

# Public Funding of Political Parties in Ghana: An Outmoded Concept?

Ransford Edward Gyampo

## Abstract

*Political parties are the vehicles through which the ideals of multi-party democracy could be achieved in any fledgling democracy. But in Ghana, they are the most neglected of all the political institutions. Consequently they exist merely as “election machines” and become moribund during inter-election periods. The proposal for state funding of political parties was seen as a means of reinvigorating them to be able to function effectively and produce quality leaders capable of tackling the developmental challenges of the country. This paper therefore reviews the Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008. Through a survey of some 210 respondents and government officials, it argues that the quest for public funding of political parties was outmoded at conception because governments are not committed to the proposal, nor do Ghanaians seem to support it. The study concludes on the note that until politicians strive to reduce the perception of corruption against them and encourage their members to support them financially through the payment of monthly dues and special levies, political parties will continue to function as weak election machines in Ghana.*

**KEYWORDS:** Public Funding; Draft Bill; Political Parties; Election Machines; Membership Dues; Corruption

## Introduction

Democratization across the world has influenced the formation of many political parties particularly in transitional democracies.<sup>1</sup> These political parties, according to Chibber and Kollman, Apter, and Bofo-Arthur,<sup>2</sup> can be described as the heart and soul of democracy because they perform key roles in the formation of government, grooming of leaders at national and sub-national

levels, and holding governments accountable when they are in opposition. However, in Ghana, political parties are among the most neglected state political institutions.<sup>3</sup> They operate like purely private organizations with no state or national interest in their establishment, maintenance and well-being.<sup>4</sup> Neglected political parties can only produce mediocre or poor quality leadership both at the party and government level. In this regard, political parties must not just operate as machines for churning out electoral victories, but also function effectively as vehicles for public education, leadership training, national integration and skills acquisition during inter-election periods.<sup>5</sup> This is especially the case where article 55, section 3 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution mandates political parties to shape the political will of the people, disseminate information on socio-economic and political ideas and sponsor candidates for elections to any public office other than to District Assemblies or lower local government units. But will the paucity of funding available to Ghanaian political parties enable them to perform these roles? The only sources of public financial support for political parties in Ghana are the indirect support by not taxing their incomes and the direct support by allocating a few vehicles in election years to those participating in the elections through the Electoral Commission.

Political parties in Ghana are inactive during inter-election periods and are unable to establish and maintain offices in many parts of the country because of the financial challenges they face. Consequently, the few financiers who are able to fund party activities often hijack the political parties and control their decision making processes in a manner that undermines internal democracy within the parties.<sup>6</sup> Again, in deciding who must lead the party at both the Presidential and Parliamentary levels, money becomes one of the major deciding factors.<sup>7</sup> The parties charge huge nomination fees that deter those who do not have the financial muscle to file their nominations. After paying such huge fees, candidates are expected to also 'buy' the votes of the citizenry, particularly at the constituency level in order to receive some assurance of electoral victory.<sup>8</sup> These tendencies result in massive corruption as the winning candidates concentrate on re-gaining funds spent during the filing of their nominations and campaign "through all manner of corrupt means."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, during election campaign periods,

an uneven playing field is created as the party in power exploits its incumbency and access to state resources while those in opposition financially suffocate. Indeed, most of the parties in opposition are unable to mount billboards, print fliers, or procure other party paraphernalia to facilitate their campaign. They are also unable to tour the entire country to campaign. However, ruling parties are able to campaign across the length and breadth of the country with ease due to their access to state resources and funds.<sup>10</sup>

The gloomy picture of political parties in Ghana justifies the call for some form of state funding for them, and, indeed, there can be no meaningful discussion of strengthening the pillars of multi-party democracy without dealing with the financial suffocations political parties in Ghana go through. In South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Mali, and Zimbabwe, political parties receive some funding from the state.<sup>11</sup> The question of party funding must therefore be of concern to the state if political parties are to play their roles effectively in Ghana's multi-party democracy.

It was against this background that the Institute of Economic Affairs-Ghana Political Parties Programme (IEA-GPPP) prepared the Public Funding of Political Parties Bill. The bill was finalized in 2008 and submitted to the presidency in 2010. It is worth noting that the IEA-GPPP is an initiative that brings together the four main political parties in Ghana with representation in Ghana to discuss issues of national importance in an apolitical manner and to recommend solutions to them. Formed in 2002, it has made several contributions to Ghana's democracy including the preparation of the 2010 Presidential Transition Act, the 2008 Political Parties Bill, the initiation of the Right to Information Bill in 1996, the proposal for Constitutional Review in 2006, and the preparation of Code of Conduct for Political Parties.<sup>12</sup>

In 2007, former President John Agyekum Kufuor pledged his support for the Public Funding of Political Parties Bill and asked the IEA-GPPP to ensure that it makes provision for realistic formula for the disbursement of funds. Former President John Evans Atta Mills also pledged his commitment to ensuring the passage of the bill into law in his 2010 State of the Nation's Address. The question to pose however is whether politicians in Ghana and the citizenry as a whole are genuinely ready and in support of state funding of political parties.

## **The State of Current Thinking on Party Financing of Political Parties**

Heidenheimer describes political party funding as the important lubrication that greases the engine of party politics,<sup>13</sup> while Nassmacher describes it as the main driving force for modern competitive political systems.<sup>14</sup> Unruh also indicates that party financing is the “mother’s milk of politics”<sup>15</sup> and one which “can buy goods, skills and services.”<sup>16</sup> All these claims about party funding, are simply because of the huge sums of money required to be spent on the activities of political parties,<sup>17</sup> including reaching out to voters, breaking down public inertia and securing political activity.<sup>18</sup> In their discussions on political party funding, most of these scholars seek to investigate the sources of funding for political parties. However, there is still limited information in this area because political parties are often not willing to fully disclose the extent of contributions and the identity of their donors.<sup>19</sup>

The only source of funding that may be available to political parties that cannot be shrouded in secrecy is public funding.<sup>20</sup> In discussing public funding of political parties in Ghana, studies that come in handy are the works of Ayee et. al, Salih, Kumado, Bofo-Arthur, and Saffu.<sup>21</sup> Writing on party financing in Ghana, these scholars argue that public funding remains the probable option, at least for now, given the paucity of funding available to political parties from their individual supporters and contributors. To ensure maximum fairness, there should be consensus about the most neutral and trusted institution to handle disbursement of state resources to political parties.<sup>22</sup> Also, the formula for sharing must first consider equity in which party infrastructure building will receive priority attention.<sup>23</sup> Because of the prevalence of political corruption, stringent measures of disclosure of funds received from the state must be a priority for the state and defaulting parties must lose their legal status or be banned for two general elections to serve as a deterrent to others.<sup>24</sup> Finally, frequent auditing and publication of party accounts in the private and national media is also highly recommended by the above scholars.

Proposing public funding of political parties is one thing, and examining governmental commitment to, as well as public support for, the proposal is another. A brief review of the literature seems to suggest that scholars have not given much attention to

governmental commitment and public support for the proposal. Given that the draft bill has not been presented to parliament for deliberations since 2010, two questions ought to be answered. First, are Ghanaians prepared for state or public funding of political parties? Second, are governments or political elites committed to the proposal? There may be anecdotal and hear-say evidence to suggest that Ghanaians may not be willing to fund political parties with their taxes and will therefore kick out any attempt on the part of the state to fund political parties. On the contrary, some political leaders in Ghana have publicly indicated their commitment to public funding of political parties. However, there seems to be no empirical studies conducted about the preparedness of Ghanaians for the proposal of public funding of political parties. Also, the body of literature reviewed above does not point to any study that measures the commitment of political leaders to public funding of political parties. These are the gaps in the literature that this study seeks to fill.

### **A Note on Methodology**

The study combines elite interviews<sup>25</sup> with a sample of respondents selected from the three main zones of Ghana, namely northern, middle, and southern zones. An interview appointment was scheduled with Marietta Brew Appiah-Oppong, the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of the Republic of Ghana, on February 19, 2014. This officer is in charge of drafting legislations and tabling government bills for cabinet discussion before its submission to parliament for deliberations. Through direct meetings scheduled by the author, attempts were also made to confirm information received from other officers at the presidency and the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC). With regards to the ruling party, the General Secretary was interviewed, not only because he attends cabinet meetings, but also because he was part of the Institute of Economic Affairs-Ghana Political Parties Programme (IEA-GPPP) that initiated the process towards the drafting of the bill in 2007 when the NDC was in opposition. Therefore in measuring commitment to public funding of political parties by politicians it was important to find out whether his views and commitment to the bill when in opposition were the same after his party won power in the 2008 and 2012 General Elections.

Face-to-face interviews were also conducted from January 10, 2014 to June 25, 2014. Those interviewed were the ordinary people, specifically, traders, i.e. market women and men selected from the Makola Market, the biggest market in Accra, the capital of Ghana, to represent the Southern Zone; Central Market in Kejetia, the biggest market in Kumasi to represent the Middle Zone; and the Aboabo Market, the biggest market in Tamale to represent the Northern Zone. Furthermore, the heads and staff of nonpartisan civil society organizations (CSOs) that promotes democracy and development; and representatives from academia. First, the ordinary people were chosen because they reflect the bulk of Ghanaians whose taxes would be used to finance political parties if the bill became law. The category of respondents referred to as “ordinary people” were chosen from the three biggest markets in the three main Zones of the country because in Ghana, majority of those who are not formally employed by the state resort to all forms of trading activities especially in the markets.<sup>26</sup> It must however be added that quite a number of such people also pursue petty trading ventures on the streets. The main CSOs operating in the areas of democracy and development in Ghana are the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Ghana), and the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG). These were chosen purposely for their significance in Ghana’s democratic and electoral politics since 1992. Finally, people from academia were chosen because of their intellectual background and the expected authoritative views they could offer about the subject matter. For the purpose of this study, the relevant people from academia were chosen from the Departments of Political Science and Economics of the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra.

To be able to effectively accommodate the diverse elements involved in the sample population, a sample size of 210 respondents was considered most appropriate for the study. In particular, it ensured a more balanced ratio in the choice and distribution of the unstructured questions for the respondents expected to appreciate the ideals of public funding of political parties and the ordinary people who may not have authoritative views on the subject matter.

The elite respondents were chosen from Accra not only to satisfy geopolitical complexion and the fact that it is the

cosmopolitan capital of Ghana, but also because that is where most of them are located. For instance, the three main CSOs in Ghana that operate with the mission to promote democracy and development are based in Accra. Again, to reflect the views of academia, preference was given to scholars from the nation's premier university, which is also in Accra. Of the 210 respondents, 150 were from the category referred to as ordinary people as follows: 50 from the Makola Market in Accra representing the Southern Zone; 50 from the Kejetia Central Market in Kumasi representing the Middle Zone; and 50 from the Aboabo Market in Tamale representing the Northern Zone. Forty (40) respondents were from the CSOs while 20 were from academia. The skewed distribution of respondents in favor of ordinary people was not only because they were the ones who mostly carry the tax burden of state but also because they constitute a huge segment of the population, and in a developing country like Ghana, they normally outnumber the other respondents selected.<sup>27</sup> Besides, the staff strength of CSOs and academic institutions in Ghana are generally limited, as many CSOs and academic institutions operate with relatively few human resources.

The 150 ordinary respondents comprised 103 females and 47 males. This can be explained by the fact that market trading in Ghana is culturally dominated by women, and indeed the studies of Allah-Mensah, Manuh, and Tsikata support this claim.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, we encountered more women than men in the market. All 150 ordinary respondents were more than the Ghanaian maturity and voting age of 18 years old. Regarding their educational background, 106 had some education (i.e., basic to secondary or vocational education), which makes it somewhat easier for them to appreciate the subject matter, while 44 had no formal education.

From the 40 CSOs, 20 respondents were chosen from the IEA-Ghana; 10 from the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and 10 from the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG). The distribution was skewed in favor of the IEA-Ghana not only because it initiated and prepared the draft bill but also because it is Ghana's foremost public policy think tank and bigger than the others in terms of size, strength, popularity and capacity. Finally, out of the 20 respondents from academia, 10 each were selected from the Departments of Political Science and Economics at the University of Ghana. The

voting age and educational background of respondents in the second and third category of respondents are obvious and do not warrant detailed commentary. Again, all the respondents were employed, albeit some of the jobs of the ordinary people in the market could be described as under-employment. The questions asked during the face-to-face interviews revolved around the following key issues:

- Do you support any of the political parties in Ghana?
- Did you vote in the last (2012) general election?
- Do you contribute to funding your party?
- If yes, how, and if no, why not?
- Do you know about the Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill?
- Should political parties benefit from public funding?
- If yes, why?
- If no, why?
- If you agree to public funding, what should be the criteria for allocation of funds?

Before analyzing the responses to these critical questions, it is admitted that given the small sample size and the selection of the bulk of respondents only from Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale, the findings of this study may merely represent hazy clues about the general view of Ghanaians about the subject matter under investigation. Any critique about the representativeness of the study in view of the fact that respondents were chosen only from the three Zones will be accepted as constructive. However it is also factual that the cosmopolitan nature of the capital cities selected to represent the Zones makes it plausible to use them for a microscopic study, particularly on critical issues such as public funding where views expressed in one part of the country, particularly by the ordinary citizenry are likely to be the same across the other regions.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the low level of trust for politicians by Ghanaians, the perceived negative implications of public funding of political parties for the Ghanaian economy that is already saddled with serious challenges, and the plague of economic misery that confronts the cross section of Ghanaians makes the selection of the three Zones for this study somewhat representative.<sup>30</sup>

In the next section, the concept of public funding of political parties is discussed. Thereafter, we provide a background and

main features of the Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008; analyze the findings of the research; and draw a conclusion from the study.

## **Public Funding of Political Parties**

### *Public Funding of Political Parties Explained*

Public funding of political parties is an arrangement that enables the state to give financial resources or indirect assistance to political parties in order to enable them to run their activities and achieve their ultimate objective of capturing political power and implementing policy prescriptions that would better the lots of the ordinary people.<sup>31</sup> The sources of funding for the purpose of financing political party activities are usually from public taxes and private contributions of individuals and corporate entities.<sup>32</sup> Countries like Germany, Ireland, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and countries in post-communist Eastern Europe practice some form of public funding of political parties.<sup>33</sup> In Africa, countries like Lesotho, Mali, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana have some arrangements for the state to fund political parties. Indeed, in Botswana for instance, parliament introduced and adopted a motion to fund political parties in 2013.<sup>34</sup>

The result of the increased use of the mass media and more cost-intensive campaigning techniques has rendered the running of political parties a very expensive venture. Again, in their quest to professionalize their internal activities and to run effectively, political parties in many parts of the world are daily manned by recruited full-time staff. Given that these full-time party employees are to be paid salaries, the need for some form of arrangement to ensure regular cash flow for the parties cannot be underestimated.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, the increasing amount of money needed for parties to continue to play a role in promoting multi-partyism is coupled with a decrease in revenue.<sup>36</sup> In recent years, many political parties in advanced democracies have suffered from a growing disengagement of citizens from conventional politics. This has led to a decline in membership of political parties and deprived parties of an important source of revenue by reducing significantly the amount of income derived from membership subscriptions.<sup>42</sup> However Biezen<sup>37</sup> argues that parties in modern democracies cannot

reasonably be expected to generate all necessary funding themselves. In this regard, the state must intervene to provide financial support to political parties. The criteria for allocating funds to political parties by the state vary. They include the number of votes cast for a political party in an election and the number of parliamentary seats obtained in an election. The size of a party's membership may be another conceivable formula for the allocation of funds, as well as the party's ability to field and secure the election of an agreed percentage or number of marginalized groups such as women, youth, or the physically challenged into the legislature or other decision making bodies of state as an affirmative action criteria.<sup>38</sup>

Public funding of political parties must find a synthesis between private and public financing of internal party affairs and external activities. If parties rely only on private contributions, certain private individuals may hijack the party. On the other hand, excessive reliance on public funding can weaken the relationship between parties and their electorates.<sup>39</sup> It is, therefore, imperative that parties strive to seek support from both sources or else they will lose funds. Too much reliance on funds from the state could erode the party's link with society and undermine the party's legitimacy.<sup>40</sup> In the current context of an increasing disengagement of society from party politics and a growing reluctance to donate money to them, parties may find it extremely difficult to raise funds. The availability of money from the state, moreover, may make it seem unnecessary for parties to raise money through private or voluntary fundraising and this may ultimately spell doom for the party.<sup>41</sup>

Generally, there should be some rules that must guide the distribution of funds by the state to political parties. These rules may require political parties to disclose their sources of income and expenditure and publish their party accounts. The rules may provide for an independent audit, inspection and control of party funds and accounts as well as mechanisms that ensure that blueprints on funding of political parties are adhered to.<sup>42</sup>

### *Arguments for Public Funding*

One major argument in favor of public funding for political parties is that it can support parties in meeting the cost of democratic politics and compensate for the scarcity of internal financing.<sup>43</sup> Few

political parties have been able to survive decades of authoritarian rule in many developing democracies. Such parties have had much of their organizational structures eradicated by the repressive regimes of non-democratic rule.<sup>44</sup> The proliferation of several other political parties in many developing countries is a recent phenomenon. These parties could therefore not draw on a developed organizational infrastructure or institutionalized links with organized and individual interests for financial assistance.<sup>45</sup> In this context, there are few alternative resources available except for state funding, which serves to compensate for the general scarcity of financial resources.<sup>46</sup> Part of the normal cost of parties in contemporary democracies includes the development and maintenance of the sometimes extensive party structures in order to sustain all the activities of the party organization. Granted, as it is quite expensive to maintain these structures, public support may be provided to augment the limited resources that may be generated by the party on its own.<sup>47</sup> In the periods immediately before elections, campaign activity will be at its highest, with parties distributing leaflets and posters, sending out direct mailings, broadcasting political messages on radio and television, and so on. The use of the mass media, and the professionalization of election campaigns through an increased use of consultants and public relations agencies have all made campaigning increasingly expensive in recent years. In this regard many scholars have re-echoed the need for the state to provide funding to political parties so they can effectively run their activities before, during and after elections.<sup>48</sup>

Another reason for public funding is that it promotes equal opportunities, fairness, and the equality of political competition.<sup>49</sup> Not all parties are equally resourceful and the fact that many of them cannot secure funds from private contributors should not in any way hinder their effective functioning. In this regard, minor parties that are unable to appeal to wealthy or established interests and newly established parties that lack links with affiliated interest organizations must also benefit from some form of public funding in order to create a level playing field that enables all political parties to compete on a more equitable basis.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the concern with equality of political competition and participation has a special relevance in transitional and newer democracies,<sup>51</sup> where public funding is deployed to compensate for the disadvantages confronting newly created parties when competing with the materially and financially

sound ones.<sup>52</sup> Public funding also restricts the influence of private money and thus limits its potential for distortion of the democratic political process. The situation where political parties become disproportionately influenced by a small minority of people because of their huge financial contributions in a manner that undermines majority interest is significantly curtailed. Again, the practice shields parties from meeting the selfish demands of its internal financiers and ultimately checks the corrupting relationships and practices that usually emerge between those who funded the party and the state or government.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, public funding may assist opposition parties in carrying out their parliamentary duties, in particular that of holding the incumbent government accountable. In the UK, for instance, parliamentary activities of opposition parties are financed by the state. The money is used to provide research assistance for front bench spokesmen and staff or personal assistants to the leader of the opposition.<sup>54</sup>

### *Critiquing Public Funding*

Public funding of political parties has, however, also been critiqued. One main argument in this regard is that it increases the tax burden and forces taxpayers to offer financial support to parties that they did not approve of politically.<sup>55</sup> In many developing countries fighting the quagmire of poverty and under-development, it is considered politically un-wise for government to spend the tax-payer's money of political parties when there are pressing bread and butter challenges confronting the ordinary people.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, public funding is also regarded as dangerous because it could increase the distance between the political elite and the citizen who is to be represented.<sup>57</sup> After state support, political parties may relax in their membership drive and cease to actively campaign for new membership. This may eventually lead to the dictatorship of party leaders over members and the sidelining of members from party decision-making.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008— Background and Main Features**

In June 2006, the IEA-GPPP initiated a discussion about the need to strengthen political parties so they can produce quality leaders

and work effectively to consolidate Ghana's democracy. One major challenge confronting political parties, and that accounts for their weakened status, was the paucity of funding available to them, particularly those in opposition.<sup>59</sup> Members of the IEA-GPPP, therefore, called for state financing of political parties to ensure a level playing field for all parties as well as build their capacity as credible agents through which multiparty democratic ideals could be realized.<sup>60</sup> As a first step towards the realization of this call, the IEA-GPPP initiated a move to have enacted a Public Funding of Political Parties Act that will provide state and other public financial support for political parties in Ghana. In furtherance of this initiative, the IEA-GPPP prepared the initial proposals for the bill. Thereafter, a Legal Consultant was commissioned to prepare a Draft Bill on Public Funding of Political Parties. The Draft Bill was subjected to nation-wide stakeholder consultations. Apart from these consultations, two separate workshops were held in Kumasi and Accra, at which various proposals for amendments were made.<sup>61</sup> Some of the proposals were incorporated into the draft bill.<sup>62</sup> The final proposed *Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008*, has the following as its major features:

- The establishment of a Political Parties Fund;
- The principal source of money for the Fund is two and half percent of the total tax revenue of Ghana;
- Other corporate entities and private individuals can also contribute to the Fund;
- The Fund is to be administered by the Electoral Commission;
- A formula for the disbursement of the Fund comprising the reimbursement for electoral expenses and general administration;
- An Affirmative Action provision to encourage political parties to field women candidates in elections;
- A provision that exempts the Fund from taxation; and
- A provision for an annual audit of the Fund and annual reports to parliament.<sup>63</sup>

The proposed draft bill was accepted by the IEA-GPPP and at a public ceremony held on October 10, 2007, the Electoral Commission also accepted to manage and administer the Fund once the bill is passed into law. The Bill was submitted to the executive on January 16, 2010. It was then expected to be considered

by the executive and, thereafter, forwarded to parliament to be passed into law. Regrettably, it has still not moved past the executive after four years of submission. The next section of this paper analyzes the findings of the study and attempts an explanation for this delay. It also unearths and discusses the mood as well as preparedness of Ghanaians for the draft bill.

## **Analysis of Data**

### *Current State of the Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008*

“We are aware of the Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill prepared and submitted to the presidency by the IEA-GPPP. It has however not come up during any of our strategy discussions for the year. I know the bill is very important but I also know that it is certainly not a priority,” stated Kow Sessah Acquaye, a State Attorney and Personal Assistant to the Attorney General and Minister for Justice of the Republic of Ghana, when he was asked about the status of the draft bill during a follow-up interview with him on March 25, 2014. In an interview, Marietta Brew Appiah-Opong, the Attorney-General of the Republic of Ghana, pointed out quite frankly that “no proposal for public funding of political parties has been discussed at the cabinet level, let alone being forwarded to my department for review, drafting or re-drafting.” In a follow-up interview with Michael Kpessa Whyte of the Policy Unit at the presidency on March 28, 2014, he indicated that the cabinet had not discussed the draft bill since it was not a priority. Again, the General Secretary of the ruling NDC, Johnson Asiedu Nketiah, who actively campaigned for the bill and played a leading role in its preparation, had developed cold-feet about the bill. He seemed ignorant about the status of the bill.<sup>64</sup> This clearly shows lack of government commitment to passing the bill into law. According Dr. Obed Asamoah, a former Attorney-General and Minister of Justice under the Rawlings regime (1992-2000) and a very astute and seasoned Ghanaian politician, “The idea of public funding of political parties may seem good on paper, but in reality, it sounds unwise because it could amount to giving dangerous arsenal to one’s political enemy.”<sup>65</sup> This powerful statement seems instructive in trying to demystify why the draft bill has been

with the presidency since 2010 and yet has not been tabled for discussion and action. There appears to be no genuine political will towards public funding of political parties beyond mere political rhetoric. Parties in opposition clamor for it only to develop cold-feet when they gain power.

### *Support for Political Parties and Voting in Elections*

Ghanaians are politically active and the average voter turn-out in elections since 1992 has been close to 70%. The response of the interviewees attested to this claim as all the respondents indicated their support for one political party or the other. They all voted in the 2012 General Elections for their respective political parties. Given that the survey was not about people's political affiliation, we did not probe further to ask respondents to indicate the parties they voted for in the 2012 General Elections.

### *Contributing to Funding of Political Parties*

At a meeting of the Platform of General Secretaries and Policy Analysts held on May 22, 2005 to discuss some preliminary proposals for public funding of political parties,<sup>66</sup> Dan Botwe, the then General Secretary of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) who was also the chairman for the Platform, observed the following: "The irony, however, is that even though many Ghanaians claim to support one party or the other and are prepared to do anything to defend their respective parties, they are not willing to contribute any money to fund the political parties they claim to die for."<sup>67</sup> This typical characteristic of many Ghanaians was reflected in the response to the issue above. In other words, in probing to ascertain whether the respondents contributed to the funding of their political parties, the answer was generally "No". The Executive Director and staff of the IEA, representing only 10% of the respondents, however, indicated that under their Ghana Political Parties Programme (GPPP), it had for the past twelve years funded the capacity building programmes of the political parties; contributed to building the institutional capacities of the parties by providing them with computers, printers and other office equipment; and paid the monthly salaries of three officers of the parties, namely the General Secretaries, Policy Analysts and Party Coordinators under the IEA-GPPP. No doubt that the formal

proposal for public funding of political parties emanated from the IEA-GPPP. It must however be noted that the IEA funding to members of the GPPP is at the corporate level. The individual respondents from the IEA indicated that they did not also contribute directly to help finance their preferred political parties.

In explaining why they did not contribute to funding political parties, a whopping majority of 88 percent indicated that their weak and unstable financial positions did not make the idea of direct contribution to funding political parties a priority for them. In their view, the basic bread and butter issues must be solved and some financial security and stability achieved by the individual before any idea of contributing to party funding may be considered. Indeed, even though Ghana has achieved a lower middle income status, this is yet to reflect in the pocket of the ordinary Ghanaian, as poverty, unemployment, under-employment, and other forms of economic miserization are still highly prevalent.<sup>68</sup> Seven percent of the respondents were of the view that political parties worth their sort should be capable of raising moneys on their own without depending on individual direct contributions. This position sounds a little absurd because it is the very individual contributions that could generate funds for the parties. Yet, those who held this view believed parties that were unable to look beyond individual membership contributions must be treated with contempt because they were not worthy of the mandate of the people. Finally, five percent of the respondents were of the view that their contributions would simply be “a drop in an ocean.” It would simply be insignificant and that nobody would recognize them. Generally, personal donations and individual contributions to parties must be grounded on the firm conviction and support people have for their parties and must not be a means for “a public display of affluence.”<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, the respondents who claimed they might not be recognized may have a case because, in Ghana, only people who make huge cash donations to political parties are publicly acclaimed, hailed, and defended by their parties, even when they land in trouble relating to corruption.

#### *The Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008*

A massive 84 percent of the respondents interviewed did not know about the existence of the draft bill. However, all the respondents

from IEA (10 percent) knew about the bill while 3 percent, 2 percent, and 1 percent knew about the bill from the respective camps of the CDD, IDEG and academia. The rest of the sampled population (ordinary people) was ignorant of the draft bill. The reason all the respondents from IEA were aware of the bill was obvious and needs no protracted comment. That the ordinary people were unaware of the bill was also understandable. In Ghana, even law enforcement agencies flout the laws, sometimes with impunity, largely as a result of their ignorance of it. The ordinary people may, therefore, be excused if they did not know about a draft bill that may never be passed into law.

In responding to the question as to whether political parties should be funded by the state, 82 percent of the respondents said no; 5 percent were indifferent; and 13 percent answered in the affirmative. For those who believed political parties must be funded by the state, 11 percent indicated that it would help the political parties run their activities effectively, strengthen and enable them produce quality leaders to tackle the nation's developmental challenge, as well as create a level playing field for parties. Some of the respondents (2 percent) also indicated that Ghanaian political parties are already benefitting from some form of public funding in the form of the state distributing vehicles to political parties to aid their electioneering campaign and not taxing their incomes. These respondents believed the idea must be enhanced since it already exists. In this regard, apart from those who held this latter view, the views expressed in support of public funding by the respondents were in tandem with those of scholars such as Doublet, Biezen, and Landfried.<sup>70</sup> The advocates of public funding also suggested ways in which the funds could be distributed in a manner that responds to the concerns raised by some public figures, including former President John Kufuor, who claimed to support the draft bill but wanted a national consensus on how the funds would be distributed by the state. To these respondents, the funds would be allocated by looking at the strength of political parties in terms of the number of branches, offices, and seats they obtained in parliament and the number of women they fielded, particularly in their strongholds, as a means of promoting affirmative action as prescribed by scholars, including Nassmacher and Malbin.<sup>71</sup>

For the respondents who believed political parties should not be funded by the state, 30 percent were of the view that the state should rather channel its scarce resources into developmental projects and alleviate economic hardships. In their view, given the level of poverty in the country, it is unwise and a misplaced priority to fund political parties with the nation's meager resources. Related to the above, 7 percent of the respondents abhorred the idea because it may increase the tax burden of the ordinary people and worsen their economic hardships. This explanation sits well with the views of scholars such as Alexander and Burnell when they discussed the criticisms of public funding of parties.<sup>72</sup> Another 35 percent of the respondents did not support public funding because to them, politicians were corrupt and were always in the news for looting state resources. These respondents found the idea of public funding as an absurd and exceptional opportunity for politicians to steal more state money for their selfish aggrandizement.

Again, there were those who did not support public funding of political parties because of the fear that it may open the floodgates for the proliferation of amorphous political parties for the purpose of receiving some financial gains from the state. Indeed, there are over 20 registered political parties in Ghana,<sup>73</sup> and there was fear among some of the respondents (6 percent) that Ghana may soon witness the proliferation of mushroom parties akin to what occurred in Mali if the proposal of public funding of political parties is implemented.<sup>74</sup> Finally, 4 percent of the respondents were of the view that serious political parties worth their sort should be able to raise funds for their activities by themselves without the state. The idea of public funding, to these respondents, smacks of an attempt to empower mediocrity in running the affairs of political parties. The respondents were of the view that political leaders should be able to source and raise funds for the country they are seeking to run and if charity really begins at home, then such potential leaders must first of all be able to raise funds by themselves for their parties. When the skill to raise funds for the internal activities of political parties is perfected, it can plausibly be argued that leaders would find it easier raising funds for the nation when they are elected to govern.

## Brief Discussion

This study shows that even though Ghanaians are politically active, they are not too keen on contributing funds to keep their respective political parties running. Given their weak financial base, they are also not supportive of any proposal for public funding of political parties. This may be understandable given the low level of democratic maturity and the level of poverty in the country. However, what worsens the future of the proposal for public funding of political parties is the total lack of political will on the part of political leaders to pursue this agenda. Generally, political parties in power in Africa tend to operate in a neo-patrimonial context, a situation where all powers, resources and largess are expected to flow from of the state.<sup>75</sup> With the exception of a few proactive African countries that have introduced some customized variant of public funding of political parties, the vast majority of African leaders prefer to use state power and resources only to the advantage of party supporters in a manner that promotes all manner of corrupt practices through blatant looting of state resources as well as facilitate the divisive phenomenon of “winner-takes-all politics.”<sup>76</sup> Indeed, before this study, Bayart had already written about *belly politics*, in which, similar to neo-patrimonialism, the state gives support to only those who are cronies of the government.<sup>77</sup> This multi-faceted metaphor arose in Africa after independence and was generally characterized by a controlling government and the interdependence of the elite in control of the private and public spheres.<sup>78</sup> Under this kind of prebendal politics, actors on both sides use their status to strengthen their economic and political power.<sup>79</sup> Nigeria’s postcolonial experience is perhaps the most apt example of the politics of the belly. The countless coups and ethnic and religious clashes in the oil-rich delta region are all underpinned by a cabal of high-ranking military personnel that demonstrates the networked nepotism characteristic of Bayart’s metaphor. Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha gained notoriety for this practice with Abacha in his four-year term, embezzling over four billion USD. Babangida also institutionalized corruption and amassed fortunes sufficient to make him one of Nigeria’s richest people. He reserved many government jobs for only his ethnic kinsmen and those who supported him.<sup>80</sup>

In Ghana, too, the lack of political will to pass the *Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill* is a typical manifestation of the practice of the belly politics that have plagued African countries after independence. In this regard, democratization in Ghana has not served as a countervailing check on the practice of neo-patrimonialism, as argued by Lindberg.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, the unwillingness or lack of political will on the part of elected politicians in Ghana to ensure some form of funding for all parties in order to create a level playing field during electoral competition and their desire to use resources of the state only to the advantage of their clients reflect their neo-patrimonial nature and the practice of belly politics in Africa as a whole. It is also a way of keeping the opposition poor and depriving them of the needed resources to be able to challenge or match the ruling party in terms of electoral campaign.<sup>82</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Public funding of political parties may have been introduced in countries, particularly developing African countries, for peculiar reasons and under different conditions.<sup>83</sup> The idea may therefore not be “swallowed, hook, line and sinker.” In Ghana, judging from the findings of this study, the proposal seems outmoded at conception. The *Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008* may never be passed into law given the lack of political will to implement such a law and the perception of public funding as a dangerous weapon for political opponents by ruling regimes. The idea was first discussed in 1996 during the Jerry Rawlings regime at a cabinet meeting and was killed because the zero-sum game of politics in Ghana does not make it wise to for the ruling government to empower the opposition.<sup>84</sup> Political parties in opposition clamor for it but develop cold feet about it when they get power because they see public funding as a dangerous arsenal to their real or perceived political opponents.<sup>85</sup> Admittedly, the study shows that the proposal for public funding may be unpopular, as the views of those interviewed weighed heavily against the draft bill. Nevertheless, this is not the reason why the passage of the bill may never see the light of day. The introduction of several bills and initiatives in Ghana since 1992 has met stiff opposition from the public, and yet these initiatives have been

implemented successfully because of governmental commitment and support for them. Indeed, the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) in Ghana in 1995 was met with severe opposition from the public. It culminated in a series of demonstrations that led to some casualties. Yet the government was resilient and committed to introducing and implementing the policy, and today, VAT is being implemented in Ghana. Unfortunately, the proposal for public funding of political parties in Ghana may likely face ‘double jeopardy’ because whereas the public as per the findings of this study might not support it, governments are also not committed to the proposal. Governments continue to pretend to favor it in order not to hurt their democratic credentials. With this political hypocrisy on the part of government, the idea of public funding of political parties may never materialize. If the findings of this study are anything to go by, then it can aptly be argued that until politicians strive to shed the corruption perception against them and encourage their supporters to voluntarily and regularly support them financially through the payment of monthly dues and special levies, political parties, particularly those in opposition, will continue to suffer financial suffocation and remain weak election machines in Ghana.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ingrid v. Biezen, *Political Parties in New Democracies: Party Organization in Southern and East-Central Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 24.

<sup>2</sup> See P.K. Chhibber and K. Kollman, *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India and the United States* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 45; David Apter, “Ghana,” in *Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa*, eds. James S. Coleman and Carl. G. Rosberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 21; Kwame Boafo-Arthur, “Political Parties and Democratic Sustainability in Ghana, 1992-2000,” in *African Political Parties: Evolution, Industrialization and Governance*, ed. Mohammed M. A. Salih (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 52.

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), *Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill, 2008* (Accra: IEA-Ghana, 2008), 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Kwame Ninsin, *Political Parties and Political Participation in Ghana* (Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2006), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), *Political Party Financing in Ghana: Policy Guidelines*. (Accra: CDD-Ghana, 2005), 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6.
- <sup>9</sup> IEA, *Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill*, 10.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 12.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 13.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 15.
- <sup>13</sup> Arnold Heidenheimer, *Comparative Political Finance: the Financing of Party Organizations and Electoral Campaigns* (Lexington, Maryland: Heath, 1970), 31.
- <sup>14</sup> Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, "Introduction: Political Parties, Funding and Democracy," in *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns*, eds. Reginald Austin and Maja Tjernström (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2003), 22-30.
- <sup>15</sup> Jesse Unruh, "Introduction: Political Parties, Funding and Democracy," in *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns*, 76.
- <sup>16</sup> See Henry Wells, *Government Financing of Political Parties in Puerto Rico* (Princeton: Citizens' Research Foundation, 1961), 82; Alexander Heard, *The Costs of Democracy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 251.
- <sup>17</sup> Gullan Gidlund, "Regulation of Party Finance in Sweden," in *Comparative Political Finance among the Democracies*, eds. Herbert E. Alexander and Rei Shiratori (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 107.
- <sup>18</sup> Matti Wiberg, *The Public Purse and Political Parties: Public Financing of Political Parties in Nordic Countries* (Helsinki: The Finnish Political Science Association, 1991), 48.
- <sup>19</sup> Michael Pinto-Duschinsky "Financing Politics: A Global View," in *Political Finance and Democracy in Nigeria: Prospects and Strategies for Reform*, ed. Ndubisi, Obiorah, (Lagos: Centre for Law and Social Action, 2004), 15.
- <sup>20</sup> Joseph Ayee, "Financing Political Parties in Ghana: An Exploratory Study," in *Political Parties and Democracy in Ghana's Fourth Republic*, eds. Kwame A. Ninsin and Francis K. Drah. (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 1993), 35.
- <sup>21</sup> See Joseph Ayee, Felix Anebo, and Emmanuel Debrah, "Financing Political Parties in Ghana," accessed, May 20, 2013, [http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/2007\\_NOVEMBER\\_REPORT\\_FINANCING\\_POLITICAL\\_PARTIES\\_IN\\_GHANA\\_J\\_AYEE.pdf](http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/2007_NOVEMBER_REPORT_FINANCING_POLITICAL_PARTIES_IN_GHANA_J_AYEE.pdf); Boafo-Arthur, "Political Parties and Democratic Sustainability," 64; Yaw Saffu, "The Funding of Political Parties and Campaigns in Africa," in *African Political Parties: Evolution, Institutionalization and Governance* ed. Mohammed Salih (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 95.
- <sup>22</sup> Boafo-Arthur, "Political Parties and Democratic Sustainability," 66.
- <sup>23</sup> Saffu, "The Funding of Political Parties and Campaigns in Africa," 96.
- <sup>24</sup> Joseph Ayee, Felix Anebo, and Emmanuel Debrah, "Financing Political Parties in Ghana," 23.
- <sup>25</sup> Elite can be explained in terms of the use of interview to elicit information from those at the apex of any stratification system. For the purpose of this study, the elites who were interviewed were officials or professors from academia; heads and staff of civil society; as well as policy makers and top party functionaries.
- <sup>26</sup> CDD-Ghana, *Political Party Fundraising*, 10.

- <sup>27</sup> Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER), *The State of the Ghanaian Economy, 2012* (Legon, Accra: ISSER, 2012), 48.
- <sup>28</sup> See the studies of Beatrix Allah-Mensah, *Women in Politics and Political Life in Ghana* (Accra: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, 2005), 20; Takyiwa Manuh, "Towards Greater Representation of Women in National Governance," *Governance Newsletter: A Publication of the Institute of Economic Affairs* 17, no. 6 (2011), accessed, April 20, 2014, <http://ieagh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/gov-v17-n6.pdf>; Dzodzi Tsikata, *Affirmative Action and Prospects for Gender Equality in Ghanaian Politics* (Accra: Abantu, Women in Broadcasting, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2009), 21.
- <sup>29</sup> Michelle D. Gavin, "Africa's Restless Youth," in *Beyond Humanitarianism*, eds. Princeton Lyman and Patricia Dorff (New York: Brookings Institute Press, 2007), 46.
- <sup>30</sup> CDD-Ghana, *Political Party Fundraising*, 11.
- <sup>31</sup> ISSER, *The State of the Ghanaian Economy, 2012*, 54.
- <sup>32</sup> Biezen, *Political Parties in New Democracies*, 81.
- <sup>33</sup> Heidenheimer, *Comparative Political Finance*, 99.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> See more details at <http://en-starafrica.com/news/botswana-mps-adopt-political-party-funding-motion.html>.
- <sup>36</sup> Richard Gillespie "Party Funding in a New Democracy: Spain" in *Funding Democratization*, eds. Peter Burnell and Alan Ware (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 85.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 88.
- <sup>38</sup> Richard Katz, "Party Organizations and Finance," in *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, eds. Lawrence Le Duc, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris (London: Sage, 1996), 86.
- <sup>39</sup> Biezen, *Political Parties in New Democracies*, 71.
- <sup>40</sup> Nassmacher, "Introduction," 78; Michael J. Malbin, *Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaign Finance Laws* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1980), 20.
- <sup>41</sup> Frank J. Sorauf, *Inside Campaign Finance: Myths and Realities* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1990), 81.
- <sup>42</sup> Ingrid v. Biezen, *Financing Political Parties and Election Campaigns: Guidelines* (Birmingham: Council of Europe Publishing, 2003), 51.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., 682. Also see Michael Levi and David Nelken, "The Corruption of Politics and the Politics of Corruption: An Overview," *Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (1996), 12.
- <sup>44</sup> Walter Little and Eduardo Posada-Carbó, "Political Corruption in Europe and Latin America," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No 1 (1997), 193.
- <sup>45</sup> Donatella Della Porta, and Alberto Vannucci, *Corrupt Exchanges: Actors, Resources, and Mechanisms of Political Corruption* (New York: De Gruyter, 1999), 81.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>49</sup> Biezen, *Political Parties in New Democracies*, 87.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Diego Gambetta “Corruption: An Analytical Map” in *Political Corruption in Transition: A Skeptic’s Handbook*, eds. Stephen Kotkin, and Andras Sajó, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), 38; Heidenheimer, *Comparative Political Finance*, 103.

<sup>51</sup> See Gambetta “Corruption: An Analytical Map,” 39; Yves Doublet, *Le Financement de la Vie Politique*. Translated by Emmanuel Kuto, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 65.

<sup>52</sup> Kaltefleiter, Werner and Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, “The New German System of Public Subsidies to Political Parties,” in *Political Parties in Democracy*, eds. Josef Thesing and Wilhelm Hofmeister (Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 1995), 388.

<sup>53</sup> See Heidenheimer, *Comparative Political Finance*, 103.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>55</sup> See Arthur B. Gunlicks, *Campaign and Party Finance in North America and Western Europe* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), 99; Katz, “Party Organizations and Finance,” 212.

<sup>56</sup> Petak Zdravko, “A Comparative Analysis of Financing Parties and Elections in Croatia and other Countries” *Politička Misao*, Vol. XXXVIII, (2001), No. 5, 18–33

<sup>57</sup> Ruud Koole, “The modesty of Dutch party finance” in *Comparative Political Finance in the 1980s*, ed. Herbert E. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 214.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Burnell, “Money and Politics in Emerging Democracies” in *Funding Democratization*, eds. Peter Burnell and Alan Ware (New York: Manchester University Press), 15.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>61</sup> IEA, *Draft Public Funding of Political Parties Bill*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>64</sup> The major proposals include the need for a Board of the Political Parties Fund composed of representatives of the political parties that would be responsible for policy issues while the Electoral Commission would be in charge of the management of the Fund; the need to reach an agreement with Ghana’s development partners on the proposed major source of revenue into the Fund, which is a percentage of the Value Added Tax (VAT); sensitizing the Ghanaian citizenry on the proposed use of the VAT for the purpose of the Fund in order to avoid societal backlash; getting rid of provisions in the bill that exerts governmental control of the Fund; and that Independent candidates should not benefit from the Fund.

<sup>65</sup> Mrs. Jean Mensa (Executive Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs) interview with the author June, 1, 2014, in Accra, Ghana.

<sup>66</sup> Asiedu Nketiah, interview with the author, March 27, 2014, at the Conference Hall of the Institute of Economic Affairs in Accra, Ghana. During the interview the General Secretary admitted that nothing had been done directly by himself or his party in pushing for a discussion and passage of the draft bill.

<sup>67</sup> Views expressed by Dan Botwe, former General Secretary of the New Patriotic Party at a Roundtable on Party Financing in Accra on March 15, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> Dr. Obed Asamoah, who was a member of the Caucus of Political Party Chairmen (one of the structures under the IEA-GPPP comprising the national chairmen of the four main political parties with representation in parliament), made this point during a Caucus meeting on November 16, 2005 at the Conference Hall of the IEA, Accra, Ghana.

<sup>69</sup> CDD-Ghana, *Political Party Fundraising*, 15.

<sup>70</sup> This Platform is the second most important structure under the IEA-GPPP that brings together the General Secretaries and Policy Analysts of the four main political parties with representation in Ghana's parliament to meet every month and discuss issues of national concern with the view to proposing practical solutions to them.

<sup>71</sup> ISSER, *The State of the Ghanaian Economy, 2012*, 86.

<sup>72</sup> See Doublet, *Le Financement de la Vie Politique*, 56; Biezen, *Political Parties in New Democracies*, 67.

<sup>73</sup> Nassmacher, "Introduction"; 76.

<sup>74</sup> Koole, "The modesty of Dutch party finance," 215. Also see Byrne, Iain, *What Price Politics?: Proposals for the Regulation of Party Funding* (London: Charter 88, 1998), 51.

<sup>75</sup> Even though there are over 20 political parties in Ghana, only four of them are represented in parliament. They are the National Democratic Congress, the New Patriotic Party, the Convention Peoples' Party and the Peoples' National Convention. Out of the four, only two, the NDC and NPP are capable of winning elections and forming government.

<sup>76</sup> Ernest K. Abotsi, "Rethinking the Winner-Takes-All System" *IEA Governance Newsletter*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (2013), 1-5.

<sup>77</sup> In Mali, the proliferation of mushroom political parties is rampant and there are over 100 registered political parties.

<sup>78</sup> Staffan Lindberg, "Its Our Time to Chop: Do Elections in Africa Feed Neopatrimonialism Rather than Counter-Act It?" *Democratization*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2003), 128.

<sup>79</sup> Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Michigan: Polity, 2009), 159.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>83</sup> Lindberg, "Its Our Time to Chop," 140. Also see Susan. Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 201.

<sup>84</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, and Steven Wilkinson, "Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 114, No. 6 (2009), 377. Also see Martin Linton, *Money and Votes* (London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 1994), 101.

<sup>85</sup> South Africa, at the fall of the apartheid régime, was so eager to include the black majority in mainstream politics and further place them on the same scale so as to close the gap between the well-resourced white politician and the vibrant, but ill-resourced black politician. One of the ways of achieving this aim was to fund the political parties from public funds. Be that as it may, the glaring economic disparity between Ghana and the Republic of South Africa needs no protracted comments. In Zimbabwe too, it is only the Mugabe-led ruling party (ZANU PF) that receives public funding. In Mali, public funding was introduced to whip up general interest in politics and to entrench multi-party democracy but this has led to an unnecessary proliferation of mushroom parties that rather drains the resources of state.

<sup>86</sup> The author remains grateful to Dr. Obed Asamoah, former Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in the Jerry Rawlings regime (1996-2000) for this view.

<sup>87</sup> The two main political parties in Ghana that have ruled the nation since 1992 have all supported the idea but failed to implement it when they were elected to power.