain, promote rent-seeking in the form of outright theft, kickbacks, and straddling, that is, public officials using public office to secure employment or other assets in the private sector (Aidoo

and DeMarco, 2009). Though personal greed fuels part of officials' pilfering of state coffers, neopatrimonial leaders are keen on divvying up the national cake amongst current and potential supporters.

Political power in neopatrimonial regimes flows through the informal institutions of patron-client networks and therefore delegitimizes the formal institutions of government (Sandbrook and Oelbaum 1997). This erosion of the rational-legal bureaucracy may ultimately undermine political stability. Van de Walle writes, "Having too long undermined state capacity for political reasons, at some point the bureaucracy no longer performs at all, order breaks down, and leaders find it increasingly hard to manage the inter-elite accommodation processes that are at the core of political instability" (van de Walle 2001:185).

Many accounts paint neopatrimonialism as political dysfunction, a system which can survive only by cannibalizing itself (Aidoo and DeMarco 2009). And hence the social disorders, economic crisis or institutional decay created by this system spiral beyond the control of the political leader. That notwithstanding; however, neopatrimonial regimes are not necessarily doomed to political instability. It is a strategy among many for political legitimacy. Leaders would not employ it if they did not believe that it had at least a chance of working (implying that they are rational actors). Admittedly, it has failed miserably; however, it has paid huge dividends which have been attested to by a number of longstanding neopatrimonial regimes. For instance, Mkandawire (1998) points out that patron-client network actually played a role in the state-led development of many Asian countries. Besides, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Daniel Arap-Moi, and Paul Biya employed neopatrimonialism to their advantage. Lindberg's study shows that politicians in Ghana strategically employed neopatrimonial networks. Using cabinet size as a proxy variable for the extent of the patronage network, his analysis reveals that increasing cabinet size by one ministry reduces the likelihood of political instability by a factor greater than a percentage increase in GDP (Lindberg 2003). The use of patronage networks helps us reconcile the variations in the direct access to state resources and a larger quantity of resources that would be afforded to political elites. Patronage is therefore used as a glue to hold the elite to the regime.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that the nature of the state and its politics usually contribute to shaping the understanding of whether or not a country's democracy will be sustained. And that, although Ghana has more or less "perfected" her electoral democracy; however, neopatrimonialism is not only pervasive but also, sturdily holding sway the democratization of state institutions and its politics, and thereby, rendering the relative democratic gains merely cosmetic in outlook. Again, it concludes that, because neopatrimonialism combines informal rule with an outward commitment to formal bureaucratic and legal standards, corruption is intrinsic.

Indeed, the toleration of corruption by subordinates may be one of the rewards that a leader can bestow. At the same time, neopatrimonialism (in general) and neopatrimonial corruption (in particular) are generally corrosive of political institutionalization, since they suggest the primacy of "connections" rather than the formal structures of law, constitutionalism, and bureaucratic procedure. Neopatrimonialism may therefore have both exclusionary and inclusionary components. Neopatrimonial political management may be exclusive, insofar as its benefits may be unevenly distributed in favor of individuals from certain class, regional, ethnic/religious, or kinship back- grounds. Those lacking "connections" find themselves unable to obtain access to state resources or influence state policy. Conversely, neopatrimonial networks may also be distributed widely, bringing very different critical mass in constituencies and different social elites into an overarching pyramid of patron-client relations.

The extent to which neopatrimonialism is one or the other depends on a variety of factors- the nature of key political constituencies, the level of resources available to attract new clients, the existence of non-neopatrimonial alternatives, and the costs of nonparticipation as well as specific historical contexts.

In all cases, however, neopatrimonialism spurs rivalry and unhealthy competition among clients, as each competes keenly for scarce material resources and the patron's "ear." Official lines of responsibility are hence overwritten by patronage and clientelism; the boundaries of public role and private interest are unclear, with public office representing an important mechanism of private rent-seeking; state resources (and the state's ability to shape resource flows) are used to lubricate patron-client networks. At the same time, the state's ability to extract resources and regulate behaviors creates conditions under which the supply of, and access to, scarce goods can be manipulated, the fundamental foundation of the power of patronage.

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