

**CLIENTELISM AND ELECTIONS: A STUDY  
OF GHANIAN POLITICIANS' DISCOURSES**

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Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa  
in partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts Political Science

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## Abstract

This thesis brings to light political dynamics related to clientelism and other forms of corruption in Ghanaian electoral campaigns from 2012 to 2023. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the research question: how do political actors of the two major political parties in Ghana –the NPP and NDC –debate and argue about clientelism in Ghana? To answer this question, it analyzes three 2012, 2016, and 2020 elections and alternations in power, while also considering the upcoming 2024 elections. Using Discourse Analysis and drawing on primary and secondary data collected in Ghanaian media (YouTube videos of political campaigns; televised interviews given to local media; etc.), this study unravels the cultural, religious and historical imports of language in the Ghanaian context of clientelism, veering away from the traditional definition of clientelism. The study finds that leading political actors in Ghana produce three types of discourses when they talk about clientelism: discourses on food and clientelism; discourses on family, clan, ethnicity and clientelism; and discourses on clientelism, wrongdoings and promises of politicians. These discourses use metaphors, proverbs, songs, speeches and other cultural references.

## Acknowledgement

I am compelled to express my deepest gratitude to each of you, for it is your unwavering support, love, and encouragement that have carried me through this journey.

Dad, your wisdom, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the cornerstone of my education. Your unwavering belief in my potential has been a guiding light, propelling me forward even when self-doubt threatened to overshadow my path. Your dedication to my dreams has made this achievement possible, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

To my siblings, you have been my steadfast cheerleaders, my confidants, and my partners in countless late-night study sessions. Your words of encouragement, shared laughter, and the unbreakable bond we share have been a source of strength throughout this journey. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

Professor Jourde, your mentorship has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey. Your guidance, insightful feedback and commitment to fostering critical thinking and intellectual growth has left an indelible mark on my academic pursuits.

To my beloved Fiancé, your unwavering support has been my rock. Through the long hours of research, the moments of frustration, and the late-night writing marathons, you stood by my side with unwavering patience and love. Your support has been a constant source of inspiration, and I am grateful for your unwavering presence in my life.

As I reflect on the completion of my master's degree, I carry with me not only the knowledge I've gained but also the immeasurable wealth of love and support from each of you. This achievement is not just a testament to my dedication but a testament to the collective strength of my support system.

Thank you, from the depths of my heart, for being my pillars of strength, my sources of inspiration, and my cherished loved ones. With gratitude and appreciation!

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The political history and trajectory of democracy has long shown the saliency of choosing representatives and leaders. This over time has evolved into a more complex process of campaigning, elections and post elections processes to ensure safe, free and fair continuity of elections. The ways campaigns are carried out by both political leaders and voters are of increasing interest to the scholarly body. Electoral competition constitutes a fundamental pillar of democratic systems (Wagner & Krause, 2023). Competitive electoral processes provide opposition parties with the chance to replace those in power, due to the presence of numerous swing voters, especially in African countries with multiethnic democracies like Kenya and Ghana (Horowitz, 2022). And these are commonly linked to the concept of "good governance" and a variety of favorable policy outcomes as emphasized by theories of governance (Ansell & Torfing, 2022). These outcomes include augmented investment in education (Stasavage, 2005), extended life expectancy (Baum & Lake, 2003), reduced corruption (Olken & Pande, 2012), enhanced provision of public goods (De Mesquita *et al.*, 2005), and elevated levels of economic growth (Besley *et al.*, 2010). However, it is important to acknowledge that electoral competition can also present certain disadvantages. It may result in trade-offs or have varying effects on development outcomes (De Kadt & Wittels, 2019). The presence of competitive electoral campaigns can generate incentives for candidates and political parties to engage in practices that undermine the principles of fair democratic elections, with the aim of increasing their likelihood of winning (Horowitz, 2022). In other words, these campaigns may employ clientelist methods of distribution as a means of mobilizing voter support (Dawson, 2022).

In most countries around the world, beyond the formal rules of the electoral games, more informal dynamics unfold during electoral campaigns, where personal ties between candidates and individual voters or groups of voters are evoked and mobilized. These personalized ties are often grouped under concepts such as clientelism or neopatrimonialism. This practice of contingent exchange amongst political actors, and between elites and voters, has been observed to flourish in both autocratic and democratic systems and it is found in a diverse range of cultural contexts (Hicken 2011). In certain political contexts, clientelism diminishes in the face of economic development, while in others, it demonstrates adaptability and resilience. It further posits that the current state of knowledge regarding the origins and mechanisms of clientelism underscores the interplay between clientelism and democracy, as well as between clientelism and development (Hicken 2011). Again, there is a correlation between clientelism and diverse political and economic consequences, encompassing democratic accountability, corruption, and the provision of public goods (Guardado & Wantchekon, 2018). For example, Pellicer *et al.* (2021) posited that the interplay between clientelism, political inefficacy, and beliefs that legitimize inequality mutually reinforces one another, resulting in the emergence of multiple equilibria.

Clientelism remains a persistent aspect of African politics, despite growing urbanization (Nathan, 2019), more programmatic politics (Horowitz, 2022), and competitive elections (Hicken, 2011). While traditional explanations often focus on the motivations and incentives of political parties and individuals, current research demonstrates how voters strengthen clientelist ties (Pellicer *et al.*, 2021) and use these connections to demand more transparent government (Roelofs, 2019). Although the traditional type of clientelism (direct vote buying) is still prevalent throughout Africa, it does not seem to have a significant impact on election outcomes,

but rather, newer concepts such as patronage and the use of specific words targeted at a group of people have proven to have an impact on election outcomes (Guardado & Wantchekon, 2018). Additionally, even though people often understand the costs of clientelism (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2013), they nonetheless participate in clientelist partnerships even when their expectations are seldom met. Relatedly, in their study in local elections in South Africa, Dawson *et al.* (2023) argued that in political settings where electoral clientelism exists but is not widespread, clientelist tactics assume a distinct nature by being more deliberate and strategically aimed at individuals and regions that maximize the transactional benefits for the clientelist political party.

Also, in Africa, through clientelism, political parties mobilize voters using a variety of techniques, including organizing rallies, going door to door, and giving out presents. However, how parties can decide which strategy to use in each constituency remains a concern. Because of this, parties favor holding rallies in their core voter bases and using focused strategies—such as canvassing and handouts—in swing and opposition districts (Nathan, 2019a). Opposition parties may not, however, have the resources necessary to implement such a plan. The capacity to target core supporters with state goodies between elections and being in a strong financial position are two advantages enjoyed by the ruling parties (Klaus *et al.*, 2023). Evidence from Ghana revealed that the governing political party focused its rallies on its home seats and conducted most of its canvassing in areas where it had little electoral support. The opposing party, on the other hand, made all its efforts in its home areas. Hence, evidence asserts that party clientelism's conduct during elections is influenced by incumbency status. Additionally, Brierley and Kramon (2020) contend that at certain points throughout the election cycle, dominant parties may target both core and swing voters (Brierley & Kramon, 2020).

## 1.1 Historical Context of Clientelism in Ghana

Before we delve into the historical context and overview of clientelism in Ghana, it is worth noting that, since the early 1990s, politics in Ghana has mostly been a democratic one. The period between Independence (1957) and 1992 has been marked by instability, with numerous coups d'état, with cycles of civilian governments succeeded by military regimes. The last military regime lasted from 1981 until 1992 under the rule of Jerry Rawlings. After the Cold War, Ghana, like most African regimes, established a form of democratic transition. This was the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic. The 4<sup>th</sup> Republic has been characterized by smooth transitions between governing and opposition parties. In 1992, Ghana adopted a democratic constitution, which provided for a multi-party system. Since then, the country has organized a series of uninterrupted presidential and legislative elections every four years. The presidential election is based on a two-round system, whereas the legislative election is based on a first-past-the-post system. For the first two democratic elections, in 1992 and 1996, the victory went to the former military strongman, Jerry Rawlings, and his party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC). But in 2000, Rawlings agreed to step down after his two terms (as required by the constitution), and the country had its very first peaceful alternation in power, with the victory of the former opposition party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP). By 2000, power had alternated between the two most popular political parties in the country, the NDC and NPP. The table below illustrates the trajectory of power alternation since the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic in 1992, when power was given to a civilian government after 13 years of military rule, up until 2020, which was the last elections held in Ghana.



<b>YEAR</b>	<b>POLITICAL PARTY IN POWER</b>
<b>1992</b>	<b>NDC - Start of 4<sup>th</sup> Republic and power handed to the NDC under civilian rule.</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>NDC - Re-elected</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>NPP - First power alternation, NPP (under J.A. Kufuor) defeated NDC</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>NPP - Re-elected under John Agyekum Kufuor</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>NDC - Second power alternation, back to the NDC under Evans Atta Mills.</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>NDC - Re-elected under John Mahama</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>NPP - Third power alternation, back to the NPP headed by Akufo-Addo</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>NPP - Re-elected under Akufo-Addo</b>

From the table above, there is an evident pattern of peaceful power alternation between the NPP and the NDC. There is also a trend of political parties running two terms / tenures of office of 8 years. The membership of these parties are somewhat along ethnic affiliations, in that the NDC obtains much support from voters of the Northern part of the country, whereas the NPP is largely supported by voters in Akan-dominated communities, and by other ethnic groups of the Ashanti Region and its environs in the southern part of Ghana (Nathan 2019b). Ghanaians are extremely vocal and participate in sharing their opinions on the political happenings of the state, which could be seen as a strong democratic feature of the country. In these heated debates, accusations of corruption, theft, rigging of elections are also prevalent in the political setting of the country (Gyamah-Boadi 2002; Lindberg 2003).

Although the country has known several regime types, dynamics of clientelism are not new. In fact, in what is today Ghana, the phenomenon of clientelism has roots in the pre-colonial and colonial eras. During the pre-colonial era, Ghana's traditional governance systems were characterized by the presence of patron-client relationships between chiefs and their subjects (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002). The advent of colonial governance brought about a novel manifestation of clientelism known as indirect rule, wherein indigenous chiefs assumed the role of intermediaries between British colonial authorities and the local populace (Austin, 2005). The British granted local chiefs and elites the ability to preserve their traditional systems of authority, if these served the interest of the British. The functioning of this system was predicated on the establishment of patronage connections between chiefs and their subjects, and between British officials and the chiefs. In this arrangement, chiefs assumed the responsibility of offering protection, allocating resources, and facilitating contact with colonial administrators, while subjects reciprocated with loyalty and support (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). The pattern of patron-client relationships persisted throughout the period following Ghana's attainment of independence, exerting a significant influence on the country's political landscape.

Following Ghana's attainment of independence in 1957, a distinct form of clientelism surfaced, characterized by the utilization of patronage networks between international financial institutions and political figures such as Jerry John Rawlings, to solidify their authority, through economic liberalization programs, gained through infinite networks of “personal relationships”. (Pitcher et al., 2009 p.134). This consequently deepens dependence on the former and leaving countries at the peril of patrimonial leaders.

Nevertheless, clientelism continues to be a deeply entrenched characteristic of the political landscape in Ghana. The 'Verandah Boys', colloquially referred to as 'macho men', constitute an informal political faction that has historically and continues to engage in political activities characterized by the utilization of violence, intimidation, and mobilization (Bob-Milliar, 2014). These groups frequently maintain affiliations with specific political parties and exert significant influence in shaping electoral outcomes within specific geographical areas. According to Lindberg (2003), the prevailing belief that politicians in Ghana serve as suppliers of public necessities has fostered a political climate that prioritizes the needs and demands of the electorate. The dependence of citizens on politicians for the fulfilment of their fundamental needs engenders power dynamics that afford politicians the opportunity to manipulate and exploit the public's circumstances for political gain. In contexts where politicians are widely regarded as the primary providers of resources and services, they can leverage this perception to cultivate patronage networks, wherein they offer benefits, resources, and privileges in return for political backing (Gyimah-Boadi, 2002). To sum up, the phenomenon of clientelism remains a prominent factor in contemporary Ghanaian electoral processes, exerting considerable influence over voter preferences, campaign tactics, and the broader political landscape. Politicians frequently employ strategies such as the allocation of tangible resources, cultivation of personal connections, and provision of promises regarding future benefits as means to garner electoral support. These phenomena have multiple implications for diverse facets of society and governance.

## 1.2 Research questions, research hunches and theoretical framework

As the literature section below will reveal, scholars have studied the construction of clientelist relations between politicians and voters from a variety of perspectives. As we will argue below, one perspective that is still understudied is one which sheds light on the normative or cultural foundations of clientelist politics, where the discourses, words, or symbols are mobilized by the actors to discursively attack one another, or perhaps also to develop relations one with another. Since it has embarked on a path of democratization in 1992, Ghana's regime is characterized by its *de facto* two-party system. This means that, although there are several other political parties in existence, only the NPP and the NDC have been governing parties (together, they have held about 96% - 99% of the Parliament's seats). Hence, this thesis will only focus on these two parties. Considering this observation, this thesis seeks to answer the following research question: How do political actors of the two major political parties in Ghana – the NPP and NDC – debate and argue about clientelism in Ghana?

To answer this question, this thesis will use an inductive and ideational approach; hence, it will not put forward formal hypotheses to be tested. Rather, at this stage, the thesis offers what are called study hunches or propositions, which will then provide avenues for further research.

Politicians who discursively battle one another in electoral times will draw from cultural metaphors and images that convey notions of theft (selfish manducation; greediness, etc.), while others may produce discourses that frame their actions through images of development and redistribution. Discourses on clientelism can be both negative, i.e. criticizing opponents for diverting public resources to favor their loyal clients, friends, and allies, and emphasizing how

they are using “their” own resources to help constituents. In doing so, they must ensure that their words resonate amongst their audience, hence the necessity to have recourse to expressions, images, metaphors, and other discursive devices that can evoke the necessary images to those to whom their speeches are directed.

To explore and validate these hunches, this thesis will base its theoretical and methodological framework on the Critical Discourse analysis Approach (CDA). In a nutshell, from a theoretical standpoint, CDA investigates the language used in political debate. Political campaigns are built on speech and discourse, which is how the public is informed of promises, goals, and intentions. However, CDA is not only limited to studying how promises and intentions are made known to the public, but it also shows other subject matters such as how gender stereotypes can be found in political media discourse (Sriwimon & Zilli, 2017). It is focused on how language is used to both reinforce and subvert power structures, as well as the connection between discourse and institutional and personal identity (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This research will combine critical discourse analysis as a theory, while conceptualizing it in the African context in combination with Africanist scholars such as Schatzberg (2001), Agbiboa (2022), Ofori and Arifari (2001). These scholars delve more into the context of Africa and democracy and provide insightful tools to analyze discourses and representations in various African societies. Schatzberg’s (2001) work on African politics and food will be of great use in the analysis of the data in the empirical section, as well as the “Politics of the Belly” of Bayart (1989). A critical discourse analysis is a type of research method that involves collecting and organizing relevant materials to be looked at. These materials may include media texts, political speeches, and other forms of public discourse (Fairclough, 2013). The present analysis will concentrate on both micro-level elements of discourse, including wording, as well as macro-

level elements, encompassing the social, political, and economic context within which the discourse was generated and interpreted (Fairclough, 2013). The interpretation of the results would involve an examination of the correlation between the textual features and broader social practices (Harvey, 2023). By utilizing a variety of Harvey's (2023) identified strategies, tactics, and structures, this study aims to examine the ways in which conversations and language contribute to the persistence of clientelism in the political process.

### 1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The research's primary components are presented in Chapter 1, along with a summary of the study. The introduction provides a thematic outline of how discourse analysis may be used to understand the client rhythms in Ghanaian election speeches.

Chapter 2 includes the literature review, which will focus on clientelism, with regards to how it is generally understood or perceived by scholars in the field, as well as its different manifestations and ideas like patrimonialism and nepotism that are related to it but bearing slight differences. It will conclude with a discussion on the limitations of this literature, which will then open the discussion for the contribution this thesis seeks to make.

The study's theoretical framework and methodology and design are discussed in Chapter 3 of the thesis. It provides the theoretical framework as well as the method. As we will see, both are derived from the Critical Discourse Analysis (or CDA). The method is fundamentally qualitative and highly inductive. This chapter also contains the research question and the main research intuitions.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the discourse surrounding the 2012, 2016, 2020 and 2024 electoral debates in Ghana. It is divided into subsections based on various themes identified in the speeches. As we will see, this chapter will highlight three types of discourses on clientelism that characterize these debates: discourses on food and the act of eating, whereby clientelism is associated to resources that are “eaten” by the elites and their loyal clients to the detriment of the citizenry of Ghana. Then, it will discuss discourses that proclaim, evoke, or suggest that clientelism is a mechanism that favors politicians’ families, and by extension, their region or ethnic group of origin. They are accusations launched at the political adversaries who are said to favour the interests of a few to the detriment of the totality of Ghana’s citizens. Finally, a third type of discourses emphasize the personalized, individual nature of clientelism, that puts the individual at the center of the political transaction, as opposed to the office or the official function and institution the politician is supposed to represent.

The study is concluded in Chapter 5 with a summary of the key findings and learnings from the discourse analysis of Ghanaian election speeches. It will also offer a few policy recommendations. It will conclude by highlighting some limitations of this research and will then use this as an opportunity to offer some avenues for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on clientelism and other similar dynamics such as neopatrimonialism and prebendalism is vast. Our goal in this chapter is to review the main contributions of this literature, both in general and in the specific context of Ghanaian politics. This will enable us to better position our thesis in this literature and highlight how it can contribute to it.

### 2.1 The Literature on Clientelism

The scholarly work on clientelism and related concepts like corruption, nepotism, prebendalism, and neopatrimonialism spans various countries and historical periods. Clientelism in politics is often characterized by an imbalanced relationship between political leaders and groups, where goods and services are exchanged for political support, often including jobs and other material or non-material benefits (Hicken, 2011). A study by Uwazurike (1996) reveal how political elites used their positions to amass wealth and distribute state resources among their supporters. The research highlighted how this system of patronage reinforced political loyalty and further entrenched the power of the ruling elite. While immediate exchanges are not common, there is an element of trust between the patron and client, and programmatic or ideological components are generally less central than those based on loyalty and trust (Nathan, 2019; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002; Carbone & Pellegata, 2020; Kelsall, 2012). This loyalty is often predicated upon ethnicity or other related identities (religion, region, and language), with certain candidates and parties representing these identities (Lindberg & Morrison, 2008; Lindberg, 2012).



The roots of clientelism can be traced back in history, with many authors agreeing that colonial powers played a significant role in fostering this pattern (Joseph 1983; Berman 1998; De Sardan, 1999; Schaffer, 2007; Ololajulo, 2016). Colonial states relied on alliances with local "Big Men" and incorporated pre-existing patron-client relations based on ethnic ties (Berman, 1998). In modern times, when elections constitute a primary means of accessing and maintaining power, the relationship between voters and candidates can develop into one where candidates and elected officials exchange votes for favors, gifts, and cash, sometimes with specific conditions attached (Mueller, 2018). Several scholars have analyzed these dynamics in many different countries. This would include Joseph's (1983) study on Nigeria where, as he shows, elections and clientelism overlap strongly, describing how candidates invested heavily in elections and recouped their investments by distributing public resources to sectional constituencies. A study in Uganda by the Africa Leadership Institute (Kaduuli, 2008) revealed that Ugandan voters at the grassroots will always re-elect an MP who attends fundraisings, burials of their deceased, pays school fees for their children, and solves any other personal issues as opposed to community problems, irrespective of whether the MP attends and represents them well in Parliament or not (Kaduuli, 2008). Similarly, a study in Benin revealed that clientelism works for all types of candidates but particularly well for regional and incumbent candidates and that the credibility of clientelist appeals and accessibility of clientelist goods greatly influence voting behavior (Wantchekon, 2003). In Tanzania, a study on the Tanzanian Parliament found that key local politicians are increasingly found to play the role of a broker in their home communities, establishing links between the groups of clients and a patron, i.e., the MP (Wang, 2005). In Malawi, the survey (2006) by the Institute for Economic and Social Research found that Malawians expect their MPs to be responsive with visits to their

constituencies frequently and deliver development benefits (IFESOR, 2006). These studies enable us to observe that democratization, or at least the rise of electoral politics, does not necessarily increase or decrease political clientelism, but rather, it would change these practices as compared to authoritarian contexts (Van de Walle, 2009).

Although our research will not explore this aspect extensively, it is worth indicating that the literature has also studied the consequences of the development of clientelism. For instance, Bonga (2021) shows how clientelism engenders a lack of transparency and weak institutional checks and balances that can make it difficult to hold politicians accountable for their campaign promises, actions, or misuse of resources. Candidates with access to greater financial resources have an advantage in terms of advertising, mobilization, and influence, even in countries such as Indonesia, although that may not always be the case if the persons in question are believed to be from the “wrong ethnic background for the district” or the locals have united against them, or they are known to be very corrupt (Aspinall, 2014). Another study by Ragauskas & Valeškaitė (2020) examined the performance of government agencies where nepotism was prevalent. The findings revealed a negative impact on efficiency and competence, as many individuals appointed through nepotistic practices lacked the necessary skills and qualifications for their roles. This inefficiency further contributed to public mistrust in the fairness and integrity of political leaders. Similarly, a study by Suberu (2013) analyzed these dynamics affected the quality of public administration and public service delivery. The findings demonstrated that the focus on political loyalty rather than qualifications and competence in appointments had detrimental effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies (see also Ugwuani & Nwokedi 2015).

## 2.2 The Literature on Clientelism in Ghana

The literature on clientelism in Ghana all point to the co-existence of a consolidated electoral democracy and clientelism in Ghana. We should first insist that scholars emphasize the historical roots of clientelism in Ghana, pointing to the legacy of colonialism, traditional chieftaincy systems, and patron-client relationships that continue to shape political dynamics. Their literature highlight the significance of informal institutions, such as family ties, ethnic affiliations, and social networks, in shaping clientelistic practices in Ghana. These informal networks often coexist with formal political structures and influence decision-making processes (Nordensvärd & Ketola, 2022). Since gaining Independence, and with the rise of electoral politics in the 1990s, Ghana's competitive politics show a very high level of clientelism; this, among other things, has made politicians much more concerned about meeting the short-term goal of satisfying their supporters to ensure their own political survival (Abdulai & Hickey, 2016; Appiah & Abdulai, 2017; Ichino & Nathan, 2013; Hicken, 2011). There is a strong emphasis on the wants of the public due to the notion that politicians serve as providers of these needs (Lindberg, 2003). Politicians can influence and take advantage of the public's stance for political goals because citizens depend on them to supply their necessities. Hence scholars point to the prevalence of conspicuous and diffuse gift-giving during rallies, showcasing the display of wealth and money to persuade voters (Gadjanova, 2017; Driscoll, 2018). In competitive political environments, candidates may engage in increased spending to compete for voters' support, especially when direct vote-buying proves ineffective in secret-ballot systems with swing voters (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2013). Also, unofficial political groups have been involved in politics and have engaged in violence, intimidation, and mobilization during their political

campaigns (Faanu & Graham, 2017). These organizations frequently have ties to specific political parties and are crucial in influencing election outcomes in certain areas.

Literature on the cultural and ethnic imports on how clientelism is talked about in the Ghanaian political space is salient in discussing the subject matter in the Ghanaian context. Ethnicity is a set of cultural practices, outlook and orientations that distinguish a group of people or community from the other, as defined by Giddens (1996), in Adjei (2013). They see themselves as different from other ethnic groups, mainly in terms of languages spoken, festivals, beliefs and ways of doing things to keep and ensure continuity of their traditions. Ethnicity has been seen to be a major theme or concept in politics in most African states, Ghana inclusive. Ofori and Fiwornu's (2020) study into the language of ethnopolitics in Ghana reveal how ethnocentrism has been used as a tool to fuel ethnic politics in the country. Ethnocentrism is when a particular ethnic group sees themselves as superior to all other ethnic groups in the country. Some Ghanaian and African leaders in general have been said to pass comments that incite or promote ethnocentrism, to gain support or resonance from a particular ethnic group. Ofori and Fiwornu (2020) debunk Hooghe's (2008) claims that educated people are less likely to express ethnocentric sentiments in a country by stating that there are well educated academics and lawyers who have made ethnocentric speeches which have been gathered and analyzed in their article on the study of the language of ethnopolitics in Ghana. This is all geared towards the fact that ethnocentrism is very much existent in Ghanaian and African politics, which even predates to the pre-independence era, where political groups were formed based on ethnic alliances, such as Togoland Congress (1951), Anlo Youth Organization (1952), National Liberation Movement (1954) the Northern People's Party (1954) Faanu & Graham (2017). This is important because in the empirical section, accusations of ethnic politics will be analyzed.

However, in a different light, this thesis tends to dwell more on how politicians and political actors will accuse the other of ethnic politics, while they portray themselves as not engaging in ethnocentric politics, rather than how political actors' speeches promote ethnic politics.

It is important to note, however, that the competitive nature of the Ghanaian system may also generate outcomes that are less detrimental than in authoritarian regimes. For instance, Lindberg (2010) showed that MPs in Ghana are held accountable by diverse political actors in Ghanaian society for a variety of purposes. The study further revealed that while religious leaders in Ghana ask MPs to attend functions and perhaps give a small donation, citizens hold MPs accountable for personal assistance in the form of direct monetary requests either as pocket money, or to buy food items, pay bills or school fees, contribute to funerals and weddings, or start a small trading-business or do farming (Lindberg, 2010). For his part, Kim (2016) shows that politicians must also engage voters that are not located in their stronghold, thereby expanding the scope of their support. This situation of MPs being required by their supporters to provide even the most basic essentials place these MPs on a different pedestal. Most often than not, the power they hold in their office or position in parliament is often conflicted with their abilities as individuals to provide and this further breeds clientelism, as they tend to use their personal funds and resources to support the locals in anticipation of votes or following, to the extent of handing 'chop-money' (small cash sums) to constituents (Lindberg, 2003). Zackaria & Appiah-Marfo's, (2022) analysis of clientelism among Ghanaian MPs looks at it on two different scales, the large constituency-level and individual / personal scale with singled out members of the constituency, which gives a clear picture of the various forms clientelism could come in. They nonetheless emphasize that these two forms still take away from the

traditional roles of the MPs, thereby influencing development (Zackaria & Appiah-Marfo, 2022).

Scholars of Ghanaian politics, similarly those who study other countries, have also pointed to the negative consequences of clientelism. For example, on public sector performance, Appiah and Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai (2017) argued that there has been a politicization of state institutions through patronage appointments, with adverse effects for state bureaucracy because “one of the first acts of successive governments has been to dissolve the boards of state-controlled enterprises so as to appoint their own loyalists to those positions.” On the effective governance of natural resources, Sam Hickey, Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai, Angelo Izama, and Giles Mohan compared Uganda (dominant party politics) with Ghana (competitive clientelism) and showed that Uganda seems to be governing oil according to national interests, while competitive clientelism and short-termism/rent-seeking have negatively affected Ghana (Hickey et al., 2015). Similarly, Monica Skaten argued that long-term stability is elusive in the oil industry due to the short-term incentives created by political polarization (Skaten, 2018). In a recent study by Zhang and Kim (2023), the authors emphasize the pressing need for a deeper exploration of the enduring effects of clientelism, including institutional erosion, decreasing public trust and participation, and growing social inequality.

### 2.3 Some Limitations in the Literature

This literature we have presented above is immensely useful and helpful. It will enable us to better understand the centrality of clientelism in general, and in electoral campaigns in particular, Ghana. However, one major caveat is that it tends to adopt a very materialistic approach. By this we mean that it focuses on the tangible resources that are exchanged, the

material consequences that clientelism can have on growth and economic development and the like. Yet, as it was often implied in their arguments, clientelism is not simply a material exchange of goods and votes, a purely materialistic transactional relation. Rather, this exchange is predicated upon normative or moral dynamics, which are themselves embedded in significant historical trajectories. In other words, these relations are embedded in social relations with cultural significance that have historical roots. Hence, some scholars have urged a deeper exploration of the cultural and historical underpinnings of clientelist practices (Schaffer, 2007; De Sardan, 1999; Agbiboa 2022; Schatzberg 2001). This also means that we need to be much more aware of the context-dependent, fluid, and contested nature of these clientelist relations, as they unfold over different time spans and spatial contexts (Ololajulo, 2016). If we were to ignore these aspects, we would have overlooked how, for instance, clientelist exchanges may often be framed as moral duties in support of a community. The association between clientelist politics in Africa and the continent's cultural systems has been subject to differing viewpoints in the literature. Some scholars argue that cultural practices provide a conducive environment for clientelism, while others contend that clientelist politics is a feature of modern states irrespective of culture (Bach & Gazibo, 2003; Anciano, 2017). The thread this thesis will follow is not that some “cultures” are more conducive to clientelism, but rather, that everywhere clientelism unfolds, it is necessarily embedded within a normative system of significance.

To conclude, the literature on clientelism and related concepts provides valuable insights into the dynamics of political relationships across different societies and historical contexts. While the material aspects of clientelism are essential, more attention should be given to the cultural and ideational dimensions that underpin these practices. Understanding the context-

specific, contested nature of clientelist exchanges can enrich our comprehension of this complex political phenomenon (Schaffer, 2007; De Sardan, 1999; Ololajulo, 2016).

Considering this review of the literature, the strengths of the current scholarship as well as the main gaps we can find in it, our goal is therefore to explore the discursive dimension of clientelism in Ghana during electoral times. Hence, our research question is: *How do Ghanaian politicians from the NDC and the NPP represent and debate about clientelism during electoral campaigns?*



## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To analyze the discourses of Ghanaian politicians surrounding the issue of clientelism, this thesis will resort to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The peculiarity of CDA is that it can be used both as a theoretical framework and a method. Hence, in the following pages, we will present both aspects of CDA. The theoretical framework will use CDA, which will be combined with the contributions of Africanist scholars who have worked on the role of discourses, metaphors, and representations, and their role in African politics. By combining core CDA authors with scholars who have worked on the politics of discourses in Africa, we can enrich the analysis and ground it more deeply into the realities of African politics, being more sensitive to the local context.

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

Since the 1970s, Discourse Analysis has been utilized across various fields of research, extending beyond language, signs, and texts (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). Within this broad framework, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as a powerful theoretical and methodological approach, aiming to explore language use, power dynamics, and social inequalities embedded within discourse (Fairclough, 2013; Wodak, 2015). Drawing on the interdisciplinary perspectives of linguistics, sociology, and critical social theory, CDA provides a critical lens to examine how discourse shapes and reflects social, political, and cultural practices. The primary objective of this research is to employ CDA to comprehend and analyze power relations and ideological struggles in contemporary society.

At its core, CDA goes beyond surface-level analysis and seeks to unveil hidden ideologies, power structures, and social inequalities perpetuated through language use (Van Dijk, 2008). It recognizes that discourse is not a neutral mode of communication but rather a site of power struggle and domination. By critically analyzing texts, speeches, media representations, and other forms of discourse, CDA aims to reveal the underlying mechanisms through which power operates and shapes social realities. For instance, in the context of an electoral campaign, CDA delves into how "the practice of politics in general is anchored on speeches" (Nyako, 2013 p.1) and examines the way promises, vague, implicit, and indirect statements are conveyed (Obeng, 1997). This theoretical framework helps in evaluating the discourse structure that involves social and political power (Van Dijk, 1993), and it directs attention to the "messaging technique" used to disseminate information and campaign issues to the electorate and voters (Nathan, 2019b). The power of discourse in politics highlights the close relationship between words and power (Ninsin, 2016).

During electoral campaign speeches, from manifestos to debates, and campaign rallies, presidential aspirants make promises, while outlining their plans and objectives should they be voted into power. Thus, it becomes essential to analyze their diction, choice of words, and phrases. This research aims to analyze both hidden or implicit meanings of clientelist phrases and openly known ones connoting clientelist appeals. Furthermore, Fairclough (1985) offers valuable insights that can be applied to certain aspects of this research. He focuses on the Ideological-Discursive Formations (IDFs) of societies and institutions, attempting to "denaturalize" these ideologies through Critical Discourse Analysis. Denaturalization refers to the process of revealing how social structures determine properties of discourse and vice versa.

By employing Critical Discourse Analysis, this research aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics and ideological struggles manifested in contemporary political discourse during electoral campaigns in Ghana. It seeks to uncover the hidden meanings, social inequalities, and power structures that shape and define political communication and decision-making processes.

In addition, we seek to add to our theoretical framework authors from the field of African studies who have provided helpful theoretical insights that help decipher the discourses on clientelism. Some have formally declared their connection to CDA whereas others have not, but they nonetheless all share a common interest in shedding light on the role of discourses and norms in their study of African politics. Such authors include notably Olivier de Sardan (1999) who invited us to explore the way people talk about corruption in their daily activities, to embed acts deemed illegal in their daily interactions. In the same vein, Blundo and De Sardan (2001) invited us to consider how we can analyze “statements and words relating to corruption” which “sketch out the symbolic, ideological and argumentative landscape of corruption” (2001, 98). Similarly, Hasty (2005) also insists on understanding what discourses and practices linked to corruption have to say, what they reveal about how people envision politics. Bako-Arifari (2001, 42), in her study of corruption in the port of Cotonou also insists on the importance of understanding the “discourses and languages of corruption.” More generally, as Schatzberg (2001, 4) argues, it is important that scholars “examine the specific language, metaphors, and other images used to transmit thoughts about politics.”

A final dimension I seek to add to this CDA framework comes from the immensely interesting work of Ofori (2015; 2017), which has to do with the notion of insult. In effect, a very significant dimension of politicians’ discourses on and about clientelism belongs to the

realm of insult. In a nutshell, as Ofori explains, a lot of what politicians say about clientelism and all the related dynamics (corruption, nepotism, etc.) indeed take the form of an insult directed at their opponents: they *accuse* their adversaries of being corrupt, nepotistic, patronage-seekers, and the like. In his dissertation, Ofori (2015) has a brilliant section devoted to insults that have to do with corruption (section 4.3.2). These accusations are in effect insults launched at political adversaries. Insults as discursive weapons are important because, as Ofori (2017, 130) argues, within the Ghanaian society “insults do not only affect the target or addressee, but people who are in one way or the other connected to him or her, such as his/her family or in the context of this work, the political party the target is associated with.” Hence, discourses on clientelism are often taking the form of insults, which are ways to diminish not just individual political opponents, but also their political party, and possibly other collectives to which they belong (their family, their region, their ethnic group). This is therefore an important addendum to the CDA framework.

### 3.2 Research Propositions

This thesis adopts an inductive and ideational approach, and therefore does not present formal hypotheses to be tested. Instead, it will put forward research hunches or propositions. As we try to understand how political actors debate about clientelism, we argue that they will draw from cultural metaphors and images that convey notions of theft, selfish manducation, and greediness. This will involve the strategic use of linguistic techniques that create messages that have a strong resonance amongst their audiences, drawing from symbols, metaphors, and phrases embedded in various cultural representations such as ethnicity, religion and history. By exploring these research propositions, this study seeks to shed light on the complex interplay

between language, culture, power, and clientelism in the context of electoral campaigns, providing valuable insights into the political communication strategies employed by different actors in Ghanaian politics.

### 3.3 Method

As was already made clear in the theoretical framework section, this thesis adopts a social constructivist ontology and is therefore focusing on meanings embedded in discourses and practices. The research approach employed for this study is therefore fundamentally qualitative. The qualitative method of collecting and analyzing data involves first making meaning of relevant data, which may be collected from sources such as interviews, on-site observations, and documents, and then effectively articulating what the data reveals. By adopting this research approach, the researcher gains useful information, new insights, or a better grasp of the topic that is the focus of the current study. As a result, the qualitative research approach is deemed ideal to be adopted in undertaking this study.

According to Popenoe et al. (2021), data analysis encompasses the activities of sorting, collating, coding, and organizing gathered data to extract meaningful insights. In line with our theoretical framework presented above, our main method to analyze our data will adopt the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method (Cukier et al. 2009). Cukier et al. (2009) outlines a framework consisting of four distinct stages for the implementation of CDA: 1) establishing the scope and parameters of the dataset under examination; 2) conducting a thorough analysis of the content and applying appropriate coding techniques; 3) engaging in a comprehensive reading and interpretation of the text; and 4) providing a detailed explanation of the findings. The data collected is analyzed by applying a variety of approaches, such as the identification of

language patterns, the investigation of the social environment surrounding the discourse, and the investigation of the power dynamics that are present in the discourse (Harvey, 2023). The study focuses not only on the micro-level aspects of discourse, such as phrasing and syntax, but also on the macro-level elements, which include the social, political, and economic environment within which the discourse was formed and understood (Fairclough, 2013).

Discourse analysis is a qualitative method utilized and refined by constructivists (Fulcher 2010). According to Locke (2004), discourse is not only a means of representing the world but also a way of signifying and constructing its meaning. McGregor (2010) defines discourse as the act of communicating thoughts or ideas using language. According to Van Dijk (2006), critical discourse analysis necessitates a comprehensive understanding of various disciplines and the complex connections between text, speech, public opinion, power, society, and cultures. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is essential for comprehensively examining and evaluating the representation of social life in textual materials. It involves the processes of describing, interpreting, analyzing and critiquing such texts. Discourse analysis is a methodological approach that involves the examination and interpretation of language use to understand and analyze a particular issue or problem. Interpretation is the process of deriving meaning from a text through reading or analysis. According to Locke (2004), discourse is a means by which humans use sign systems, such as verbal language, to create a coherent understanding of the world. The author characterizes discourse as being actively connected to reality. Language represents reality by passively relating to it, with words referring to objects that are assumed to exist in the real world (Locke 2004). Engaging in discussions and conversations with stakeholders in education policy can provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of these policies. Language is a socially and culturally constructed

instrument that shapes our perception of reality (Fulcher, 2010). Language is central to critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a suitable approach for studying education policy, political statements, and election-related clientelism due to its politically interventionist nature and its aim to bring about political or social transformation. Fulcher (2010) defines discourse analysis as a means of comprehending social interactions. Fulcher (2010) defines discourse as a specific theme within a text, particularly those that pertain to identities.

Data for this thesis mostly consist of speeches, interviews given to different news media, political statements made at rallies, political talks/ campaign promises made on radio stations. As well as songs made by popular artistes in support of a particular party. The goal was to look for any statement, declaration, etc. that touched on the topic of clientelism largely defined, as well as more popular synonyms. All these data were collected on the internet, mainly on Ghanaian media web pages, YouTube channels, as well as social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter (X). All the speeches, songs, statements, etc., that we have collected were either in English or Twi, which is the most spoken language in Ghana. As a locutor of Twi, I did not need any assistance to translate. Where necessary, I have written the original quote from a discourse in Twi, and then provided my own Translation in English. The table with the full list of speeches, declarations, and interviews, including the dates and the internet links where they were found, can be found in Appendix 1.

In the context of this study, the study's target population includes available statements made by the politicians, flagbearers of the two largest parties in Ghana, the NPP and NDC, and their running mates, party officials who have some sort of influence on the Ghanaian populace

and members of parliament. As we explained above, this study limits itself to the two ruling parties who have systematically controlled about 96% of all parliamentary seats. The periods covered by this study includes the 2012, 2016, 2020 and 2024 electoral campaigns. It is important to remember that Ghana is one of the few African countries that had many alternations in power since it began to democratize in the early 1990s. This means that the period we cover includes moments when the two parties have been at times in power and at times in the opposition. Also, it is worth mentioning that although most of the speeches, declarations, and other discourses were generally directed at the opposite political party (NPP leaders talking about NDC leaders, and vice-versa), there are also cases where political actors denounced political rivals from their own party, as seen in the empirical section. These cases of intra-party discursive debates are therefore legitimate sources of data because, just like inter-party debates, they reveal just as much about how political actors debate about clientelism.

As will be seen in the empirical section, a larger number of speeches, phrases or discourses in general will be directed towards the NPP. The reason for this is because out of the three electoral periods this research covers, two of them are during the tenure of office of the NPP. This inevitably means that more criticisms / discourses / accusations will be directed towards the NPP, making the number of speeches under the NPP government substantially higher than that of the NDC. It is also important to specify that we have included all the speeches, declarations, statements, and other discourses that we found; we have not excluded any of them, as long as they pertained to clientelism and similar notions and were produced by members of the two parties.



In view of this, however, it is important to highlight some limitations in the methodology employed in the data collection and analysis process. Given that the speeches / words of the NPP and NDC politicians were, for the most part, obtained through online sources, the data provided is limited. This is mainly due to the fact that not every speech or discourse may be covered by media outlets or readily accessible online. In addition, given the limited timeframe of the research, this research was unable to present a more systematic comparison of NDC speeches against those of the NPP, in terms of how they differ from one another. However, some similarities will be established in the discourses of the two political parties. Also, in addition to those made in English, discourses in just one local language, Twi, were collected, as this cancels out discourses or speeches made in other Ghanaian languages such as Dagbani, Ewe, Hausa or Ga-Adangbe. Although Twi is the most widely spoken language in Ghana, some information given in other languages will not be present in the data collection and analysis in this research. Lastly, the lack of fieldwork in Ghana to find people's or voters' opinions on the words or diction of these politicians and its impact on voter behavior would have been ideal. Therefore, this research can only propose it for future studies in Clientelism.

## CHAPTER 4: CLIENTELISM IN GHANAIAAN POLITICIANS' DISCOURSES

In this chapter, we will examine the data we have collected from the press, social media, and other online sources. As we remember, the overall objective is to understand the phenomenon of clientelism in political campaign speeches in Ghana. As we already explained above, this analysis takes a discursive approach to analyzing the ways politicians talk about clientelism in electoral moments. The “non-material” dimensions of clientelism are thus at the center of our analysis (Klaus and Wilfahrt, 2023). This chapter thus seeks to provide a provisional answer to the main research question about how Ghanaian politicians represent and debate about clientelism during electoral campaigns. This analysis seeks to group the data found according to themes that run through the data, while taking note of linguistic cultural imports in some of the quotes. As we will see, there are three main types of discourses that stand out. First, debates about clientelism centre on the notions of “eating” and other metaphors related to food. When politicians accuse one another of diverting resources for themselves and their networks, they often draw from discourses that pertain to the realm of food. Second, another type of discourse pertains to the notion of the family and the ethnic group. Here, politicians accuse one another of serving their family, their kin, and at times more generally their ethnic group, rather than striving for improvement in the standard and quality of living of the entire Ghanaian populace. The central idea is that resources that should normally be utilized to the benefit of all the citizens of the country are reallocated to networks made of a politicians' immediate family, their extended circle or kin, or ethnic group. The unfair allocation of jobs, resources and social benefits by these politicians are in the end, to the detriment of the regular Ghanaian. Finally, a third type of discourse focuses on the notions of personalized wrongdoings

and promises. Here, it is the very notion of the individual that is at the centre of the discourse, since, as we recall, clientelism is a relationship in which people who are supposed to be simply representatives of public institutions, officeholders, actually use public resources for private purposes, and build personalized relations with clients. The person, as an individual, is thus the subject of criticism or the central focus of the promises made (or betrayed), not the office or the institution.

#### 4.1 Clientelism and “Eating” the Money: Food Metaphors

Many political scientists have explained how discourses on food and clientelism are tightly connected one to another. The famous image used by French political scientist Jean-François Bayart, the “Politics of the Belly” (1989) to speak about the construction of the state, is a case in point. For him, politics is about eating, eating power. Agbiboa (2022, 81) adds that “None is more evocative than the corporeal metaphor of food and eating through which Africans have historically imagined and articulated the corruption complex”. This author reminds us that in Kenya, “At election time, a common phrase is used: ‘Our time to eat’ (*wakati wetu wa kula*), which refers to the politicization of ethnic identities and the pressures on politicians to feed their ethnic kinsmen after electoral victory. [...] a politician who is considered to be ‘one of ours’ is warned by his people that ‘we can’t eat bones when others are eating meat’.” (Agbiboa 2022, 84). For his part, Schatzberg (1993, 453) reminds us that “the language of corruption is often related to the language of food: *madesu ya bana* ('beans for the children'), and *un petit quelque chose à manger* ('a little something to eat') in Zaire, as well as the ubiquitous East African equivalent, *chai* (tea).” As he adds, criticisms launched at politicians will often use these kinds of discourses, as they highlight how a politician that ‘eats’ too much is one who did

not share enough, which creates frustration and anger amongst those who have been excluded: “The 'men with big tummies' have eaten too much, and the 'thin people' have had enough” (Schatzberg 1993, 453). In sum, to understand how actors debate and discuss about politics, we need to pay attention to the discourses that emphasize food and the act of eating, as they reveal a lot about how politics is understood.

In the Ghanaian local parlance, the act of spending money is frequently associated with eating food. In this section, it must be reiterated that most Ghanaian languages use the verb “to eat” and “to spend” interchangeably especially when talking about bribery and corruption in the country. The language that will be mainly used in the analysis will be Twi, one of the widely spoken local languages in Ghana. The Twi word for both eat and spend is “*di*”, so when people talk about politicians spending money, they often relate it to food, use metaphors, adverbs and proverbs surrounding eating actual food.

Leading to the 2012 elections, Akufo-Addo, then leading the largest party in opposition, used rhetorical questions and metaphors at a rally in December 2012, to discuss the NDC's corruption. The NDC was in power at the time; he asked; “*The fruits of office, the money under the table has become sweet for them so they are determined to stay, are we going to allow that to happen? [...] I'm not here to steal and pocket government money.*”<sup>1</sup> The rhetorical indicates that the opposition is tired of the 8-year corruption-filled incumbency enjoyed by the NDC government. This was Akufo-Addo's second time running as the NPP flagbearer, and he was taking no chances at this point. His forwardness in addressing the people and his seeming frustration about how corrupt the incumbent government is clearly portrayed in his words. He

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<sup>1</sup> NPP final rally, December 5, 2012 Sahara TV <https://youtu.be/gEcbSun3sZ8>

aims to let the people know that he is nothing like the ones in power at the time. His import of “the money under the table has become sweet for them” highlights the linkage between money and food in the Ghanaian culture. Money under the table is illegitimate money, which is undisclosed to the public, the sweet suggests that the incumbent NDC are enjoying the ill-gotten monies from their time in incumbency. Here, it is seen that just as food is termed as sweet, money is similarly described, as though the illicit monies were literally being eaten by the NDC government in this case.

Four years later, at the final NPP rally of 2016, Nana Addo once again resorted to a food metaphor, which was meant to resonate strongly with his crowd of supporters. He said, in the local language of Twi: “*yɛ te sika so, nanso ɛkom de yen.*”<sup>2</sup> This means that despite having money, the people are hungry. However, a literal translation will be: “we are sitting on money, yet we are hungry.” The metaphor was used with reference to the fact that despite Ghana having so much natural and human resources, as well as the amount of funds the incumbent NDC government have access to, most people in the country are living in extreme poverty. With this statement, Akufo-Addo accuses the incumbent government of keeping money, in fact eating the money amongst themselves, while the rest of the population who do not have the chance of being connected to those in power are hungry. This speaks directly to corruption as an unfair distribution of wealth and resources, which is often euphemized with food, the act of eating and other related terms. In addition, it is important to understand that this metaphor has yet another layer of meaning, one which was not misunderstood by the crowd. In effect, the metaphor of “sitting on money” has inferences from the Akan culture where a chief, most importantly, the

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<sup>2</sup> NPP final rally 2016, National trade fair center, December 5<sup>th</sup> 2016  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_nK9urXqLQ&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_nK9urXqLQ&t=2s)

Asante king, sits on a golden stool (*sika dwa kofi*) during his enstoolment (or ‘enthronement’). The Twi word for money, “*sika*” is derived from the Twi word for gold (*sika-kɔkɔ*). Therefore this metaphor was easily understood by majority of the voters, to which they resonated more with, making the phrase overly popularized in the country. Another reference in the Akan culture of sitting on money is commonly made when the Asante king is being given appellations whenever he attends an event. The statement: “*ɔte kɔkɔ so*”, meaning, he who sits on gold (in this case the golden stool). Therefore, it is not far-fetched for Akufo-Addo so say we are sitting on money and Ghanaians popularizing it. However, even more interesting is the fact that Akufo-Addo added that “we are hungry” when he could have simply said we are poor, or there is hardship in the country. Hence, saying “we are hungry” evokes strong sentiments, since a resource-rich nation that is “sitting on money” should, in actual sense, not go hungry nor be poor. This perfectly shows the link between money, food and accusations of clientelism as a form of corruption in the local language.

In the same vein, allusion to food and clientelism was also used during a parliamentary session in December 2022. During a session dedicated to the approval of the Budget and Economic Statement for the 2023 fiscal year, the minority caucus of parliament (mainly made up of NDC MPs) mocked the NPP parliamentarians over the bad state of the economy.<sup>3</sup> Just after the speaker of parliament passed the motion for the approval, the NDC MPs started singing a song titled “Africa Money (our Money)”, by Barima Sidney. The Lyrics are as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> Ghanaweb article, How NDC MPs jammed to Barima Sidney’s ‘African Money’ after approval of 2023 budget : <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/How-NDC-MPs-jammed-to-Barima-Sidney-s-African-Money-after-approval-of-2023-budget-1676030>

Wanna money ee oga dey **chop** am nyafunyafu.

Wonna money eh, ao money oh.

Africa money eh, Oga dey **chop** am fuga fuga.”<sup>4</sup>

*[The boss is hurriedly spending our money.*

*Oh, our money, oh our money, Africa's money.*

*The leader is spending it greedily]*

In this song, the act of spending money is described as it being “eaten”, or “chop” in Pidgin. The manner in which this money is being spent, or the adverb used to qualify this “chop” is often used with food in local parlance, which means to hurriedly stuff food in your mouth, just as a glutton would. The essence of the MPs singing this song is to mockingly accuse incumbent government of manipulating figures in order to get surplus off of government expenditure and “eat” or “pocket” the money for themselves. Note that this is not peculiar to Ghanaian Pidgin, as we also hear it in other English-speaking countries of Africa. As Agbiboa reminds us, looking at the case of Nigeria, “**Chopping** is a powerful idiom through which average Nigerians criticize and hold their ‘cashivorous’ elites accountable for their precarious existence and lack of upward mobility” (Agbiboa 2022, 92). This is how we must read the following headline, when an artist and activist, Kwame Asare Obeng, was interviewed and he claimed that people in the NPP party were asking him to take corruption money. The headline about his interview read as: “NPP figures advising me to ‘shut up and **chop** some’ – A Plus

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<sup>4</sup> MPs singing “Our Money” in parliament. <https://youtu.be/HxG8dZvmJIY?si=pE5DGSG3RiI3rwCk>

reveals.”<sup>5</sup> In the interview, he claimed that “I hear a lot of NPP figures say Kwame, keep quiet and eat. Even if you give me bank of Ghana, I will never do what is wrong at the expense of the country.”<sup>6</sup> Once again, what is significant here is not whether his accusations are true or false, but rather how accusations about clientelism reveal the food dimension, the act of chopping/eating.



Screenshot of Yen online media’s Facebook page. 26 June 2019.<sup>7</sup>

The same allusion to “chop” was used by Gabby Otchere Darko, the President’s cousin, a well-known journalist, lawyer and political risk analyst. Although Gabby Otchere Darko does

<sup>5</sup> GhanaWeb, 25 June 2019. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/NPP-figures-advising-me-to-shut-up-and-chop-some-A-Plus-reveals-758062>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Source: <https://www.facebook.com/yencomgh/photos/a-plus-has-revealed-how-he-has-severally-had-to-reject-advice-from-some-new-patr/2195004564123441/>



not hold an official position or office in government, he has an immense influence on the populace because of his position and influence in the media (as chief editor of *The Statesman* newspaper) and strong voice against the NDC. In his view, the NPP's eight years in governance from 2000 to 2008 under former president John Kufour brought about good progress and stability in the economic affairs of the country, but it has been all washed down the drain by those he calls the "NDCeivers", who have brought nothing but hardship with their "incompetence and greed". He used food metaphors to decry the NDC and its corruption. First, he used the analogy of the people being promised rich three-square meals daily, only to be denied breakfast, lunch and supper, just to be woken up in the middle of the night to be served breadcrumbs and a glass of water. Then, he further goes on to use the expression to "chop" to accuse the "NDCeivers" of nurturing their own people while depriving the rest of the population access to money, or food:

Remember what they told you on the eve of choice when they knocked on your door in the middle of the night, bearing gifts: *'Let me have your **chop** money tomorrow as well for I am like you, from the same tribe, from the same plebian background, I care for you. You cannot trust the others who look down on you and will lord over you. I am you and you are me. They are your enemies'*.<sup>8</sup>

As we saw previously, his use of "chop money" refers to how money is talked about as being "eaten", the way food is being eaten. Hence the term "chop money" is used very commonly to refer to a meagre allowance which is usually taken on an almost daily basis and does not have any major contribution to the financial growth of the person receiving it. It is

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<sup>8</sup> MPs singing "Our Money" in parliament. <https://youtu.be/HxG8dZvmJlY?si=pE5DGSG3RiI3rwCk>

usually given for food, water or something very basic and essential to survival. The giving of “chop money” here is frequently meant to keep the person on the receiving end constantly dependent on the giver, thereby deepening the power and authority the latter has over the former. As Hasty (2005, 275) reminds us, this kind of accusation of top state officials who are eating/chopping public resources is not new. She quotes a popular columnist [who] commented in 2000 on a scandal involving the presidential jet by describing how certain unnamed ‘people at the tree tops **chop** and become **bellyful** and use our scarce foreign cash to buy or lease or buy and lease presidential jets " (Ghanaian Chronicle). It is also important to notice how there is definitely an insulting dimension to all these speeches, which brings us back to our theoretical framework and the notion of insult we emphasized, following Ofori (2015; 2017). In effect, through these accusations, where a political adversary is basically described as a glutton who stuffs his mouth with money diverted from the public, the politician is literally insulting his opponents.

This also echoed a similar accusation that was launched at Cecilia Dapaah, the Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources of the NPP. Her story was quite strange and eventually turned against her: in the summer of 2023, she had reported a theft of US\$ 1 million, € 300,000 and millions of Ghana cedis from her home.<sup>9</sup> But rather than focusing on the theft, the media began to wonder how and why she earned that amount of money, and eventually, who else in the government has such huge amounts stashed up in their homes. Regarding this story, Asiedu Nketia, the National Chairman of the NDC, granted an interview in August 2023 on Radio Gold to talk about the alleged theft in Cecilia Dapaah’s home. The main medium of communication in this interview is Twi, and Asiedu Nketia’s comments regarding the issue further extends the

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<sup>9</sup> *Citi Newsroom*, July 22, 2023: <https://citinewsroom.com/2023/07/cecilia-dapaah-resigns-as-sanitation-minister/>

debate surrounding corrupt practices of politicians. He explained that “*Wɔn ɛbribri y'ani so ɛna wɔn fom oman sika ɛde gu omo bɔtɔ mu,*”<sup>10</sup> which meant they have confused us and are greedily “stuffing” [*fom*] the country’s money into their mouths). Here, Asiedu Nketie uses the verb “*fom*”, which means the act of greedily and hurriedly stuffing food in one’s mouth, usually with two hands, to describe how the NPP government is taking and spending money in the country. This gives a vividly clear picture of how the discourse surrounding clientelism and the other forms of corruption in the country as well as the cultural and linguistic inputs in tailoring these discourses.

Finally, let us mention an interview with one of the aspirants for NPP flagbearership, Kwabena Agyapong. As we are approaching the electoral period, the two parties are having primaries to elect those who will represent the parties at the forthcoming elections. During this interview, he was asked about an incidence of corruption in his own party, the NPP. He used the opportunity to address the shortcomings of his party. He stated that the intra-NPP elections were plagued by clientelism, as some delegates voted for some candidates through exchanges of money for support. He makes one very interesting statement in Twi, saying “*M'ankɔ ammanmuo mu sɛ merɛkɔpɛ biribi adi.*”<sup>11</sup> This can be translated in: “I did not go into politics to look for something to **eat**”. He goes on to reiterate that he does not think they (the elite of the party) should allow themselves to be bought, “I’ve said it before, we should not allow monetization and materialism to take over our political space.”<sup>12</sup> This once again reveals how the deployment of clientelist practices are associated to the act of eating, and that accusations launched at

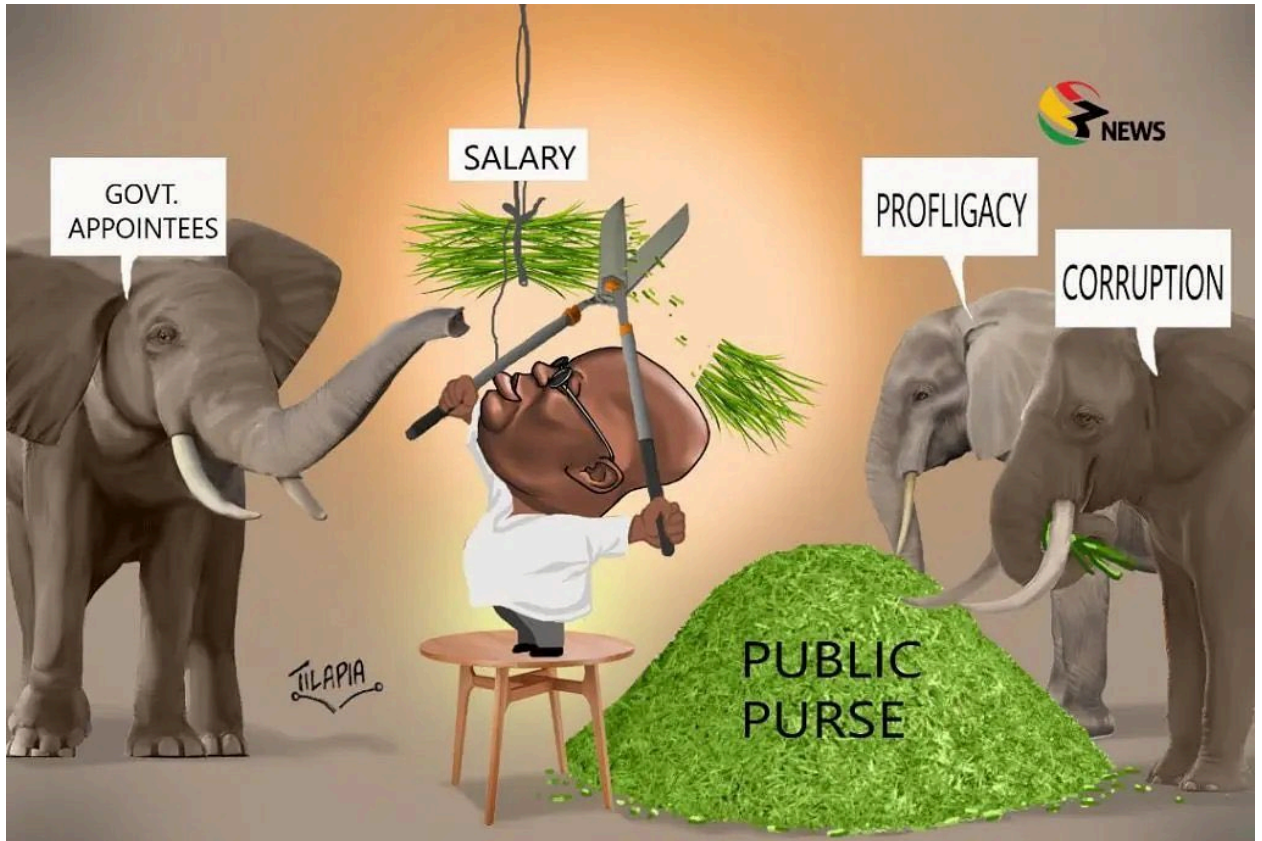
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<sup>10</sup> Asiedu Nketia interview on Radio Gold <https://youtu.be/nD8uqjqOpBs?si=O3rzHLcPw0s8lgNV>

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Kwabena Agyapong [https://youtu.be/K1T6E1eMD5Q?si=j4JXexvKsvcX\\_u6w](https://youtu.be/K1T6E1eMD5Q?si=j4JXexvKsvcX_u6w)

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

opponents from the rival party, or from one's own party, carefully delve into a vocabulary of eating for oneself as a corrupt act.



*Caricature by Tilapia Da Cartoonist, which shows elephants named “Corruption” and “Profligacy” eating the public purse. Corruption is about eating scarce resources. 24 March 2022.<sup>13</sup>*

In sum, as we have seen, to understand debates about clientelism during electoral times in Ghana, we need to pay attention to how politicians use discourses surrounding food and the act of eating. What we saw here echoes and confirms what Agbibo (2022), Bayart (1989), Schatzberg (1993) and others have argued, that discursively food and politics are closely intertwined. As Agbibo (2022, 90) so eloquently said, “clientelistic accountability is refracted

<sup>13</sup> Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TV3GH/posts/cartoon-by-tilapia-da-cartoonist-30-pay-cut-but-corruption-profligacy-chewing-pu/5737641989598462/>

through what is locally known as ‘stomach infrastructure,’ a term which reclaims the logic of ‘wealth in people that underpins the politics of *bigmanity* in Africa.’ What we saw in our analysis of Ghanaian politicians above, or rather what we heard from them, were references about this “stomach infrastructure.”

#### 4.2 Clientelism and Family/Ethnic Discourses

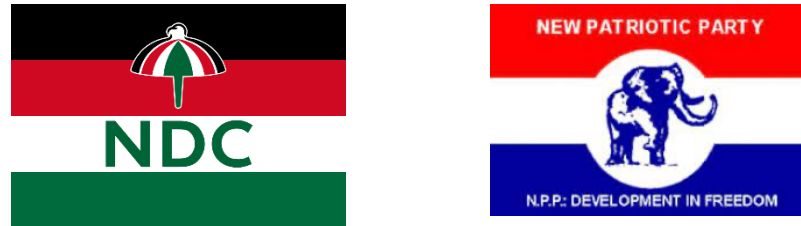
Our collection of speeches also revealed that another frequent type of discourse that Ghanaian political actors use in debates about clientelism pertains to the realm of the family and ethnicity. In such cases, politicians accuse one another of using public resources and dodging official laws and rules to favor loyal clients from their family and/or their ethnic groups (or their “tribe”, to use a word often uttered by politicians themselves). In other words, analysts must pay close attention to the words of the family and ethnicity in order to make sense of what political actors debate.

A revealing pattern seen since the last ten years or so has to do with the region of origin of the President, and more generally his ethnic identity and that of those who support him. Before detailing further these discourses, let us remind the readers that there is a general perception, which is grounded in reality for the most part, that the two largest parties have strong regional foundations. In a nutshell, the NPP is strongly established amongst Asante voters, whereas the NDC has deep roots amongst the Ewe voters, and to some extent those of the Northern regions. As Fridy (2007, 294) argues, “it is ethnic identities that better predict the popularity of one party over another.” In other words, the ethnic identity of a candidate becomes a “cognitive shortcut” to identify to which party s/he belongs (Fridy 2007, 283). Although this

is not directly tied to discourses on clientelism or corruption, a very tangible example of this ethnicization of political discourses can be seen in this discussion taking place during a popular talk show on *Joy News* in 2016, when the guests discussed the case of President Akufo-Addo's running mate. As we just said, Akufo-Addo and the NPP have their stronghold amongst the Asante people and region, whereas their rival NDC is popular amongst Ewe and Northerners. But Akufo-Addo's running mate, Mahamudu Bawumia, was actually from the North, a region generally supporting the NDC. During that talk show, Mr. Owula Mangortey, a traditionalist in the Shai-Osodoku traditional area, blasted Bawumia for accepting to run for the NPP, knowing that almost all his own family, as good Northerners, are all working for the NDC. He said:

*“You have a running mate of a political party [Mahamadu Bawumia] who is from the Mamprugu area (Northern region), he goes about using invectives against his fellow Northerners, calling him incompetent, **calling him a thief** [...], but let me tell you something my brother, you don't smell too much of an elephant [symbol of the NPP, see below], you smell more of an umbrella [symbol of the NDC, see below]. [...] Your father, Alhaji, Mumuni Bawumia was an NDC man and chairman of the council of state, your mother was a women's organizer of one of the NDC constituencies, your elder brother is the NDC ambassador to Burkina Faso and now ambassador to Morocco” (...), “who did you marry? Samira Bawumia who was the TEIN [NDC student wing] president at KNUST [Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology], your brother in-law is the NDC MP for Adenta on the NDC ticket, Mohammed Ramadan, who is the presidential staffer. [...] So where you are [in the NPP], they do not trust you, they will use you to make all the noise and then dump*

*you...my brother...you are insulting the Northerners that they do not know what is nice...*<sup>14</sup>



*The symbols of the two parties*

Interestingly, after declaiming that a “man from the North” should never run for the NPP, he alludes to the fact that one’s ethnic and family background is deeply embedded in clientelism and thus in one’s professional and political careers: in effect, he alleged in this same interview that it was because of Bawumia’s father’s position that the past governor of the Bank of Ghana, gave Bawumia employment in the bank. As we can see, ethnicity and clientelism are always connected in political discourses.

As we just alluded to, the equation between political party and ethnicity is often seen as a direct one. This was made clear during a visit which then President John Mahama (of the NDC) made to the town of Kumasi, the historical stronghold of the Asante and thus of the NPP. He was in an ‘enemy’ territory but, as the incumbent President, and thus had the power to use resources to attract voters, we could have expected him to woo and cajole the people to vote for him, even if they were not from his traditional core of supporters. But instead, President Mahama called the Asante people difficult and hard to please, by using an Akan proverb “...*the*

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<sup>14</sup> Majority Caucus, Joy News. November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, <https://youtu.be/jgQ7B551ZLk> 23-11-16

*chicken never pleases the Hawk no matter how well it dances. [...] As for Kumasi, even if we construct roads tarred with gold, they will tell us that we did nothing.*"<sup>15</sup> Mahama already had this preconceived notion that ethnicity and party politics is unchangeable, and that even clientelist promises cannot change it. Here, we can see that the notion of insult, which was highlighted in the theoretical framework, is quite evident. As Ofori (2017, 130) explained, discourses as insults in Ghana often focus on a person's "ethnicity or tribe." Here we can see that this ethnic stronghold of the NPP party, which is the heart of the Asante ethnic group, is put at the center of the critique, which becomes in fact a form of insult: they are hawks who can never be pleased, no matter how much "gold" their roads are paved with! This is an important part of Mahama's discourse that must be emphasized. Although we do not have enough space to elaborate, it is also important to add that ethnicity's role in elections is more complex and nuanced, especially regarding the voting behavior of voters from the other ethnic communities of Ghana, who form the majority of voters (Friday 2007, 281). But no matter the nuances analysts can bring, it remains true that for most people, candidates' ethnic background acts as cues for their political party affiliation. And this is what discourses on clientelism will emphasize, as we will show in the next paragraphs.

A very significant expression used by members of the NDC party to discredit their opponents of the NPP party is that of the "Akyem Mafia", and some derivatives such as "Akyem royal family" or "Akyem Sakawa boys." In this expression, the central noun is of course Akyem, or in its full name, Akyem-Kyebi, which is located in the Eastern region of Ghana, and is the region of origin of President Akufo-Addo (and former leader of the opposition). One of

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<sup>15</sup> General News of Tuesday, 6 May 2014. If we build roads with gold, Ashantis won't appreciate – Mahama. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/If-we-build-roads-with-gold-Ashantis-won-t-appreciate-Mahama-308371>



the first occurrences of this expression goes back to a show, *Majority Caucus on Joy News*, broadcast in October 2012, during which Prince-Derek Adjei, who was at the time a National Youth Coordinator for the then ruling NDC party. He used the expressions “Akyem mafia” and “Akyem royal family” throughout the show, when talking about the role of the NPP in the political history of Ghana, accusing them of violence since the period leading to Independence.<sup>16</sup> This politician was clearly accusing the NPP of capturing and using the state for the benefit of their own family, and by extension their region or ethnic group. The idea here is to accuse the President and his circle of acting like mafias would to impose their control over different economic sectors to serve their clan, their family, at the expense of anybody else. The notion of mafia clearly alludes to how a malign *family* illegally uses its power to grab resources that would otherwise belong to the public. Conveying the idea that the President and his family is similar to a mafia thus mobilizes the language of the family, of corruption, and bad and criminal intentions.

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<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that in his brilliant PhD dissertation, Ofori also noted that use of the “Akyem Mafia”, by pro-NDC newspapers, as an insulting strategy. As he explains (2015, 178): “the NPP presidential candidate’s tribe, Akyem, is presented as ‘marauding Akyem mafia within the NPP’.”



*A screenshot from the Chronicle’s frontpage evoking the “Akyem Mafia”<sup>17</sup>*

The “Akyem Mafia” tag was again used by the MP for Bolgatanga Central Constituency in the Upper East Region, Isaac Adongo, when he posted an article on his thoughts concerning the Agyapa Royalties deal the NPP-led government had brought forth to be accepted by parliament. The post, captioned “The Agyapa Royalties Fraud Is the Last Straw: The **Akyem Sakawa Boys** and Grandpas Must Go.” This was then reposted and amplified by the former President, John Mahama, on Facebook and this courted a lot of attention including that of the President himself.<sup>18</sup> In the same vein, an NPP candidate for the 2024 parliamentary election was accused of being a “Sakawa boy”; as he tried to defend himself of such an accusation, a

<sup>17</sup> Source: [https://twitter.com/tv3\\_ghana/status/1302872185883721731?lang=ar-x-fm](https://twitter.com/tv3_ghana/status/1302872185883721731?lang=ar-x-fm) )

<sup>18</sup> Angry Akufo-Addo slams Isaac Adongo's 'Akyem Mafia', 'Sakawa Boys' tag amplified by Mahama on Facebook <https://www.classfonline.com/news/politics/Angry-Akufo-Addo-slams-Isaac-Adongo-s-Akyem-Mafia-Sakawa-Boys-tag-amplified-by-Mahama-on-Facebook-17677>

newspaper had the following caption: “I’m not a **Sakawa Boy** super rich NPP parliamentary aspirant cries out.”<sup>19</sup> In the expression “Akyem Sakawa Boys”, “Sakawa Boys” refers to people who engage in activities of cyberfraud in Ghana. They are well-known for their capacity to fraud gullible people online and accumulate a vast amount of wealth in doing so. The MP tagging the president and members of his government who come from the Akyem region as “Sakawa boys” and “Grandpas” was an accusation of tribal or ethnic politics associated with nepotism, pointing at their attempt to defraud the country of its mineral resources. In similar terms, a NDC MP, Isaac Adongo, criticized the NPP government and what it does in the region inhabited by Ewe as “The war on Voltarians for political power is purely the evil and divisive work of the sleeping and nonperforming Nana Addo and the **Akyem Mafia**.”<sup>20</sup> Eventually these expressions percolated into daily talks on radio or TV shows, as can be seen for instance when the radio announcer Bobie Ansah declared in 2019 that “*NPP’s Akyem mafia led government will abuse Ghanaians.*”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> GhanaWeb, 24 July 2023. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/region/albynewsghana/I-m-not-a-Sakawa-Boy-Super-rich-NPP-Parliamentary-aspirant-cries-out-122357>

<sup>20</sup> ClassFM Online, 28 June 2020. <https://www.classfmonline.com/news/politics/War-on-Ewes-pure-evil-work-of-sleeping-Akufo-Addo-and-Akyem-Mafia-Adongo-15451>

<sup>21</sup> <https://ghanapoliticsonline.com/npps-akyem-mafia-led-govt-will-abuse-ghanaians-bobie-ansah/>



*Screenshot from NDC TV report Facebook page. This links to a humoristic video they posted online. 7 September 2020.* <sup>22</sup>

Facing such accusations of mixing ethnicity-led nepotism and clientelism, the NPP leaders tried to fight back. While at a meeting with the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the Jubilee House on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Akufo-Addo addressed his concerns, saying “*I am very disturbed by this remark that the former president Mahama made that the Akyem people are “Sakawa people”.*”<sup>23</sup> He continued: “*If I was to get up to make a comment about northerners or Gonjas, you can imagine the uproar that will be in the country.*” Bawumia also urged Mahama to apologize for his remarks while addressing a group of party supporters, saying

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<sup>22</sup> Source: <https://m.facebook.com/NDCTVREPORT/videos/the-official-akyem-sakawa-boys-movie/1526807830824567/>

<sup>23</sup> Agyapa Deal: Akufo-Addo jabs Mahama over 'Akyem Mafia' and 'Sakawa Boys' tag . September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. [https://youtu.be/6KtlGt15lg8?si=tewtB\\_5DyyUCM-38](https://youtu.be/6KtlGt15lg8?si=tewtB_5DyyUCM-38)

*“How do you take a whole tribe and say that they are “Sakawa”, and my message to Mahama is that you cannot win this presidency with tribalism, Ghana is beyond tribalism [...] and so we will continue to call on John Mahama to apologize unreservedly for what he has endorsed.”<sup>24</sup>*

All these did not stop the NDC to continue in its accusations that the NPP is a clientelist enterprise serving its ethnic kin. For instance, the NDC National Communications Officer, Sammy Adu Gyamfi, said during a talk show on *Joy News* in November 2019, that President Akufo-Addo *“made a solemn promise to the people of Ghana that if elected, he will not operate a family and friends government, and nobody has been able to deny that promise.”<sup>25</sup>* Yet, he continues, the President has betrayed his promise of not favoring his own family and ethnic group:

*“...you are saying it is okay for a President to make **his own daughter** a member of the Creative Arts Council, it is okay for President Akufo-Addo to dash a vast space dedicated for a duty-free shop in terminal 3, built by President Mahama, to another **daughter of his**, without any transparent tendering process, how did President Akufo-Addo’s daughter get that space? [...] You are saying that it is okay for the President to give **his baby mama**, Madam Virginia Hesse a position as ambassador to the Czech Republic? It is okay for **his cousin** to be Finance Minister? It is okay for **his cousin** to be Roads and Highways Minister? It is okay for **his maternal relative** to be Works and Housing Minister? It is okay for the **wife of his nephew** to*

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Apologise For Akyem Sakawa Mafia Comment’ - Dr. Bawumia Tells Mahama.  
<https://youtu.be/QVC4dHEXteE?si=sEyglIuljsgkc1R0>

<sup>25</sup> Newsfile interrogates NDC’s nepotism claim against Akufo-Addo. November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.  
[https://youtu.be/9uVum9eib\\_E?si=Ya\\_GhumK37fTzXfv](https://youtu.be/9uVum9eib_E?si=Ya_GhumK37fTzXfv)

*be a board member of GNPC? The **brother** of that same wife we are talking about Gabby to be board chairman of BOST? Rodaline Baffour Gyima, **another cousin**, board member of GOIL? Is Ghana for them? Are they the only qualified people in the NPP? Are they the only qualified people in this country? [...] we are saying that hard working members of your party, have been sidelined in your own stronghold and yet people who came from nowhere have been given juicy appointments just because **they are related to the President**?<sup>26</sup>*

Sam George, the MP for Ningo Prampram, in January ,2023, through his words, revealed his thoughts concerning the family politics in play in the NPP government. During an interview on Joy Prime TV, he says,

*“This is not the NPP, this is a **family cabal of kleptocrats** who have chosen to engage in state capture. [...] When you have a group of fraudsters and kleptocrats in government whose whole goal and ambition is to rip the public purse. [...] People say politicians steal from the public purse, but we have a government that is stealing the public purse. [...] These guys have just cut the whole purse and they’re stealing the whole thing and taking it away. [...] Akufo-Addo, and Bawumia and their sidekick Ofori-Atta, I said they are bunch of criminals and fraudsters”<sup>27</sup>*

As we can see here, the accusation is once again borrowing from the language of the family and the kin. For him, this is a “family cabal of kleptocrats”, and what is this family doing? It is “*is stealing the public purse.*” He continued with these accusations that connect

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<sup>26</sup> Newsfile interrogates NDC’s nepotism claim against Akufo-Addo. November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

[https://youtu.be/9uVum9eib\\_E?si=Ya\\_GhumK37fTzXfv](https://youtu.be/9uVum9eib_E?si=Ya_GhumK37fTzXfv)

<sup>27</sup> Sam George bashes GFA, rubbishes Kennedy Agyapong's presidential ambitions. January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

<https://youtu.be/EHeJoGVb0T4?si=X2tXSBuVn8VhanTL>

clientelism to family and ethnic ties, drawing from the Sakawa Boys expression, though slightly modified. Talking about how both NDC (opposition) and NPP (in power) MPs called for the resignation of the Finance Minister, Ken Ofori Atta: “*even the NPP MPs said he should remove Ken Ofori Atta, the **President’s own cousin**, what did he do? [...] The other day when I said there were **fraud boys** in government, you people said I don’t know what I am talking about.*” He seeks to get voters support by accusation of ethnocentrism and showing his party to be the opposite.

As alluded to above, these accusations can also take place within the ruling party itself. Accusing a rival within the party to serve his family or ethnic group with public resources at the expense of the larger public seems common as well. An instance of this can be seen in the current leadership race in the NPP, for the forthcoming 2024 elections. Former Minister for Energy and NPP flagbearer hopeful, Boakye Agarko, revealed how the cousin of the President (they are all from the NPP party), Gabby Otchere Darko, with no official position in the government, allegedly negotiated a deal on behalf of the Ghana government for the mega hydro-electric power plant Ameri. The former minister narrates how the President’s cousin, Otchere Darko, re-negotiated the Ameri deal without the knowledge nor consent of the committee put in place by the government to close the deal<sup>28</sup>. According to Energy news Africa, Agyarko spoke in an interview on Asempa FM and revealed that “someone close to the president”<sup>29</sup> pressured him into doing things against his will and later hired people to tarnish his image just to get him out of the ministry. Later into the interview, he discloses that to his surprise:

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<sup>28</sup> General news, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2023 (Ghanaweb)

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Boakye-Agyarko-narrates-how-Gabby-Otchere-Darko-allegedly-negotiated-Ameri-deal-for-Ghana-1809872>

<sup>29</sup> Energy News Africa 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023 <https://energynewsafrika.com/index.php/2023/07/07/ghana-ameri-power-i-did-nothing-wrong-boakye-agyarko/>

*“Gabby had...contracted a law firm to engage Ameri Energy Group and completed their negotiation and recommended a certain company to operate the Ameri Power Plant and extended the contract to 20 years. [...] I sent Gabby an email and asked under what authority he did that...and his response was what makes me think that my boss [the President] doesn't know about what he has done”.*<sup>30</sup>

His words and speech have revealed how in some cases, it is not always a member of the opposition party that accuses governments of corruption and favoring their kin, but also members of the same party.

But sometimes, displaying one's capacity to bring money or resources to one's ethnic group or region is not an insult or an accusation, but rather something a politician is proud to be doing. This was the case in a very interesting campaign rally in 2016. The scene takes place in the last electoral rally of the NDC, just prior to the election. At that moment, the NDC is the incumbent (it will eventually lose the election), led by President John Mahama. The NDC had invited a very popular artist, Shatta Wale on stage. Interestingly, Shatta Wale's father was a politician for the NDC, hence someone who did have some political connections with the then ruling party. With the President on the stage, and a few NDC politicians next to him, they are all dancing in front of the crowd, with the artist Shatta Wale singing a famous song: *“Mahama paper.”*<sup>31</sup> This song meant that Mahama carries the “cash” (the “paper”) that the voters are going to benefit from. The message was that, as the incumbent, Mahama had access to government resources and would shower his supporters with (public) money if they vote for him, that their loyalty was to be rewarded if they voted in the right side.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Shatta Wale performing “Mahama Paper” <https://youtu.be/XKxNjY2GqQ>





*Singer Shatta Wale (center stage), singing 'Mahama Paper' with President Mahama (and NDC presidential candidate), and his delegates, 2016 campaign.<sup>32</sup>*

### 4.3 Wrongdoings and Promises: Clientelism is Personal

As we explained above, clientelism is about the blurred boundaries between the public and the personal realms, between the use of public resources for private use. At the core of these patterns are individuals who use and distribute state resources to other individuals in exchange for loyalty. Clientelism is a personalized relationship. In this last section, we discuss certain discourses that emphasize how the individual is at the very center of clientelism, whether through promises s/he makes to obtain the loyalty of other individuals, or through accusations of wrongdoings where the individual was caught in his/her trickeries.

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<sup>32</sup> Source: screenshot from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKxNjY2GqQ>

During electoral campaigns, politicians always make promises, whether clientelism is prevalent or not. But in cases where it is indeed prevalent, these promises will take on a highly personalistic dimension. Here, politicians will make promises that convey the impression that they are using *their* own resources to help *their* voters. Although this may reveal an effort to appear generous, it also shows that, quite probably, politicians confound their own resources with those of the public institutions they are supposed to serve. An excellent example of this came from an interview given by Joseph Nii Laryea Afotey-Agbo, the Greater Accra Regional Minister for the NDC party, and also an MP for the Kpone-Katamanso Constituency. In this interview, which took place in 2012, he stages himself as a politician who can *personally* help those who will vote for him. Asked about his accomplishments for his people, he explained:

*I don't take money from the RCC (Regional Coordinating Council) ...I use my own money to support them. [...] I gave them my own cash of 20 million [...]. I deal with the people at a close range, I am a member of Parliament and it is me that they know. [...] I ended up paying 450 million, almost half a billion from my own account to save them, and I have many of my type in the government (who are doing same).<sup>33</sup>*

As we can see, here that the politician frames the money spent to help constituents as his own money, thereby revealing how the personal and the public realms fuse one into the other.

It is also through this revealing, blurring that we can analyze the use of the “I” pronoun in campaign speech, in that it can convey the idea that the politician acts not as the representative of a public institution, but as a private individual who will help out dependent people, in an asymmetrical relationship. For instance, during a rally in 2016, “\$1,000,000 for

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<sup>33</sup> Majority Caucus, Joy News. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2012. <https://youtu.be/wtsOYZgdYeM>

*each constituency. [...] There will be one factory in every district [...] I will keep every promise I make (in Twi); I will never lie about something I cannot do.*"<sup>34</sup> Using the personal pronoun "I" is notable because it shows how commonly politicians put themselves in a position to *personally* help the voters. Since independence, politicians have long been seen and regarded as providers of basic goods and services especially during times or months leading to elections. It shows how dependent Ghanaians are on political leader to provide their basic needs and not necessarily the office or position one hold in the democracy. This is linked to the political culture of the Ghanaian system of seeing people in government positions as having the power to do anything and everything and the crowd response clearly validates this fact. MPs' face pressures in Ghana, even to pay fees of high school students which has metamorphosed into competitions where scholarships are given to the smartest students (Lindberg 2010).

In the same vein, during a live radio interview in the studios of Asempa FM in September 2020 (also video broadcast by Joy News), a leader of the NPP, Mahamadu Bawumia, said about the NDC manifesto that it is a "*kwatrekwa*" manifesto: "*s3 kwatrekwa se )b3 ma wo ntoma a Bisa ne din.*"<sup>35</sup> This is a local proverb, literally meaning "if a naked person promises to give you clothing, ask of his name." What is interesting here is that, once again, it is the individual, the person, who is put at the center of the relationship between the one who makes a promise, the politician, and the receiver(s) of this promise (the voters). It is not the party that counts here, or the institution the person serves; rather, one should ask about his name: who is this individual, who is s/he personally? The accusation launched by the NPP leader revealingly emphasizes the personalized dimension of the relationship.

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<sup>34</sup> NPP final rally, 2016 : [https://youtu.be/f\\_nK9urXqLQ](https://youtu.be/f_nK9urXqLQ)

<sup>35</sup> One-On-One with Vice President Dr. Bawumia Part 2 - The Pulse on JoyNews (30-9-20)  
<https://youtu.be/KDNjlWQ7N1s>

As a final example, let us bring the interesting case of an insult, based on word play, that NPP politicians had crafted to delegitimize their rival NDC. They created the word “Woyomization.” Alfred Agbesi Woyome was a financier, and high-ranking member of the then ruling NDC. It was alleged that 54.1 million Ghana cedis was fraudulently taken by Woyome in 2010, in a context where he had claimed to have helped fund the construction of stadia to host the 2008 African Cup of Nations. During its last rally in Accra towards the 2012 elections, held on December 6<sup>th</sup>, the NPP, then in the opposition, stated that *“by the grace of God, Woyomization period will come to an end on December 7. Those monies spent in corrupt deals will be used to create jobs, undertake industrialization projects like one district one factory, and also finance free senior high school education for all Ghanaians.”*<sup>36</sup> This message refers to the Woyome saga during the tenure of the NDC, painting the picture that, if it were to win election, the NPP government will not engage in corrupt practices just as the NDC did. The clever move by the NPP here was the personalization of their opponents’ clientelistic practices. The name of “Woyome” became a household name for corruption in the NDC government. In another instance, in November 2016, during a popular talk show, the *Newsfile* on Joynews, the figure of Woyome was once again mobilized in public discourse, this time by Yaw Buaben Asamoah, the spokesperson for Akufo-Addo and the NPP parliamentary candidate for Adenta in the Greater Accra Region. He used a Ghanaian proverb to describe how the attorney general at the time (2016), and the President were being blackmailed by Woyome. According to him, the President had ordered Martin Amidu, who had been recently relieved off his duties as Attorney-General, to withdraw his request to cross-examine Woyome. The NPP spokesperson said:

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<sup>36</sup> NPP final rally, December 5, 2012 Sahara TV <https://youtu.be/gEcbSun3sZ8>

*Martin Amidu is peculiarly in a position to know what is going on in the corridors of power; as they say in our local parlance, when the crocodile comes from deep within the river to tell you that there is a dead wood in the river, you have to believe it, Martin Amidu is a crocodile in this river [...]*<sup>37</sup>.

Here, we notice that the use of the word “river” refers to the incumbent government and their corrupt affairs in this case; thus, Martin Amidu knows what the actual situation is regarding who spent what and why Woyome is not able to repay the judgement debt. The NPP spokesperson continued:

*“...so when [Amidu] comes out to say that he is sure and he is certain the president is being blackmailed by Woyome, he knows what he is saying. [...] Martin Amidu says he was instructed by the President not to go forward with the investigation [...]. He [Martin] also claims that gargantuan crimes are being committed.”*<sup>38</sup>

Here, beyond the details of this affair, which may be too complicated to follow, what really matters is how, over the years, the person of Woyome was used by the NPP as the perfect example of an individual with obscure power, who could run a corrupt ring, even forcing the President to sack his Attorney-General. In turn, “Woyomization” became a common word to depict any act of clientelism or corruption perpetrated by the government.

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<sup>37</sup> Joynews Newsfile, November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 <https://youtu.be/63tweGKd2r4>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.4 Conclusion

Michael Schatzberg once argued that “we would all be better advised to seek locally relevant meanings of power through an examination of sources that reflect perceptions and understandings indigenous to the areas we study” (2001, 37). It is with this argument in mind that this chapter has analyzed a series of discourses produced by a variety of political actors in Ghana, who have debated, argued, accused, self-defended, and denounced with one another on the issue of clientelism during electoral times. As we have demonstrated, there were three general types of discourses that could be heard and read between 2012 and today, as NPP and NDC politicians electorally fought one another. One major form of discourse emphasizes the notion of clientelism as being part of the realm of food and of the act of eating. Here, we demonstrated how, for these actors, the money and the public resources that politicians divert into their networks of loyal clients are being “consumed”, “eaten”. Politicians will “chop” money for themselves or their loyal allies. When they are accused of doing so, the argument is that this is done at the expense of all Ghanaian citizens, who do not have the chance of being connected to the right people. What belongs to the public is eaten up by the few who are connected. This is related to the second type of discourse, one which puts forward the notion of the family, the kin, and by extension, a specific region and ethnic group. Indeed, as the political battles heat up, with crucial elections appearing in the horizon, politicians will accuse one another of diverting public resources and concentrating it for the benefit of their immediate family, their kin and their ethnic group. These discourses portray political opponents as actors who betray their roles as representatives of an entire nation, who prefer to favor their own people. Accusations such as “Akyem Mafia”, “Sakawa Boys”, “family cabal of kleptocrats”

and others, point in that direction. Finally, a third type of discourse, which also overlaps with the previous two, helps to see how it is the privatization of resources that is at stake: the promises that politicians make, and the wrongdoings they are guilty of making, demonstrate the key element of clientelism: that the individual, not the office, the function, is at the center of this political dynamic. When a politician claims that he is using his own money to help his voters, he is telling two things: that it is he as a person that help and to whom the loyalty should be directed, but also, perhaps more ambiguously, that as a politician he has amassed enough resources to be able to deliver.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes with an overview of the main results. In addition to the need for greater investigation, recommendations are also given.

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

As it has been evidently shown, this study investigates how discourses centered around clientelism in Ghanaian electoral landscape are tailored. Consequently, the general research question focused on how political actors debate and argue about clientelism in Ghana. In view of that, through a critical discourse analysis theoretical and methodological framework, the research propositions point to dynamics in which clientelism is framed through representations of food, ethnic / familial orientation and lastly, wrongdoings and promises.

Language is the most powerful tool and means of communicating with people and the terrain of Ghanaian electoral politics is no stranger to this fact. This study finds that the type of language, its use and how it is used is pivotal in discussions in Ghana. Using one of the most widely spoken languages in Ghana, Twi, as well as English and Pidgin, to make cultural, proverbial, and metaphoric. references in talking about clientelism is common in Ghanaian politics. Directly or indirectly, people of political influence use their words to find resonance with the masses and make themselves more relatable to the people, with the use of local linguistic imports, as we have seen proverbs from Mahamadu Bawumia and John Dramani Mahama in their speeches to voters. Knowing that most listeners and viewers of radio and TV respectively understand at least the most popular local language in Ghana, they stand a chance of reaching almost everyone's understanding when they speak Twi, thus, automatically being



lent a listening ear. With this linguistic tool, opinions on, accusations of and discussions surrounding clientelism are made. From the findings, the data was categorized into three main themes, which will be briefly summarized below.

Clientelism and “Eating” the money (food metaphors), Clientelism and family/ ethnic discourses and lastly, Wrongdoings and promises (clientelism being personal). The first theme reveals through findings, that within the Ghanaian and African context at large, corruption within the government and on the corridors of power are more described with metaphors, phrases and proverbs about food, eating and gluttony.

In terms of ethnic, partisan and familial appointments, it is found that political leaders of the NPP and NDC use speeches as a platform to convey the notion that their adversaries always engage in acts of nepotism, such as appointment of family members, members of the same ethnic group as well as party members. Speeches are instrumental in justifying or legitimising nepotistic practises by emphasising loyalty to political parties and their families or ensuring opportunities for relatives. Although these discourses are usually enunciated in a way that seeks to condemn and criticize, thus to undermine the moral value of their adversaries, these speeches sometimes inadvertently lead the audiences to understand that the accusers themselves admit to patronage and clientelism. This was the case, for instance, when the current finance minister, Ken Ofori Attah, who has been asked to step down by members of parliament did not do so. Which caused the opposition to claim that the reason why he still holds his position is because he is the cousin of the president.

It is often observed that politicians use speeches to manipulate public opinion on corruption to the disadvantage of their political opponents, justify corrupt practises, or deflect attention from their own wrongdoings. By making promises or providing benefits to specific individuals or groups in exchange for support, politicians aim to secure their political power. Speeches play a crucial role in communicating these promises and building a clientelist network. From the above data, we find that some politicians put themselves in a position to personally tend to the needs of the people, emphasizing on their personal strengths to help those who support or vote for them. Analysing public responses to speeches provides insights into societal attitudes and the effectiveness of political messaging in Ghana. Speeches are widely recognised as a potent instrument used by politicians during electoral campaigns to gain an advantage over their adversaries and achieve success in elections. The effective use of persuasive rhetoric, emotional appeals, and the capacity to establish a connection with the audience may significantly impact public sentiment and convince voters in favour of a certain candidate. This is achieved by several means, such as using songs, utilising proverbs, making religious references, and employing metaphors, colours, and nonverbal cues, among other strategies for gaining votes.

The political parties in Ghana often focus on articulating their vision, policy proposals, and achievements in their speeches to build trust and credibility with voters. They emphasise their party's mission and goals, highlighting how their policies and governance strategies align with the needs and aspirations of the electorate. By doing so, they seek to garner support and convince voters that they are the best choice for governing the country.

Additionally, research shows that political parties in Ghana use speeches to critique their opponents' policies and ideologies. They aim to discredit their opponents by highlighting their

weaknesses, inconsistencies, or failures in their speeches through the usage of metaphors, proverbs and in some cases, songs and musicians to achieve this aim. Political parties engage in various rhetorical techniques, such as persuasive language, emotional appeals, and vivid examples, to portray themselves as the better alternative and their opponents as unfit to lead.

Furthermore, speeches are used to mobilise supporters and energise grassroots movements. Political parties in Ghana often have rallies and campaign events where they deliver inspiring speeches to their base. These speeches aim to rally support, motivate volunteers, and encourage active participation in the political process. This serves to not only gain support from committed party members but also attract undecided voters who may be swayed by the enthusiasm and passion displayed during these events.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Although this thesis, in its core, was not designed as a policy-oriented work, this concluding chapter offers the opportunity to offer some reflections about potential recommendations. Understanding the other ways, other than the traditional form of clientelism is essential to fighting it. Identifying socioeconomic, historical, and cultural elements that cause this occurrence is essential for focused solutions. Researchers could examine how poverty, weak institutions, and poor governance affect clientelism. Studying Ghana's history, especially colonialism's influence on political and social structures, can help explain clientelism. Ethnographic research may also illuminate cultural norms that foster clientelism, helping governments create culturally relevant anti-corruption policies. Effectiveness of anti-corruption programmes could be assessed to evaluate their impact and opportunities for development. Researchers could rigorously evaluate clientelism policies and initiatives to determine their

effectiveness in eliminating corruption, patronage, and nepotism. For those who value mixed-methods research, this could be done by combining quantitative measures like corruption perception indices with qualitative approaches, like in-depth interviews and case studies. Researchers may uncover best practises and provide evidence-based anti-corruption recommendations by comparing programmes and their results.

In relation to findings surrounding clientelism, corruption, patronage, and nepotism in Ghana, these issues remain significant challenges for the country's governance and socioeconomic development. It is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to address these concerns by implementing robust anti-corruption measures, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering a merit-based system that rewards competence and performance. By combating clientelism, corruption, patronage, and nepotism, Ghana can pave the way for a more just and prosperous society.

Finally, there is a need to investigate the role of ethnicity, social networks, and other contextual factors in shaping speech strategies, voter preferences, and election outcomes. This will help deepen our understanding of the utilisation of speeches in clientelism during election campaigns in Ghana. The resulting insights can inform political actors, electoral commissions, and policymakers in developing strategies to promote fair and issue-based electoral practises, ultimately strengthening democratic processes in the country.

### 5.3 Limitations and Future Research Avenues

It is suggested that future studies employ data collection, this will help decide on data collection method, such as obtaining campaign speeches from official sources, political parties, or primary data collection through interviews, focus groups, or participant observation during

election campaigns. Such studies must ensure data is representative and covers different parties and regions. Again, it is suggested that future studies consider comparative analysis. This will help to compare different campaign speeches, political parties, or regions to explore variations in the use of clientelist discourse. Consider socio-political, cultural, and historical factors that may shape these variations. Some limitations must be highlighted:

First, the data collected were limited to speeches posted online. Clearly, this is not enough, and more in-depth research can be carried out to obtain a much larger repertoire of discourses to go beyond what is available on online news media and social media. There are countless public events that are held during electoral campaigns and other heated political moments that are either not reposted online, or that may be posted but are really difficult to find. Hence, we acknowledge that the data collected for this research represents only a small fraction of a much larger repertoire of political speeches.

Second, given the time constraint, this research could not undertake a more systematic comparison of speeches by party (NDC vs NPP) and by “political role” (governing party vs opposition party). With more time, it would have been interesting to see if the speeches produced by the NPP fundamentally differ from those of the NDC. In our research, we have emphasized what they all share, the common metaphors, images, notions they all convey, but one could hypothesize that there could also be intrinsic differences between the two parties, in light of their diverging historical formation and ideological orientations. As to the “political role” differentiation, our intuition is that it is quite probable that what the party in power produces in terms of discourses (regardless of whether it is the NPP or the NDC, as long as the party is in power) could be different from what the party in the opposition utters. A party’s

structural positioning (in power vs in the opposition) must have repercussions on how and what they say. This is a limitation, as much as a topic for research avenue.

Third, it would have been interesting to collect discourses that were uttered in the other languages spoken in Ghana, besides Twi. How do politicians from the North and who speak Dagbani, for instance, evoke notions associated to clientelism? Hence, taking into account the diversity of languages spoken in Ghana beyond the main one would quite certainly enrich the research and enable to see how such various types of speeches are embedded in the cultural environment from where they are produced.

Finally, and this is a limitation as much as an invitation for research avenue: in this research, the objective was not to measure directly the impact of speeches on the audiences. Here, it is important to reiterate that the production of discourses should not be conflated with the reception(s) of these discourses by the various audiences who consume/receive them. This would require another research design, one that would lead the researcher to carry out fieldwork and perhaps run surveys with various segments of the population, to understand how they receive the speeches of the politicians, how they internalize, reject, re-appropriate and transform, the words and meanings conveyed by political actors. In fact, as Ofori has demonstrated in his work on insults in Ghana, it appears that insulting politicians who are involved in clientelism and similar practices is quite common. As he says, “In view of this, citizens insulted and challenged political authority involved in corrupt practices by using idiomatic expressions and word play to expose such practices” (2015, 171). Accusing politicians of resorting to clientelism through clever discursive practices is thus a significant mechanism of delegitimizing “corrupt” politicians. As he adds, in another work, insulting as a political discourse “is a means by which ordinary citizens challenge the existing political

authority, infantilize politicians and animalize political authority in Ghanaian political discourse” (Ofori 2017, 13). This is a topic to explore further in future works. Hence, our goal was much more modest, it was not to draw definite conclusions on how people understand and react to these discourses, but rather to analyse what politicians and how their discourse can be understood, considering broader normative and cultural structures. But this is clearly what future research projects ought to do.

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## APPENDIX: LIST OF DISCOURSES AND THEIR SOURCES

Person/ Party	Date	Location	Source
Akufo-Addo, Nana (Presidential candidate, NPP)	2012-12-05	Accra, NPP rally	<a href="https://youtu.be/gEcbSun3sZ8">https://youtu.be/gEcbSun3sZ8</a>
Buaben Asamoah, Yaw	2016-11-05	News file on Joy news	<a href="https://youtu.be/63tweGKd2r4">https://youtu.be/63tweGKd2r4</a>
Akufo-Addo, Nana (Presidential candidate, NPP)	2016-11-05	NPP rally	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_nK9urXqLQ&amp;t=2s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_nK9urXqLQ&amp;t=2s</a>
Akufo-Addo, Nana (Presidential candidate, NPP)	2016-11-05	NPP rally	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_nK9urXqLQ&amp;t=2s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_nK9urXqLQ&amp;t=2s</a>
Afotey-Agbo, Joseph	2012-09-13	Majority caucus interview	<a href="https://youtu.be/wtsOYzgdYeM">https://youtu.be/wtsOYzgdYeM</a>
Akufo-Addo, Nana (Presidential candidate, NPP)	2016-12-02	Radio interview	<a href="https://youtu.be/P7heSmIWA3w">https://youtu.be/P7heSmIWA3w</a>
Mahama, John (Presidential candidate, NDC)	2023-07-21	twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/JDMahama/status/1682355215834521602?s=20">https://twitter.com/JDMahama/status/1682355215834521602?s=20</a>
Tamacloe, Edudzi, NDC director of legal affairs	2023-08-07	TV 3 New Day show	<a href="https://youtu.be/fEE1973NOF8?si=SczVHT_X4Ubsb_-r">https://youtu.be/fEE1973NOF8?si=SczVHT_X4Ubsb_-r</a>
Adjei , Prince-Derek, Deputy National Coordinator: National Youth Authority and	2012-10-23	Majority caucus. Joy News	<a href="https://youtu.be/RajiVG7WgoQ">https://youtu.be/RajiVG7WgoQ</a>

former presidential staffer			
Mahama, John (President, NDC)	2016	NDC campaign rally	(Ofori and Fiawornu,2020)
Mangortey, Owula, shai-osodoku traditional area	2016-11-23	Majority caucus	<a href="https://youtu.be/jgQ7B551ZLk">https://youtu.be/jgQ7B551ZLk</a> 23-11-16
Tamacloe, Edudzi, NDC director of legal affairs	2020-11-11	Minority Caucus	<a href="https://youtu.be/KWQLLbiDtSw?si=eOY072L1ULMOU6Cb">https://youtu.be/KWQLLbiDtSw?si=eOY072L1ULMOU6Cb</a>
Otchere Darko, Gabby	2015-11-17	Poem: The gospel according to John III, 20: 16	<a href="https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/politics/gabbyotchere-darko-writes-a-poem-to-the-ndc-the-gospel-according-to-john-iii-20-16.html">https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/politics/gabbyotchere-darko-writes-a-poem-to-the-ndc-the-gospel-according-to-john-iii-20-16.html</a>
Mahama, John (Presidential candidate, NDC)	2020-11-23	rally	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/JDMahama/videos/1863730073764798/?t=766">https://www.facebook.com/JDMahama/videos/1863730073764798/?t=766</a>
Mahama, John (Presidential candidate, NDC)	2014-05-06	visit to sympathisers in Kumasi	<a href="https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/If-we-build-roads-with-gold-Ashantis-won-t-appreciate-Mahama-308371">https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/If-we-build-roads-with-gold-Ashantis-won-t-appreciate-Mahama-308371</a>
Bawumia, Mahamadou, vice president NPP	2020-09-30	radio interview, asempa FM	<a href="https://youtu.be/KDNjIWQ7N1s">https://youtu.be/KDNjIWQ7N1s</a>
Shatta Wale, musician	2016-12-05	NDC final rally	<a href="https://youtu.be/_XKxNjY2GqQ">https://youtu.be/_XKxNjY2GqQ</a>
Akufo-Addo, Nana (Presidential candidate, NPP)	2016-12-02	UTV Ghana Online	<a href="https://youtu.be/ZccPyQtP-zw?si=yPSIL2vh6wJNpg6m">https://youtu.be/ZccPyQtP-zw?si=yPSIL2vh6wJNpg6m</a>
Bawumia, vice president NPP	2020-08-25	UTV Ghana Online	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/iwASsMxxKY0?feature=share">https://www.youtube.com/live/iwASsMxxKY0?feature=share</a>
Mahama, John (Presidential candidate, NDC)	2020-11-23	visit to supporters of Werinyanga	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/JDMahama/videos/1863730073764798/?t=766">https://www.facebook.com/JDMahama/videos/1863730073764798/?t=766</a>

Nketia, Asiedu, NDC chairmain	2023-08-10	interview on radio gold	<a href="https://youtu.be/nD8uqigQpBs?si=O3rzHLcPw0s8IlgNV">https://youtu.be/nD8uqigQpBs?si=O3rzHLcPw0s8IlgNV</a>
Nketia, Asiedu, NDC chairmain	2023-08-10	interview on radio gold	<a href="https://youtu.be/nD8uqigQpBs?si=O3rzHLcPw0s8IlgNV">https://youtu.be/nD8uqigQpBs?si=O3rzHLcPw0s8IlgNV</a>
Sam George, MP-Ningo Prampram	2023-01-24	interview on Joy Prime TV	<a href="https://youtu.be/EHeJoGVb0T4?si=5X5a12SVfwB_HQRN">https://youtu.be/EHeJoGVb0T4?si=5X5a12SVfwB_HQRN</a>
Sammy Adu-Gyamfi	2019-11-09	Newsfile on JoyNews	<a href="https://youtu.be/9uVum9eib_E?si=ybJn1bi2tUFFBWJj">https://youtu.be/9uVum9eib_E?si=ybJn1bi2tUFFBWJj</a>
Akufo-Addo, Nana (President, NPP)	2020-09-05	broadcasted meeting with archbishops and pastors	<a href="https://youtu.be/6KtIGt15lg8?si=C2jzTtC9RDxa2VJn">https://youtu.be/6KtIGt15lg8?si=C2jzTtC9RDxa2VJn</a>
Bawumia, Mahamadou, (vice president)	2020-09-07	Rally in Northern Region	<a href="https://youtu.be/QVC4dHEXteE?si=ftJ7SYAQxYdLRwEn">https://youtu.be/QVC4dHEXteE?si=ftJ7SYAQxYdLRwEn</a>
Adongo, Isaac, Mahama, John and Akufo-Addo, Nana	2020-09-04	News article	<a href="https://www.classfmonline.com/news/politics/Angry-Akufo-Addo-slams-Isaac-Adongo-s-Akyem-Mafia-Sakawa-Boys-tag-amplified-by-Mahama-on-Facebook-17677">https://www.classfmonline.com/news/politics/Angry-Akufo-Addo-slams-Isaac-Adongo-s-Akyem-Mafia-Sakawa-Boys-tag-amplified-by-Mahama-on-Facebook-17677</a>
Adongo, Isaac	2019-11-16	interview on "Good Evening Ghana"	<a href="https://youtu.be/Q6YvEuxih-4?si=F6iduQ59xrqswE1g">https://youtu.be/Q6YvEuxih-4?si=F6iduQ59xrqswE1g</a>
Mahama, John (President, NDC)	2016-09-06	Interview broadcasted	<a href="https://youtu.be/K64Dio8YKcs?si=jeUJI_KjilwZ621J">https://youtu.be/K64Dio8YKcs?si=jeUJI_KjilwZ621J</a>
NDC MPs singing	2022-12-07	Parliament of Ghana	<a href="https://youtu.be/HxG8dZvmJlY?si=pE5DGSg3Ril3rwCk">https://youtu.be/HxG8dZvmJlY?si=pE5DGSg3Ril3rwCk</a>
NDC MPs	2022-12-07	Article on MPs singing	<a href="https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/How-NDC-MPs-jammed-to-Barima-Sidney-s-African-Money-after-approval-of-2023-budget-1676030">https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/How-NDC-MPs-jammed-to-Barima-Sidney-s-African-Money-after-approval-of-2023-budget-1676030</a>
Agyapong, Kwabina	2023-07-07	Interview on Kofi TV	<a href="https://youtu.be/K1T6E1eMD5Q?si=y0qVGb5l6a1O9eL-">https://youtu.be/K1T6E1eMD5Q?si=y0qVGb5l6a1O9eL-</a>