

# Public views on state funding of political parties politics essay



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Political party funding has become a topical issue in recent public debates which must be given high priority, especially in a developing country like Ghana where democratic systems to a large extent are clearly consolidating. In Ghana, the introduction of political parties began in the late 1940s. This led to the formation of the first political party in the Gold Coast in 1947, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) under the leadership of the late Dr. J. B. Danquah. Later on, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who was invited from the United Kingdom to act as secretary broke away to form his own political party ' Convention Peoples Party (CPP)' in 1949 and subsequently won independence in 1957 for Ghana (Ghana Review International, 1996 : 2).

Since the introduction of multiparty democracy in Ghana from the early part of 1940s, funding of political party programmes and activities has been done by party members and sympathizers. This is perhaps due to the fact that in the first place, political parties started as national movements, which aimed at winning political power from the British Colonialists. In such a situation there was no way the colonial masters would help finance such political parties.

Again, the formation of political parties was begun by the intelligentsia most of whom were rich and could therefore finance the parties. However, governments in power have always used their incumbency to their advantage and would therefore not wish the state to finance political parties to be able to compete with them on the same level.

“ Between the first Republican Constitution of 1960 and the Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992, five military regimes have ruled the

country. These military interventions in the way stunted political party development in the country. Ironically, the seventeen (17) year uninterrupted democratic governance in Ghana, beginning in 1993, has been a major achievement that seems to herald a re-birth in party politics” (Centre for Democratic Development-Ghana Policy Guidelines, 2005: 1).

Inadequate funding of political parties has made ruling parties in Africa and especially Ghana take advantage of the power of incumbency thereby not ensuring level playing field for all parties.

Currently, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana addresses funding problem partially by “ guaranteeing all political parties equal access to the state-owned media during election seasons”. ‘ Additional support has also been given to the parties through Electoral Commission by the state. Such support provides limited numbers of vehicles to the parties during elections. Also, political parties enjoy tax exemption whilst non-governmental and some donor organizations offer trainings and logistics support to political parties’ (Article 55, Clause 11-12 of 1992 Constitution).

Paradoxically, the policy of the Electoral Commission of Ghana tends to compound the problem of funding of political parties. ‘ The Electoral Commission of Ghana spells out that a presidential candidate who fails to obtain 25% of the votes cast in the general elections loses the nomination fees paid to the Electoral Commission. The policy emphasizes that a parliamentary candidate must win 12. 5 % of total votes cast in order to get the nomination fees refunded” (Elections, 2004: 30). Interestingly, parties that face funding problems are the ones that largely find it difficult to win

votes above the minimum requirement set by the Electoral Commission. This to a large extent has fuelled the debate on the funding of political parties in the country.

## 1. 1 Problem Statement

Political parties in Ghana have had a lot of problems in organizing and mobilizing both human and material resources in pursuit of their programmes. Fundamental to these problems is that of finance.

Financing political parties in Ghana has been an agonising issue to most political parties, especially the smaller ones and the parties' in opposition in particular. The Political Parties Law, Act 574 of 2000 (Section 23, 1- 24) says among other things that “ members of a political party or their sympathizers have to contribute towards the financing of the political party”. ‘ It states further that foreigners cannot contribute towards the financing of a political party, nor can a foreign corporate body do so’.

Even though there is no limit to how much each individual can contribute to the financing of a political party, few individuals in the various political parties in Ghana are rich enough to contribute any substantial sums of money for the efficient running of their political parties. The fact is that running political parties requires huge sums of money. For instance, political parties are required by law “ to have offices in at least two- thirds of the districts in each region as well as national headquarters”, (Political Party Law, Act 574 of 2000, Section 9: 3; Article 55 (7b) of 1992 Constitution).

Political parties need vehicles to conduct their campaigns, elections and constituencies /national congresses to select their leaders at the <https://assignbuster.com/public-views-on-state-funding-of-political-parties-politics-essay/>

constituencies and national levels. All of these calls for money before these activities could be carried out successfully.

It is important to note that the issue of political parties funding has become topical in recent times. The debate on financing of political parties in Ghana has been far too long in this country with some political experts making a strong case for the implementation of the policy even before 2012 General Elections. The country's constitution guarantees that political parties operate very transparent financial systems. Article 21(1) of the Political Parties Law Act 574 (2000) states that ' within six months from the end of the year, a political party is to submit a statement of account to the Electoral Commission of Ghana', including the following:

" Sources of funds,

Membership dues paid

Contributions or donations in cash or kind received

Properties of the parties and when they were acquired".

Invariably, these have been the main sources of political parties funding since independence. Additionally, Article 23 (1) of the Political Parties Laws Act 574 " regulates the funding of political parties and stipulates that only Ghanaian citizens, partnership or enterprises in which a Ghanaian owns at least 75% and is registered under the laws of Ghana can contribute or make donations in cash or kind to a political party".

In view of the above, several forums have been organized by Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and KAB-Governance Consult since the 1992 elections for people to express their views on the subject. Research conducted by the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), journal publications and speeches by certain personalities including the Chairman of Electoral Commission of Ghana, Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, the former President of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufour and other political leaders, have all added to the debate on the state funding of political parties in Ghana.

According to CDD- Ghana Policy Guidelines, 2005: 6 there are other people who argued that the state is not financially sound for state funding of political parties in Ghana. In their view, “ the country is already struggling with chronic huge gaps in financing the nation’s key social sectors such as health care, education, utilities and not to mention current levels of perceptions of corruption in the country in general and within political parties in particular”. Also their contention is that “ if the state funds political parties, there would be too many parties in the country and that some parties might become complacent and atrophy after they receive public funding; political parties will cease to actively seek new members and funds from the voting public. Thus the parties will no longer feel a need to perform their activities, since funding will be comfortably provided by the state”.

On the contrary, those who argue in favour of state funding of political parties believe that:

” Individuals should be made to pay for the democracy they enjoy just like paying for social infrastructure and services”.

” Since there is funding for all agencies that uphold the democracy like Electoral Commission, Judicial Services, Executives, Legislatures, etc, political parties should have its share of the state funding”.

” Party funding will help curb corruption; nepotism and favoritism”. (CDD-Ghana Policy Guidelines, 2005: 5).

Link to that others are of the view that, ” if countries like Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia are funding their political parties, then Ghana’s pedigree as a bastion of democracy in Africa should not be far from these less developed African countries” (Daily Graphic, Thursday, 12/09/2009). Mr. Julius Ochiel Secretary-General of the Kenyan African Democratic Development Union (KADDDU) at the 2009 Netherlands Institute of Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and African Regional Programme (ARP) round table conference held in Accra indicated that, ” his country had just passed a political parties act, which provided for the state funding of political parties”. Mr. Ochiel said \$70 million has been budgeted for Kenya’s next election. ” He further said in view of the requirement for accessing the funds, the number of political parties in the country has reduced from 168 to 46” (Kofi Yeboah, 2009). <http://www.modernghana.com>

Numerous questions lingering in the minds of most Ghanaians now are; should political parties be funded by the state? If yes why and how? These and other related questions have remained unanswered by the ensuing debate by the experts. It is against this background of arguments and <https://assignbuster.com/public-views-on-state-funding-of-political-parties-politics-essay/>

counter arguments and controversies and inconsistencies about state funding of political parties that has necessitated this research to empirically seek the views of the ordinary Ghanaian tax payer from the Wa Municipality to contribute to the debate on state funding of political parties.

## 1. 2 Main Research Question

What are the views of people of the Wa Municipality on state funding of political parties' programmes and activities in Ghana?

## 1. 3 Sub – Research Questions

What are the people's views about the challenges political parties face in financing their programmes and activities in Ghana?

What are the people's views about the sources of funding of political parties programmes and activities in Ghana?

What are the views of people in the Wa Municipality about state funding of political parties in Ghana?

How will state funding influence political parties' programmes and activities in Ghana?

What lessons can be drawn from the study for policy formulation in Ghana?

## 1. 4 Main Research Objective

To find out the views of the people of Wa Municipality on state funding of political parties' programmes and activities in Ghana.



### 1. 5 Sub Research Objectives

To investigate the people's views about the challenges political parties face in financing their programmes and activities in Ghana.

To find out the people's views about the sources of funding of political parties programmes and activities in Ghana.

To examine the people's views about state funding of political parties in Ghana.

To examine how state funding will influence political parties programmes and activities in Ghana.

To draw lessons for policy formulation in Ghana.

### 1. 6 Justification of the Study

Like other developing countries, in Ghana people often do not concern themselves with how political parties find money to organize, mobilize and run their programmes and activities. All that people, for that matter, the electorate are interested in is to see parties moving from one place to another campaigning and what they promise to do for them when they get the nod.

The significance of the study would therefore bring to the fore the concerns of stakeholders on whether political parties should be funded to make them efficient and generate relevant data on state funding of political parties in Ghana and thereby add to the ongoing debate on state funding of political

parties. Again it would benefit Ghana's multiparty democracy and all stakeholders who have legitimate interest in electoral activities in particular such as; Political parties, Electorate , The Government, Donors , Civil Societies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), (Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), KAB-Governance Consult etc), who have always pushed for this agenda and Electoral Commission.

The study would further contribute to the on going debate on the subject when completed but also provide informed data/ information for policy makers to take concrete decision on state funding of political parties in Ghana.

#### 1. 7 Limitation of the Study

A study of this nature should have covered the whole constituencies in the Upper West Region. However, due to lack of adequate time and financial constraints, the study would be restricted to eight (8) Electoral Areas in the Wa Municipality which might not give fair representation of the peoples' views. Nonetheless, the views of the people will be enough to contribute to the debate at stake.

Again, much has not been written on the topic and that the researcher suspect literature will be limited in scope. The available literature will be thoroughly examined with their contributions to the topic and gaps if any. Finally, uncooperative attitudes of some respondents that researcher might come into contact with are likely to militate against the smooth running of the research work.

## 1. 8 Organization of the Study

The study would be structured into six (6) chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction, which covers background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study.

The second chapter concerns with the literature review on conceptual issues on state funding of political parties programmes and activities, whilst Chapter three examines the methodology which includes: introduction, study area, study design, sample population, methods of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter four would focus on the analysis of data from the field of study specifically Wa Municipality. Chapter five devoted to summary of main findings and conclusions of the study. The final chapter which is chapter six deals with suggested recommendations based on the study findings for effective policy- making and future research into other related fields of political parties in the country.

## 2. 0 Literature Review

The study shall review existing literature on the conceptual issues indicated below:

The history of Multiparty democracy in Ghana

Sources of funding of political parties in Ghana and debates about that.

Mode/ System of state funding of political parties in developing countries

Experiences at international levels on best practices (America, Europe, Asia, South and West Africa) on state funding of political parties.

Challenges facing political parties in carrying out a healthy and sustainable programmes and activities

## 2. 1 Literature Review Summary

One cannot obtain much literature on funding of political parties in Ghana even though a lot of discussions/ debates have taken place on the subject. This makes study of such nature more meaningful. Notwithstanding this problem, the few literature (books) and written articles on the subject are worthier to be reviewed.

Funding of political parties has been a thorny issue for multiparty democracy in developing countries due to high poverty in these states. If multiparty democracy is to succeed then it is of utmost importance that the key factors for the viability of political parties ought to be identified and systematically addressed.

Political parties are faced with serious challenges in their duties as educators of the people and as initiators of political programmes for the attainment and maintenance of political power. " Besides the three arms of Government- the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary- political life is animated by citizens, groups, the mass media and political parties; the role of the latter in the political life is strongly influenced by the various types of the political systems in which they operate"(Akpovo, 1996: 65). Akpovo's view implies <https://assignbuster.com/public-views-on-state-funding-of-political-parties-politics-essay/>

that political parties play a crucial role in the political life of citizens in modern political dispensation and one needs to be given the necessary prominence.

Aminou, (1996: 45-46) posits that, " in West Africa after independence most countries relegated the multiparty system to the background as was the practice in many African counties. Political leaders at the time felt national unity; modernization and development were more paramount than multiparty democracy". During this period funds from the state were directly or indirectly used to finance the one party system, as was the case in La Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Ghana. " He further indicated that in other countries where the one - party system was practised it was from the funds of the state security and sometimes directly or indirectly from the national budget that the ' State Party' realised its financial resources". The myopic perception of most post- independent African leaders about nation building and development perhaps might have stifled the growth and development of multiparty democracy in Africa and Ghana in particular.

In Ghana, since the time of the first political party- the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was formed to date, political party funding has been the responsibility of members of the political parties themselves. The main sources of political party funding according to Political Parties Law, Act 574 of 2000 allowed by law have been:

" Contributions from funding members

Dues or subscriptions from members

Donations from non- members who are Ghanaians

Special fund – raising activities

Sales from party emblems, stickers, t- shirt, cups among others”.

Ironically, political parties incur several expenses by establishing branches in all the ten (10) regions of the country as indicated earlier on (Article 55: 7b of the 1992 Constitution), holding periodic meetings, keeping activities and the general public informed, buying and fuelling of vehicles for campaigning in electioneering periods, budget for party members and polling agents, Television and Radio announcements among others.

From the above one realises that running political parties in Ghana requires huge sums of money and in order for them to fulfil their functions conveniently. More especially, to be victorious, political parties need good financial and material resources, in the current political process, hence the justification of the debate on funding and regulating of political parties in Africa and Ghana in particular.

” The survival of democracy presupposes that the doors to political power should be accessible to everyone, the very poor and the rich alike” (Aminauo, 1996). Equality of all citizens before the law means equal opportunity for all political groupings in the struggle for power. ” Should the struggle for political power be a matter of few ‘ haves’ and majority ‘ have nots’? If not for a meaningful struggle for the power (healthy political game), Political parties must be seen to have relatively balance of power financially and materially”. (Akpovo, 1996: 69).

### 3. 0 Research Methodology

#### 3. 1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the means of collecting appropriate data on the research topic. All possible techniques and methods, both formal and informal would be used in the data collection.

#### 3. 2 Study Area

The Wa Municipality is one of the nine administrative Assemblies in the Upper West Region. The Municipal covers Wa, the capital town of the Upper West Region. It is bordered to the north by the Nadowli District, to the east by the Wa East District, to the west by the Wa West District and to the south by both Wa East and Wa West Districts. It lies within latitude 1°45`N to 2°45`N and longitude 9°32`W to 10°20`W. The Wa Municipal covers a land mass area of approximately 234. 74sq kilometers, which is about 6. 4% of the region. The total estimated population of the Municipality as at the 2000 Population and Housing Census was 224, 066 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000).

#### 3. 3 Study Design

According to Sarantakos (2005) every research type requires appropriate research design to be able to come out with valid and reliable findings. " Research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research" (Mouton, 2001: 55). The study design to be adopted is a Mixed Method Research approach but would be more inclined to qualitative than quantitative research. Johnson et al. (2007: 123) defined a Mixed Research <https://assignbuster.com/public-views-on-state-funding-of-political-parties-politics-essay/>

Design as "...the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e. g. use of qualitative and quantitative view points, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for both broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration".

In addition to the above the research would further employ case study because according to Yin (1993) case studies are appropriate when investigators desire to:

" Define topics broadly not narrowly,

Cover textual conditions and not just the phenomenon of study, and

Rely on multiple and not single sources of evidence".

The justification to lean more towards qualitative research is because qualitative research permits the researcher:

" to wear wider lens spectacles that enable him to see both context specific issues and the phenomena as it exist and functions within each individual community environment and in relation to other on-going phenomena" ( Bacho, 2001: 78-79).

### 3. 4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of population for the purpose of study (Panneerselvam, 2007). " The rational is to make generalisation or to draw inferences based on the study of the samples about the parameters of



population from which the samples are taken” (Yin, 1993). This study combines cluster sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling to select respondents. In all one hundred (100) respondents from the survey population of eight (8) electoral areas in the Wa Municipality would be selected.

### 3. 5 Sampling Units

The following respondents will constitute the sampling units of the study. They include; Political Party Executives, Government Officials, Registered Voters/ Electorate and Assembly Members since they are directly involved in the electoral process and have legitimate interest and as well will have first hand information on the subject under study. Electoral Commission Staff and Civil Society Organizations will also be contacted for information on the topic since they work hand in hand and will have relevant information to the study.

### 3. 6 Sampling Size Estimation and Sampling Frame

” Sample Unit is the unit of element; group or system considered or selected from a sampling frame” (Marfo, 2008). In effect, the sample unit is the entity or the phenomenon you intend investigating. In all, one hundred (100) respondents will be randomly selected as follows; party executives – 30, electorate/ registered voters – 40, assembly members – 8, Electoral commission staff – 8, Government official – 4, civil society organizations (CSOs) -10. The simple random sampling technique is to give all units equal chances of been selected in the sample. The stratifying sampling is to ensure universal representativeness and to reduce possible errors/ biases as much

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as practicable. The purposive sampling technique will ensure that the views of all those who have knowledge about political parties and political funding are brought to bear on the topic at stake.

### 3. 7 Data Collection Techniques

” It is opined that various sources, tools and techniques should be employed by researchers to collect, validate and detect inconsistencies in data” (Twumasi, 2001). Flick, (2002) in his view maintained that generally, there are two sources of data collection in social research. ” These are the primary and secondary sources. In the light of this assertion both sources would be adopted for this research”.

### 3. 8 Primary Data

Primary data collection processes will make use of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and in-depth interview with key respondents using semi-structured or open-ended questions to illicit information on the topic. ” This technique would allow respondents the liberty to give any answers by freely expressing themselves” (Twumasi, 2001).

Focus Group Discussion Technique would be applied to collect views from Government Officials, CODEO, Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and Electoral Commission Staff respondents. The Focus Group Discussion approach is to explore the feelings and views of this category of the study population through focus group discussions for the consolidation of findings. Focus Group Discussions would be organised at each of the four (4) zones as

already mentioned and each group would be composed of a minimum of six (6) members.

Survey questionnaires would be administered to literate electorate/registered voters' and the Party Executives respondents. This technique will be used for these categories because they form the majority whose views could be generalised or draw inferences based on the study.

Semi-structured questionnaires/ interview guide would be applied to Assembly Members because they are relatively few and can also help explore in-depth and specific views on the topic.

### 3. 9 Secondary Data

The secondary data relevant to the topic will also be used especially in previous researches of Centre for Democratic Development, electoral laws, policies and pending legislation, newspaper articles, or the 'gray literature'- that is, unpublished brochures, other materials from the political parties themselves, text books, publications, magazines, periodical journal, and thesis. Thus, both published and unpublished sources of data collection would be employed.

### 4. 0 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis will be done by summarising findings into themes and presented by interpretation and drawing of trends. This approach is to be adopted since the assessments of key objectives of the study depend largely on the views of the sample population. Quantitative data would be analyzed using statistical tools and techniques available on the Statistical Package for <https://assignbuster.com/public-views-on-state-funding-of-political-parties-politics-essay/>

Social Scientists (SPSS) to generate computer based outputs presented in the form of frequency tables, percentages, graphs and charts to illustrate the findings, from which inferences can be drawn.

#### 4. 1 Dissemination of Research Result

The result of the research will be published in a book to give all people access to the findings, typically citizens of Wa Municipality in particular.

#### 4. 2 Duration of the Project

The project is expected to last for fourteen (14) months, thus from March, 2010 – April, 2011. The table below indicates the time frame for the various activities:

Table 1: Research Schedule.

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

PHASE 4

From-To

(2010)

From-To

(2010)

From-

To

(2010)

From-

To

(2011)

ACTIVITY

METHOD

PROPOSAL WRITING

March-June

Conceptualizing research problem, objectives and doing some readings on the topic.

1

March

Writing of full proposal

2

March-April

Submission of proposal

3

May

Defending proposal

June

LITERATURE REVIEW

July-August

Consulting and reviewing literature on the topic

4

July-August

DATA COLLECTION

September-December

Targets ' awareness

creation on the project

Sending introductory

letters to them about it

- 

September

Following up to meet them personally

September

Designing questions for

both surveys and interviews

September

Pretesting questions and making adjustment where necessary

September

Administering questionnaire/collecting data

Surveys

October

Interviews

November

Conducting Focus

Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions

October-December

## DATA ANALYSIS, REPORT COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION

January-

April

Reviewing transcripts and summarizing data collected

January

Organizing qualitative data into themes and doing SPSS analysis of quantitative data into tables, charts and graphs

January-

February

Compiling report

March

Proof reading

April

Printing, Binding and Submission of final report

April

## BUDGET



An estimated amount of One Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty Ghana Cedis and Twenty- Five Ghana Pesewas, (GHâ, µ 1, 330. 25) as in table 2 below will be required to complete the research.

Table 2: Research Budget

Activity

Item/Quantity/

Frequency

Unit Cost

Total Cost

GH¢

PROPOSAL WRITING PHASE

27. 00

The use of internet

5 X 2 hours

GH¢ 1. 00

10, 00

Communication

2 Vodafone cards

GH¢ 5. 00

10. 00

Printing of proposal

20 pages

30GP

6. 00

Binding

1 booklet

GH¢ 1. 00

1. 00

LITERATURE REVIEW PHASE

106. 00

The use of internet

20 X 2 hours browsing

GH¢ 1. 00

40. 00

Printing of 20 pages

30GP

6. 00

Photocopying and Buying of other literature for the thesis

60. 00

DATA COLLECTION PHASE

157. 25

Transportation

5 trips to and from study area

GH¢ 5. 00

25. 00

Transportation

Internal movement at study area

GH¢ 30. 00

30. 00

communication

6 Vodafone cards

GH¢ 5. 00

30, 00

Printing of questionnaires

20 pages

0. 5 GP

10. 00

Photo copying of questionnaires

15 pages X 83

75 GP

62. 25

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORT COMPILATION PHASE

1, 040. 00

Printing of thesis

140 pages X 2 (first and second drafts)

50GP

140. 00

140 pages X 6 (original copies)

GH¢ 1. 00

840. 00

Binding of thesis

6 copies

GH¢ 10. 00

60. 00

GRAND TOTAL

GH¢

1, 330. 25