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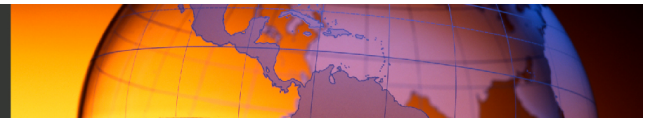

The Effects of Politics on the Implementation of Government Programs/Projects: Insights from a Developing Economy

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Over the years, Ghanaian governments have invested huge sums of money in programs and projects for socioeconomic development to improve their citizens' well-being. However, the implementation of most of these programs and projects have failed and been abandoned. There is a lack of research addressing this issue and the specific causal mechanism through which politics and culture shapes these failed implementations and program abandonments. Partisan politics—which demonstrates strong favoritism toward one's preferred political party, adherence to party policies, and reluctance to compromise with political opponents—provides an appropriate framework to clarify the role of politics in programs and projects ineffective implementation and abandonment debates. Drawing on political theory and the partisan politics literature, this study explores the role partisan politics plays in the implementation failure and abandonment of government programs and projects in Ghana. Our analysis reveals three causal factors: political culture, political corruption, and poor planning and implementation, which are shaped by partisan politics in the Ghanaian context. This impacts negatively on the unity and socioeconomic development of the country.

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Los efectos de la política en la implementación de programas / proyectos del gobierno: Información de una economía en desarrollo

A lo largo de los años, los gobiernos de Ghana han invertido grandes sumas de dinero en programas y proyectos para el desarrollo socioeconómico para mejorar el bienestar de sus ciudadanos; sin embargo, la implementación de la mayoría de estos programas y proyectos ha fallado, lo que ha llevado al abandono. Hay una falta de investigación que aborde este tema y el mecanismo causal específico a través del cual la política y la cultura configuran estas implementaciones y abandonos fallidos. La política partidista, que demuestra un fuerte favoritismo hacia el partido político, la adhesión a las políticas del partido y la renuencia a comprometerse con los opositores políticos proporciona un marco apropiado para aclarar el papel de la política en los programas y proyectos de implementación ineficaz y debates de abandono. Sobre la base de la teoría política y la literatura política partidista, este estudio explora el papel que juega la política partidista en el fracaso de la implementación y el abandono de los programas y proyectos gubernamentales en Ghana. Nuestro análisis revela tres factores causales: cultura política, corrupción política y mala planificación e implementación, que son moldeados por la política partidista en el contexto ghanés. Esto impacta negativamente en la unidad y el desarrollo socioeconómico del país.

Palabras Clave: Ghana, África Subsahariana, Cultura política, Desarrollo, Política partidista, Implementación de políticas, Abandono de proyectos, Proyectos gubernamentales, Corrupción política, Mala planificación.

政治对落实政府项目/计划产生的效果：一个发展中经济体提供的见解

多年以来，加纳政府已在社会经济发展项目和计划上投入大量资金，以期改善公民福祉；然而，大多数这些项目和计划的落实情况却以失败告终，导致项目/计划中止。关于这一问题及特定的因果机制（政治和文化通过该机制造成项目/计划的失败和中止）还缺

少相关研究。党派政治—证明对自身政党的强烈偏好，遵守党派政策，不愿与政治反对方达成妥协—提供了一个合适的框架来阐明政治在有关项目和计划的无效落实和中止的辩论中产生的作用。基于政治理论与党派政治文献，本研究探究了党派政治在加纳政府项目及计划发生失败和中止一事中产生的作用。我们的研究显示了三个因果因素：政治文化、政治腐败和糟糕的规划和落实，这些都是在加纳党派政治的背景下形成的。其消极地影响了该国的团结与社会经济发展。

关键词: 加纳, 撒哈拉以南非洲, 政治文化, 发展, 党派政治, 政策落实, 项目中止, 政府项目, 政治腐败, 规划欠佳.

Government policies are often translated into programs and projects (Freedman and McGavock 2015; Goodman and Love 1980; Haveman *et al*. 2015). Given that programs and projects measure economic growth (Alzahrani and Emsley 2013), government programs, and project performance are key to the performance of every government. Therefore, the role of government programs and projects in national development cannot be overemphasized. Extant literature (see e.g., Alic 2008; Eichengreen 1994, 1996; Eichengreen and Vazquez 1999) shows that major infrastructural development projects have emerged as a means for developing nations to achieve faster economic development. In fact, "project-based work has become a critical component of global industrial activity" (Pinto 2013, 643); and as such are inevitable in development. For instance, after World War II there were high levels of economic growth mainly in the Western world. This growth—which has variously been named as "post-World II economic expansion," "post-war economic boom," "the long boom," or "Golden Age of Capitalism," etc.—saw states embark on major strategic programs/projects to facilitate such growth and developmental plans (Alic 2008; Eichengreen 1994, 1996; Eichengreen and Vazquez 1999). For instance, the shift away from an agricultural development strategy pre-World War II to science development through research and development post-World War II to the present (that made the United States of America a superpower state) has been administered through various programs and projects. Clear examples include government-funded research projects instituted in universities for postgraduate students to conduct research aimed at enhancing economic and defense development; for example, the Manhattan Project—established to produce materials for the production of bombs (Alic 2008).

The recent growth witnessed in many countries, especially in emerging economies, indicates that government or public programs and projects are indispensable in national development. The introduction of an e-government system to facilitate government transactions is a typical example of the importance of government programs and projects. It enables government(s) to use technology—especially web-based applications—to improve access to, and efficiently convey, government information and services (Brown and Brudney 2001); to establish relationships between a government and its citizens, other governments, and businesses (Means and Schneider 2000); to use ICT facilities,

such as the Internet, in the form of databases, networking, discussion support, multimedia, automation, tracking and tracing, and personal identification technologies (Jaeger 2003; Luk 2009); and to facilitate communication during the implementation of strategic national developments (Gichoya 2005).

Even the economic growth led by private companies and capitalists that has been witnessed by many countries was initiated and regulated by various governments through programs and projects (see Eichengreen 1996). Nevertheless, the literature (Republic of Ghana 2012, 2015) indicates that the implementation of some of these government programs and projects has failed and resulted in abandonment. Given this, it is surprising that studies devoted to government program and project abandonment in developing countries are rare. Furthermore, researchers who do discuss this topic have focused on generic factors that lead to failed implementation and abandonment or failure criteria such as delays and cost overruns. The present study adds to the literature by exploring how *political* factors create conditions that lead to failed government programs' implementation and abandonment. We adopt case studies of projects abandoned by the Ghanaian government in addressing the research aims. We focus on the Ghanaian context because it is particularly illuminating to examine how partisanship has influenced Ghanaian government program abandonment, given the highly partisan political nature of implementing government programs and projects in that country (Damoah and Akwei 2017; Damoah, Akwei, and Mouzughi 2015).

Over the years, a significant amount of money has been solicited from the IMF, the World Bank, agencies, and taxpayers by the Ghanaian government to embark on programs and projects that seek to improve socioeconomic development (Ahmed *et al*. 2016; Republic of Ghana 2012, 2015). Some of these programs and projects have not been followed through (Republic of Ghana 2012, 2015). For instance, the postcolonial era saw many state policies turned into programs and projects through the ideology of industrialization, but they ended up being abandoned (Aryeetey and Harrigan 2000; Damoah and Akwei 2017; Jeffries 1982; Williams 2017). This article examines some of the most notable and costly failed policies and programs in Ghana and asks the question: *what political factors account for these failed implementations and abandonments?* In the next section, we present a review of the literature on government programs and project abandonment. This is followed by an analysis of the research method and research context by providing an overview of Ghanaian government program and project abandonment. The subsequent section presents the findings. The last section presents the conclusions, highlighting the contributions to both theory and practice.

Government Programs and Projects: Failed Implementation and Abandonment

Failed programs, project implementation, and abandonment occur where a government or key stakeholders prematurely halt the implementation of a project before it is fully completed or the project fails to achieve its original

objectives (García-Quevedo, Segarra-Blasco, and Teruel-Carrizosa 2018). This can be attributed to a host of organization-specific and external macro environmental factors. Past studies indicate that such failures may stem from organization-specific factors such as mismanagement, frequent changes in management teams, lack of skilled personnel, scarce financial resources, lack of communication, poor leadership, and the action and inactions of the project leaders (Amankwah-Amoah 2016; García-Quevedo, Segarra-Blasco, and Teruel-Carrizosa 2018). Another line of thinking suggests that such an exit can be attributed to external macro environmental factors such as recessions, changes in government, conflicts, and natural disasters (Amankwah-Amoah and Zhang 2015). Table 1 provides an overview of other general causes of project failure, together with the most relevant existing research published in each area.

Partisanship Politics, Clientelism, and Political Culture in Public Sector Management

Partisanship Politics

The extant literature on political theories suggests that there is a clear relationship between partisanship politics and the public sector management of states (Asunka 2016; Bob-Milliar 2012; Fiorina 2002; Luna 2015). However, the degree of partisan influence on the public sector management of states depends

Table 1. General Causes of Project Failure

Type of Causes	Authors and Year of Publication
Communication	Raymond and Bergeron (2008); Weijermars (2009); Wong, Cheung, and Fan (2009); Wi and Jung (2010); Ochieng and Price (2010)
Expertise/knowledge	Perkins (2006); Sambasivan and Soon (2007); Ruuska and Teigland (2009); Hwang and Ng (2013)
Funding/finance	World Bank (2004); Sambasivan and Soon (2007); Sweis and others (2008); Clausen and Attaran (2011)
Planning	Odenyika and Yusif (1997); Assaf and Al-Hejji (2006); Pourrostam and Ismail (2011); Pinto (2013)
Resources	World Bank (2004); Sambasivan and Soon (2007); Teigland and Lindqvist (2007); Sweis and others (2008); Ruuska and Teigland (2009); Clausen and Attaran (2011); Hwang and Ng (2013)
Scope change	Kaliba, Muya, and Mumba (2009); Ahonen and Savolianen (2010); Liu and others (2011)
Socioculture	Blunt (1980); Hofstede (1983); Hogberg and Adamsson (1983); Adler (1983); Blunt and Jones (1997); Muriithi and Crawford (2003); Heeks (2002, 2006); Saad, Cicmil, and Greenwood (2002); Alsakini, Wikström, and Kiiras (2004); Maumbe, Owei, and Alexander (2008); Amid, Moalagh, and Ravasan (2012) [Correction added on December 16, 2020 after first online publication: The citation "Sambasvian and Soon (2007)" was edited to "Sambasivan and Soon (2007)" to reflect the correct spelling.]

on the type of governance system being practiced and the level of democratic development (Fiorina 2002). Partisanship politics is defined differently in the literature. Muirhead (2006, 714) defines partisanship as the political orientation of citizens who stand with a party. The orientation is both psychological and behavioral. It is psychological when "the citizens identify with a party and behavioral in that they usually vote for it, and possibly give it time and money" (Efthymiou 2017). In multiparty systems partisanship is used to refer to politicians who have strong favorability to their party's policies and hardly compromise with the policies of their political opponents. Thus, in this article, we define partisanship as the placing of commitment to a political party at its core, thus prioritizing party loyalty (see also Efthymiou 2017; Mair 2013).

Standard political agency models generally predict an inverse relationship between the degree of partisan allegiances among citizens and political accountability (Besley 2007; Persson and Tabellini 2000). Thus, the more electorate pay allegiance to their affiliated political parties, the less they hold their politically appointed officials accountable for their stewardship. The extant empirical studies over the years from different contexts confirm this inverse relationship (see e.g., Anderson 2000; Hellwig and Samuels 2008; Kayser and Wlezien 2011). Thus, when voters are strongly attached to their parties' victories, the electoral control of politicians suffers.

For example, using Eurobarometer data from eight European countries between 1976 and 1992 inclusive, Kayser and Wlezien (2011) found a strong inverse relationship between partisanship and economic votes—the effects of economic performance on election outcome is stronger in places where there is low affinities to political parties and *vice versa*. Using Afrobarometer from 18 Sub-Saharan African countries that practice multiparty democracies, Chang and Kerr (2016) found that citizens' perception and tolerance for the corruption of politicians has varying degrees, depending on whether they are insiders or outsiders. Those who are inside the clientelist networks simultaneously perceive corruption as ubiquitous and are more tolerant of malfeasance than those who are outside the network. Thus, patronage insiders are more tolerant to political corruption than outsiders. Moreover, those individuals with partisan or ethnic ties to the incumbent politicians are less likely to consider corruption as widespread and *vice versa*. Insiders are, therefore, less likely to vote these politicians out than their counterparts (outsiders). In an analysis of election results from 75 countries, Hellwing and Samuels (2008) found that citizens use elections as a form of punishment or reward for incumbent parliamentarians and this economic voting serves as a check on politicians for their stewardship. However, in countries and places where there is a high affiliation of electorates to political parties, this relationship becomes weak.

Political Clientelism

Partisanship politics is aligned to political clientelism. "Political clientelism refers to the practice of providing personal favors jobs, contracts, welfare

support, money, and so forth in exchange for electoral support" (Berenschot 2018, 1564). Thus, clientelism involves an exchange between the individual politicians/political party seeking election victory and individuals or a group citizenry. The individual or group receives a targeted benefit or avoidance of any penalty through contributing to the ambitions of the politicians/political party (Yıldırım and Kitschelt 2020). There are two critical elements of clientelism: targeting and conditionality. Clientelist exchange also differs depending on the kind of resources, on networks that facilitate the exchange and the durability of the exchange, on whether it is single-shot (vote-buying), and on relational exchanges over extended periods of time (Yıldırım and Kitschelt 2020).

Clientelism takes many forms from vote buying, preferential access to public employment, social benefits, public works, and procurement (Yıldırım and Kitschelt 2020). First, let us consider consumer goods—which refers to "vote-buying"—and tangible goods, that is, a relational clientelism. The consumer goods form of clientelism is most beneficial to single-shot clientelism. Second, preferential access to public (or quasi-public) employment occurs where patronage is geared toward long-term job rewards for loyal partisan supporters, in the public sector or in the publicly regulated private sector. Third, delivering social benefits framed as advantages for social provision schemes can emerge where clientelist efforts are based on an entitlement formula for longer periods of time or as spot market transactions during the election process. The clientele has access to preferential material advantages in the social policy schemes, and this gives benefits from scholarships or public housing to individuals or locally bounded group. Fourth, the public works/procurement category, which is also a relational clientelism, plays a significant role in the linkage of clientelism and the different types of polities. It involves the awards of contract based on the recipient for preferential access to government contracts or procurement; that is, when the party operatives control the award or in a nonopen competitive bidding process. Finally, clientelism can involve interference with administrative and regulatory proceedings and making decisions concerning tax rules, economic and environmental regulation, or building security codes by supervisory agencies.

Political Culture

Political culture is often described as the historically based, widely shared beliefs, feelings, and values concerning the nature of political systems that serve as a link between citizens and the government (Almond and Verba 1963; Formisano 2001). Research on political culture began with Banfield's (1958) work on "amoral familism." According to Banfield, the social actions of people within a community is oriented toward the economic interests of the nuclear family and does not translate to the extended family. Thus, in a society displaying amoral familism, people focus more on their family and friends rather than on a collective approach. This has generated interest in the role that familism and culture play in facilitating or hindering economic development. This theory has been a basis for further elaborations and development of theories and typologies of political culture.

For example, Almond and Verba (1963) categorized political culture into three areas that can create civic culture. These include: (1) "deference," which considers the concepts of respect, acknowledgment of "inferiority," or "superiority," and authority in society; (2) "consensus," which represents the key link between government and public agreement and appeasement. Support for appeasement may not always be shared by the whole nation, but as a whole, people agree to sustain it, which implies that it is a common agreement; and (3) "homogeneity" of the people as they view themselves as one people with common goals. Furthermore, Douglas (1970) developed a two-dimensional framework of cultural comparisons of political culture, a grid or constraint by rules, and a group or incorporation into a bounded social unit.

This was expanded into four grids/groups that constitute stable social configurations and are associated with distinctive values of individualism, fatalism, hierarchy, and egalitarianism (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982). Putnam (1971), studied elite political culture that refers to a set of politically relevant beliefs, values, and habits of most highly involved and influential participants in a political system. Elite political culture is divided into "ideological politics" and the "end of ideology." Ideological politics refers to the political style; that is, the way politicians think and speak about policy problems using twelve stylistic characteristics such as inductive and deductive thinking, historical context, moralization, and reference to distributive groups benefits. An index of ideological style of a politician is determined based on the ratings of stylistic characteristics that cluster in intelligible ways, and the dominant stylistic dimension. Politicians who rank high on the index are more ideologically motivated, more abstract in their conceptions of politics, especially party politics, and more idealistic than their less "ideological" colleagues. They are also more alienated from existing sociopolitical institutions and are concentrated at the extremes of the political spectrum.

Despite the commonalities of what constitutes political culture, extensive evidence suggests that political culture has varying values that link society to the government (Almond and Verba 1963). This suggests that what may be deemed as political culture in one country may not be considered as such by other countries (Ferragina 2009). Political culture determines how governments are organized and also serves as the foundation of the form of government and governance practices of a country (Almond and Verba 1963). This would, therefore, provide the avenue for the success or failure of the governance system adopted/adapted by a country (Almond and Verba 1963). Hence, an understanding of a county's political culture provides clues and cues to political relationships between the governed and the government (Almond and Verba 1963).

The theoretical background of political theory can be traced to Almond and Verba (1963) who published their study on political cultures linked to five democratic countries: Germany, Italy, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They observed that, even though all the five countries practice democracy, their political culture differs. Using the differences in their political practices, they identified three main political cultures. First, parochial political

culture—which is linked to Mexico, a country where citizens are mostly uninformed and unaware of their government and take little interest in the political process. Second, subject political culture—which identified Germany and Italy as countries where citizens are somewhat informed and aware of their government and occasionally participate in the political process. Third, participant political culture, which identified the United Kingdom and the United States as countries where citizens are informed and actively participate in the political process. Since their work in 1963, there have been debates, arguments, and counterarguments concerning what constitutes political culture. However, the foundation of the concept of political culture is that the organization of political processes and the relationship between the governed and the government depends on sets of shared beliefs, feelings, and values concerning the nature of political systems over a period of time. And, these shared beliefs serve as a link between citizens and government.

An Overview of Ghanaian Political Culture, Partisan Politics, and Clientelism

Political culture is thus seen as the set of attitudes, practices, beliefs, and values that shape the political behavior and judgment. The political culture, therefore, reflects the type of government, and incorporates key elements of the history and traditions of previous regimes. Political culture in every society is important due to its ability to shape the political perceptions of a regime. Ghana, which practices a presidential system of governance, has witnessed political stability since 1992 and has not experienced any civil war in its history. Administratively, the country is divided into ten regions, which are further divided into 216 districts or municipalities. From 1992 to date, there have been six successive free, fair, and transparent elections and, as a result, the country is considered as the "eye" of Africa in democracy (leading in democratic practices) by international organizations and unions such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the European Union (Agyeman-Duah 2008; Debrah 2009). Accordingly, the country has seen its democratic ranking in the world improve over the years (Economist Intelligence Unit 2014). However, even though the country practices multiparty democracy, only two political parties have won power in successive elections in the fourth republic starting from 1992. This has led to partisan politics and clientelism, which may have a significant impact on Ghanaian government program and project implementation as well as on decisions to abandon such projects or programs.

Partisanship politics and the adoption of a "winner takes all" strategy has indirectly led to high clientelism in Ghana. Accordingly, citizens join political parties in return for different incentives, which include but are not limited to survival strategy, practical ends, immediate or remote incentives, and social and individual gains within Ghana (Bob-Milliar 2012). Political parties are, therefore, expected to meet the material motives of their members (Bob-Milliar 2012). Nonetheless, to receive these benefits, members are expected to significantly participate in the activities of the party either in kind or cash (Bob-Milliar 2012;

Luna 2015). Hence, the choice of candidates to represent various parties at all levels involves participation (Bob-Milliar 2012). In a study of political party financing, Luna (2015) found that party finance shapes political organization in the country; political party chairs demand money from politicians who want to contest elections. Failure to comply risks the wrath of these political party chairs and the chance to represent the party at national levels. Consequently, these elected officials collude with politicians, bureaucrats, construction contractors, and political-party chairs to extract financial resources from the state when they are elected. This is done through the public procurement process.

Furthermore, the Ghanaian compliance with formal rules and procedures is significantly higher in districts where voters demonstrate a weak commitment to political parties and *vice versa* (Asunka 2016)—therefore, adherence to formal rules and procedures during program and project implementation within the public sector may be weak. In consequence, politicians have a significant opportunity to manipulate the weaknesses in the accountability system and extract public resources for private ends.

The high clientelism in the country has created institutional bottlenecks within the public administration system (Amoako and Lyon 2014; Killick 2008). As such, access to public administration and institution are difficult, which results in the payment of bribes (Afrobarometer 2019). This may hinder the effective implementation of government programs and projects. The Ghanaian public administration system has been created by, and is controlled by, politics and politicians rather than qualified professionals—thus, it is a partisanship political administrative system (Damoah and Akwei 2017). The constitution of Ghana entrusts enormous powers to the president and, as a result, s/he appoints public institutional heads including all district and municipal chief executives (The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana). This is conducted in consultation with party executives (Luna 2015). Accordingly, all heads—including board members—of public institutions are appointed on political patronage (Luna 2015). Program and project management team leaders are appointed on the same basis; hence, government project leaders are expected to be loyal to the president and the party they represent. As a result, ethical issues in the awarding and management of programs and projects are not perceived to be as important—as portrayed by Heldman, Jansen, and Baca (2005)—to be followed during programs and projects implementation. There have been instances where a state official chairs a government project and becomes the sole supplier of materials for the project at a rate that is above the market rate (Takyi-Boadu 2011).

There may also be a cultural dimension for explaining public sector program and project abandonment. The role of the national culture in public sector program and project abandonment in Ghana may be traced to the Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimensions. Hofstede provided six dimensions for culture—power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence. Pursuant to this, GLOBE (an organization dedicated to the study of culture, leadership, and organizational effectiveness) puts countries

into clusters based on these cultural attributes espoused by Hofstede (Hoppe 2007). Using these six dimensions, the Ghanaian cultural attributes have been espoused in the following ways (see Appendix A for more details). In relation to power distance, the Ghanaian society is hierarchical in nature—practicing a master-servant relationship where the rich and those in authority, especially religious and political leaders, are revered (CIA 2015). This is in line with the findings of Asunka (2016), who identified that programs or project leaders who are political appointees could significantly influence government program and project abandonment. In addition, there is a very strong family bond, which serves as the primary source of identity, loyalty, and responsibility and, therefore, the country is regarded as feminine in terms of the masculinity dimension. This may affect the awarding and management of government programs and projects (The Hofstede Centre 2016). This national culture has translated into a political culture where political party members use the party as "family" and where they can get help, support, and identity (Bob-Milliar 2012).

There is also evidence that attitudes toward government work is poor. Some writers attribute this to cultural orientation during the colonial period, which could be linked to political-cultural orientation inherited from colonial times (Amponsah 2010; Damoah and Akwei 2017; Damoah, Akwei, and Mouzughi 2015). Amponsah (2010), for instance, traces Ghanaian government project failure to colonial rule when public sector work was perceived as belonging to the "Whiteman" and as such could be handled haphazardly. We propose that these political factors may lead to Ghanaian government programs and project abandonment.

Cases of Ghanaian Abandoned Projects in the Public Sector

There are several cases of abandoned programs and projects in Ghana and this study focuses on five of them: affordable housing projects, senior high school education reform, the national identification system project, community day school building projects, and Ghana @50 jubilee projects.

Affordable Housing Projects

One notable area of project abandonment is in the housing sector. There are insufficient houses for Ghanaian citizens and as such most of these citizens "sleep rough" in kiosks, tents, containers, shops, offices, etc. (homeless people) (Boamah 2010). Estimates show that Ghana's housing deficit is now two million units (Business News 2018). The houses that are available are mostly owned by private individuals and housing estate companies and not affordable for ordinary Ghanaians (Boamah 2010). Due to the magnitude of the housing issue, various government regimes have attempted to address this problem. For instance, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) administration, which held office between 2001 and 2009, proposed "affordable housing units" to solve the housing deficit in Borteyman and Kpone of the Greater Accra Region (Klutse 2009). The main

purpose of this project was to help those poor people living in very deplorable settlements to make the capital city and other major cities attractive (Boamah 2010), and also to create employment, especially for women. The project was abandoned soon after it started (Klutse 2009). In an attempt by the subsequent government, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), to address this housing problem, a similar project was started in 2010 but it had to be abandoned after parliamentary approval, lands given to developers, and a sod-cutting ceremony was performed by the president (Zoure 2011).

Senior High School Education Reform

Despite the improvements in education after the colonial era as a result of World Bank and IMF-supported projects (World Bank), the sector has witnessed program and project abandonment in educational reforms over the years. Many educational reform programs and projects have attempted to solve the educational problems since the first Republic of Ghana in 1961 (Nyarko 2011). These included the Kwapong 1974 and Dzobo 1972/1987 educational reform programs. Despite the huge sums of money spent on these programs and projects, the sector continues to suffer from many setbacks, including abandonment. A more recent failed program is the abandonment of the four-year Senior High School (SHS) education system. In 2002, a committee of 29 members—headed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Education-Winneba, Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah—was mandated to review the education system. The report led to the four-year SHS program/project which was implemented in 2007. At this time, the Ghanaian government, under the administration of NPP, then commenced the educational reform project to change the Senior Secondary Schools to Senior High Schools. The main changes here were an increase in study duration and the building of infrastructure to accommodate the extension of the duration. The project aimed to extend the three-year duration to four years (Modern Ghana 2013). After one-and-a-half years of implementation, the project was abandoned following a change in government.

National Identification System Project

Another high-profile project that has been abandoned in recent years is the National Identification System project. This was a project to issue identification (ID) cards for all nationals and foreign nationals residing in Ghana. It was set up in 2008 under the National Identification Authority. Evidence indicates that the national ID card project has been totally abandoned in terms of its objectives, while only partially abandoned in terms of its implementation. Thus, the issuing of the card has witnessed checkered history. Furthermore, a 2011 report indicated that issuing the ID cards had stopped and the very few that had been issued were not accepted as proof of ID in Ghanaian banks or by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (Kunateh 2014). Since then, successive governments to date have made attempts to revive the project but have not succeeded (Damoah and Akwei 2017). The most discouraging part of this was

the fact that the Electoral Commission, a government institution, has been registering and issuing voters' ID cards for voting in successive general elections up to the present day (Abissath 2012; Adams and Asante 2019). This registration and issue of new biometric voter ID cards for the various general elections is a clear indication of project abandonment.

Community Day School Building Projects

The Community Day SHS Buildings is a high-profile mega-project initiated by the Ghanaian central government in 2013 to address the school building infrastructure deficit in the SHS education. The main purpose was to build 200 Senior High Community Day Schools in rural communities to bridge the school building infrastructure gap between urban areas and rural dwellers (Republic of Ghana 2012). The government intended to introduce free SHS education and, as such, anticipated a further deficit in the infrastructure gap. However, after four years of implementation, the successes of these buildings have been mixed (Ahensah 2018; Republic of Ghana 2012). While some of them were completed, the majority of them have been abandoned. Specifically, of the proposed 200 community day senior high buildings, only 50 were completed. The remaining 150 were abandoned at various stages after change in government in 2016 (Ahensah 2018).

Ghana @50 Jubilee Projects

Another notable failure involves the Ghana @50 projects. In 2007, Ghana celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Independence from colonial rule. To commemorate the occasion and to provide a long-lasting legacy, the anniversary—among other objectives—earmarked various projects, which included the building of Jubilee Parks in all ten regional capitals, the construction of toilets in all local communities, and the building of 140 Golden Jubilee Kindergartens throughout the country (Central Newspaper 2012; Daily Guide 2011). However, reports indicate that most of these projects have either been abandoned or are not meeting the required standard and purpose of their usage. One clear example is the total abandonment of the Ghana @50 toilets (Central Newspaper 2012; Daily Guide 2011) and the Jubilee Parks (Daily Guide 2011). Regarding the toilet project, not even one of them is in use—they have been left in the bushes and were subsequently appropriated by squatters and "area boys" (gangsters) (Daily Guide 2011).

Method

The data for this study were collected using an in-depth semistructured interview to collate data from Project Management Practitioners (PMPs) in Ghana. Our intent was to elicit practitioner perceptions regarding the political reasons that account for Ghanaian government program and project

abandonment. The participants were purposely selected from the Ghana Business Directory (Ghana Business Directory 2014), and members of professional associations and institutions such as the Ghana Institute of Engineers, Ghana Association of Managers, Association of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors of Ghana, and the Chartered Institute of Project Management in Ghana. Purposive sampling was adopted as the researchers wanted to gather data from only those who had rich information concerning the subject under study. This sampling approach uses nonprobability sampling techniques.

As described by Patton (2002, 40), in this sampling approach, far less emphasis is placed on generalizing from a sample to a population and, therefore, greater attention is paid to a sample "purposely" selected for its potential to yield insight from its illuminative and rich information sources. The selection was based on the criteria that those selected would have a certain level of knowledge in the subject area being investigated, so information gathered would be reliable (Bryman 2012; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2012; Teddlie and Yu 2007). As a result of this, only practitioners who work for active and well-known companies were contacted to participate in the study. Moreover, only practitioners with a considerable amount of work experience and a significant number of years in program and project management practices were contacted to participate in the study. We also considered their academic background to ensure that participants had some level of academic and/or professional knowledge in program and project management and related fields. To ensure this, the researchers checked the profiles of the prospective participants through their company websites and via the Google search engine. Some were checked through their published work as well as on LinkedIn. The full demographic information is presented in Appendix B.

PMPs were experts who possess the technical know-how in relation to project management and can, therefore, provide expert opinions. They were directly involved in the implementation of government projects. We considered they also might be able to provide an independent opinion on government projects, as compared to other stakeholders such as the politicians and other, general, citizens. As stated by Bob-Milliar (2012), Asunka (2016), and Luna (2015), politicians and citizens have a strong attachment to their political parties and their government and their representatives. Therefore, these latter sets of stakeholders may provide opinions more biased than PMPs.

Prior to the full interview, initial pilot interviews were conducted to ensure that the interview "question guide" was appropriate. The panel consisted of three participants. By pretesting, the researchers followed the steps that Foddy (1994) prescribes should be followed to ensure the research questions' validity and reliability. This is also conforms with the recommendations made by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) on the three common approaches to ensuring the reliability of questions: tests and re-test, internal consistency, and alternative form. Data from the pilot interviews were also analyzed to ascertain if there was a need to make any amendments. After the analysis of the pilot interview, some questions were eliminated while others were added.

The full interview consisted of 30 participants. The number was not predetermined at the start of the data collection. In line with other studies using semi-structured interviews and as recommended by researchers such as Morse (2000), Hill and others (2005), Silverman (2013), and Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), this study used saturation: the point at which the data has been thoroughly optimized so that no new information emerges from participants. The researcher interviewed all the participants at their homes, offices, and construction sites. Participants were asked to provide their perception of "the political factors that led to Ghanaian government project abandonment." Interviews took place between June 2014-January 2015 and December 2016-February 2017. They were audio-recorded and were conducted in English (though participants could speak in their local language if they wished, none did). Each interview lasted between 30 and 50 minutes.

The data were analyzed using content and thematic techniques following the coding system suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008). The texts of the semi-structured interviews were analyzed with the use of words and were achieved with the help of NVivo10 software and Microsoft Word. This was based on two levels of codes: higher and lower. Higher-level codes were used to represent the main themes that explained the interpretation of the data (interpretivist tradition). The lower-level codes were used to further explain the higher-level ones. The lower and upper-level codes shared common content and dimensions that would collectively fall under one theme. The various codes were further coded according to their similarity or similar meanings. The last stage was further coded into the main themes. In all, we arrived at three major themes after coding and subcoding. The themes were analyzed in order of how often they were mentioned and the number of respondents who mentioned them. The three main themes under the political factors for Ghanaian government program and project abandonment are presented below; however, they are interrelated.

Findings and Discussions

The study's participants perceived several political factors that account for Ghanaian government program and project abandonment. Our data indicates that *partisanship politics*, *political clientelism*, and *political culture* account strongly for Ghanaian government program and project implementation failure and abandonment.

Partisanship Politics

First and foremost, partisanship politics is manifested in a political agenda when there is a change in government. All the interviewees agreed that, when there is a change in government, most former government programs and projects are abandoned due to the political agenda of the new government to meet their campaign promises. Respondents perceived that this happens

because such programs and projects will not be credited to the new party that assumes power. It was revealed that governments over the years have been more interested in winning the next general election rather than serving the interests of the nation, and, as such, each government intends to support its "own" programs and projects. Respondents perceived that "citizens in the country judge the government's performance based on its ability to successfully complete programs and projects" (R27).

A further question of *why* revealed the shared perception that most Ghanaians are illiterate and that they do not understand issues such as GDP, microand macro economics, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, the balance of payments, and other fiscal and monetary policies. What they care about instead are the programs and projects (especially the physical infrastructure) that they see. Respondents opined that this accounted for why a lot of commissioning and "cutting of sod" for government programs and projects take place in election years. One very experienced project practitioner stated that: "that is the reason why, when elections are close, a lot of projects are started, sods are cut, and projects commissioned in Ghana" (R2). Therefore, continuing the previous government's projects will mean that the current or incumbent government is not doing "*anything*." Accordingly,

> Successive governments over the years have been compelled to embark on their "own" programs and projects after coming into power instead of continuing the previous government-initiated ones. The people [citizens] are so illiterate that if you do not put up projects, especially infrastructure projects, [they] do not recognize whatever you do. All [that] they know is project, project, project. (R2)

Partisanship bias is further manifested in poor planning and implementation programs and projects. Our data indicate that Ghanaian government projects are not well planned, and this eventually leads to abandonment after initiation or halfway through the project life cycle. Respondents opined that poor planning happens at all stages of the project life cycle. Respondents cited many reasons that account for the poor planning and implementation of Ghanaian government programs or projects; reasons they saw as interrelated. They link this to the political leadership of programs and projects. First, they said that, in some programs or projects, leaders are appointed based on political patronage rather than technical know-how and, therefore, they lack the technical know-how to implement them—which leads to abandonment as they are unable to complete them. Second, respondents perceived that the government often starts many more programs and projects than it can finance. All respondents agreed that this is a fundamental reason for the abandonment of Ghanaian government programs and projects. In the words of R14: "Sometimes, instead of finishing one program or project before starting another, the government starts several of them at the same time, for fear that other districts may complain about the government not carrying out programs or projects in their community."

This finding is supported by an earlier study conducted by Tennant and Clayton (2010) on infrastructural project implementation in Jamaica, which concluded that the project faced serious and long-term challenges due to the political decisions of the government. Despite the supporting evidence that suggested that the project was not viable, the government went ahead with it. Closely related to the poor planning of program and project funding is an allocation of the funds to various government programs and projects—in other words, budgeting. The reason here is that they fail to carry out proper budgeting for these programs and projects before starting them. One interviewee opined that:

> I think generally it [is] because of poor planning… that relates to the funding. Elsewhere you realize that, when projects are conceived, budgetary allocation is fixed: if you do not have that budget allocation, no one even asks you to tender; but here, the perception is that the money is there—you go ahead and we will pay—and, somewhere in between, the government with the financial institutions will get short of funding. And then everybody will be looking at the [small amount of] funds that come through. (R16)

Furthermore, it was revealed that the government (or political parties) makes unrealistic campaign promises concerning programs and projects without knowing how they are going to obtain the requisite funds. They start such programs and projects as soon as they assume power without making adequate financial planning. "In doing so, they rely on donor promises, so if donors fail them, the projects have to come to a halt or [are] abandoned altogether. The government starts more projects than it can finance. There is a poor budgetary allocation for projects in the country" (R6).

Finally, respondents perceived that poor feasibility studies lead to poor planning. This is because, once there is a poor feasibility study, what the whole program/project is about might not be known before its initial planning of how the project(s) will be carried out; hence, an incorrect plan might be drawn up. This is also linked to campaign promises, as discussed above. Thus, because politicians have made campaign promises to embark on programs and projects, they are compelled to execute such promises without properly conducting feasibility studies.

Poor planning has been identified as a source of program/project failure by researchers such as Odeyinka and Yusif (1997), Odeh and Battaineh (2002), Assaf and Al-Hejji (2006), Pourrostam and Ismail (2011), and Pinto (2013). However, these were discussed in relation to the practitioners (technocrats) or the practicing organization while this study is focused on political leadership failure to plan properly due to political factors. In addition, one reason cited by respondents is the inability of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to justify why donor agencies should disburse program and project funds. According to R12,

> Donor agencies do not normally give out the entire money for the implementation of government programs and projects but disburse it in bits.

> The disbursements are tied to project performance and progress. However, in most cases, MDAs are unable to justify why donors should disburse such funds to projects because, often times, such projects are behind schedule or are not being used for what they were purported for.

The data indicate that the government (MDAs) diverts programs and project funds to other activities and, as a result, is unable to account for such funds in the name of the program or project in question. When this happens, the government has to look for money from somewhere else to continue the program or project to the level at which the donors would be willing to disburse money and, if the government is unable to come up with such funds, then the program or project has to be abandoned.

Political Clientelism

Programs and projects are often halted due to political clientelism (Yıldırım and Kitschelt 2020) because politicians want to terminate the existing contracts and re-award them to party members as soon as they come into power. This is often a difficult process that involves many legal procedures, and sometimes the contractor whose contract is being terminated feels cheated because s/he does not "belong" to the party in power. The aggrieved person often sues the government, and the court outcomes have resulted in what is popularly known as "gargantuan" government debt payments (Bawumia 2014, 2015). One contractor (R8) stated that:

> One project had been in place for over seven years and it had come to a halt because the government officials wanted to re-award it, based on noncompletion, but before they could do that, the current contractor had to sign documents proving noncompletion. However, because it was not his fault, he decided not to sign, which led to the project being abandoned.

This finding is echoed by Richard Jeffries' (1982) study of Rawlings and the political economy of underdevelopment in Ghana. This research found that different regimes over the years dating back to the colonial and post-colonial eras have pursued different government programs and projects through different ideologies, but some of them were abandoned after regime change (Jeffries 1982). Typical examples are those industrialization policies pursued by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, and the "Operation Feed Yourself" program pursued by Ignatius Kutu Acheampong in the 1970s (Aryeetey and Harrigan 2000; Girdner *et al*. 1980).

Another dimension of social benefits clientelism involves politically inspired programs and projects rather than people- or community-inspired ones. Respondents believe that the main reason for the lack of project patronage at both *project management* and *product* levels is when programs and projects are inspired by the government (politicians) instead of the community where they

are being implemented. Respondents said that government officials often fail to carry out proper feasibility studies concerning where programs and projects are needed. They fail to do so because of campaign promises. As a result, the government implements programs and projects in certain places simply because politicians have promised to provide a specific number of programs or projects and they should implement such programs/projects. Politicians, therefore, "dump" programs and projects on local communities. If this happens, government officials would have no option but to abandon the project or program.

Some respondents (R1, R2, R7, R10, R13, R16 R20, R27, and R30) said that, when a project is a community-inspired one, then stakeholder participation is normally strong. Moreover, if a project is a government-inspired one or one that is initiated from national, regional, district, or municipal level, then stakeholder participation is weak—often leading to abandonment. As a result, "the beneficiaries sometimes pose a threat to the project's success, both at the management level and at the product level" (R27)—resulting in a failure to use the project's deliverables. The result is again the abandonment of such programs or projects. Unlike in a collectivist society (see Ferragina 2009), these findings echo amoral familism, where the society can be likened to a nuclear family. As such the society is run like a family with collective efforts toward a common (Banfield 1958). The implication is that, despite the government projects being a public project, they may be perceived by a section of the community as belonging to a small "nuclear" family of political parties executing the projects. As such, they may lack the public support needed in the execution of public sector project.

Furthermore, preferential access to public (or quasi-public) employment clientelism leads to a lack of capacity to adequately implement government projects and programs. This likewise leads to abandonment. The lack of capacity was explained by respondents to mean two things: skill or knowledge and material resources. However, the emphasis was placed more on the former as the focus of the interview was on political reasons for program and project abandonment. Respondents argued that most government program and project leaders lack the knowledge to carry out such duties (R1, R2, R3, R4, R7, R9, R10, and R13). This happens mainly due to preferential access to public or quasi-public employment clientelism (R2, R10, R15, R18, R19, and R26), or by virtue of unqualified people occupying certain management and/or leadership positions due to their affiliation with the party in power (R6). Program and project leaders who are government-appointed officials are appointed on a political basis rather than on their own merits, and that is not about competence but the political party to which a person belongs. It was further revealed that, due to lack of knowledge, leaders of these programs engage themselves in activities that result in litigation; hence, projects or programs being abandoned. This finding echoed the work of Hwang and Ng (2013), which argues that a competent project manager is vital to project success, and that having a good project leader is vital to a project's

performance. Similarly, Gomes, Yasin, and Small (2012) established that a project manager's skills have a significant influence on the success of a project's implementation. However, these leadership problems are related to political and/or government official leadership lacking the requisite technical know-how rather than linked to qualified staff who execute the projects as contractors or PMPs, as espoused by Hwang and Ng (2013) and Gomes, Yasin, and Small in their studies. In the case of Ghanaian society—which is more of feminine society (The Hofstede Centre 2016)—political parties are perceived as a (nuclear) family (Banfield 1958; Damoah and Akwei 2017) and, as such, political party members are treated like family members in the awarding of government projects. In this way, project leadership and management positions are appointed on the basis of a "family" political patronage that may lead to abandonment, due to lack of required project management skills.

Additionally, political clientelism is manifested through political corruption, mostly through public works/procurement clientelism. All the respondents identified corruption as one of the factors for government program and project abandonment. According to them, corruption has become part of Ghanaian government program and project implementation, and the act has become a "norm" (R9), and even an "open secret" (R1, R5, R9, R15, R16, R18, R19, R22, R24, and R26). Participants cited numerous reasons for corruption in government project abandonment and perceived that all these corrupt practices happened due to how politicians and project leaders "play" politics with implementation through the public works/procurement clientelism.

> My brother, everything in Ghana is about politics. Politicians play politics with every government project—even those projects that are engineered by donor agencies are run by politicians. You know what, some of these politicians do not know anything about projects and programs but, because their party is in power, they would control the project and play politics with it… they would not allow the technocrats to implement the project. (R30)

> Even the so-called technocrats are political appointees and therefore they go there (occupying such position) with the aim of helping their respective parties who appointed them. (R17)

One major underlining reason cited by respondents concerned the bureaucratic procedures involved in the government program and project implementation process that lead to corrupt practices. Due to the numerous channels that contractors have to go through to obtain their payment, they have to do several "follow-ups." And, to "speed up the payment" process, they make "under the table" payments to government officials (R1, R7, R4, R20, and R28). The slow pace and delays in the payment process, therefore, compel contractors to offer bribes in return for quick payment. These bureaucratic procedures, according to the respondents, have been created by politicians so that they can benefit from corrupt activities. The interviewees attributed this to politicians in

that they deliberately create such a slow pace coupled with a lot of paperwork, so that "you would be compelled to give [a] 'brown envelope' to them; I believe you know what [a] brown envelope is… bribe, you know" (R25). In the words of R22,

> Politicians and civil servants who are mainly party members deliberately make the procurement and other paperwork so long and bureaucratic, so that you would have no choice than to do follow up. The follow-up means that you have to have "connections" with an insider who would lead you, otherwise forget it. I have a lot of personal experience; it is the naked truth, but no one would admit it. You are afraid to admit [it] because you do not know whom you are talking to… if the media gets to know of it, they would bring your company and the government down, so you have to deny it.

These institutional bottlenecks are major factors that stifle public administration. The data also revealed that, not only are the contractors compelled to pay, but the political leaders of the programs and projects specifically demand bribes before awarding contracts.

In addition, 20 (R1, R3, R4, R5, R8, R9, R10, R11, R14, R15, R16, R17, R18, R19, R20, R21, R22, R23, R24, and R25) out of the 30 respondents stated that it has become a norm for contractors to informally pay 10 percent of the contract sum to government officials to win a contract, and it is practically impossible for contractors to be awarded a contract if they fail to make such payments. Further to this, when contracts are being awarded, there are "unofficial middlemen" (R9) between government officials and contractors, and these men take money from both sides, to "link them up" for a contract deal. According to respondent R9,

> Sometimes contracts are awarded before the official bidding for the contract. If this corrupt act happens, government officials are unable to ensure that the projects have been completed. My brother, everybody knows this, but the politicians and contractors would deny [it] in public—I believe you should know this already. You can even ask a class 1 pupil and they would tell you the same thing. We have [a] serious problem in this country and I do not know how we can stop this; if you do not pay, others would go and pay.

Indeed, corruption has become a hot topic in Ghana in recent years (Addo ; Bawumia 2014, 2015; Imani Ghana 2014; Mark 2015), even though the phenomenon has been endemic in the public administration of the country for a long time (Jeffries 1982). The results of this research confirms public opinion concerning this. The finding is also congruent with Transparency International and other media reports concerning corruption in the country (Sanders 2015). Afrobaromter reports over the years also indicate that the fight against corruption in the country is on the decline (Afrobarometer 2019). More than half (53 percent) of Ghanaians in 2018 perceived that the level of

corruption in the country had risen in the past year, a 17-percentage-point increase compared to the 2017 survey (Afrobarometer 2019). However, the previous literature on corruption in Ghana has predominantly been reports, lectures, and media reports (Addo ; Bawumia 2015; Ghanaian Chronicle 2012; Imani Ghana 2014; Sanders 2015). This finding adds an academic dimension to the literature.

Corruption intensifies due to the public works clientelism in government programs and projects because contracts are often given to family and political party members to reward them for their loyalty to the political party in government and to use profits made from such programs and projects to fund the party.

> Do you think, you can get [a] government project contract if you are not related to any politician or people in [a] high position? Didn't you hear that the majority leader in parliament described the Mahama-led government as family and friends; oh sorry, you don't live in the country. This came from the government's own party parliamentarian because he felt all the key ministerial appointments are being given to only family members and people close to the president and his wife. (R24)

This finding confirms the study conducted by Luna (2015), which concluded that party members collude with government officials and contractors to syphon government funds through construction contracts and then, they pay back in the form of kickbacks. The participants stated that, because contracts are awarded on a family and political affiliation basis, contractors can abandon such programs and projects without fear of arrest and/or prosecution. In agreement with partisanship and political theories (Lebamoff 2019), this finding suggests that being affiliated with the government's political party serves as a leeway for unaccountable political stewardship (Putnam 1971).

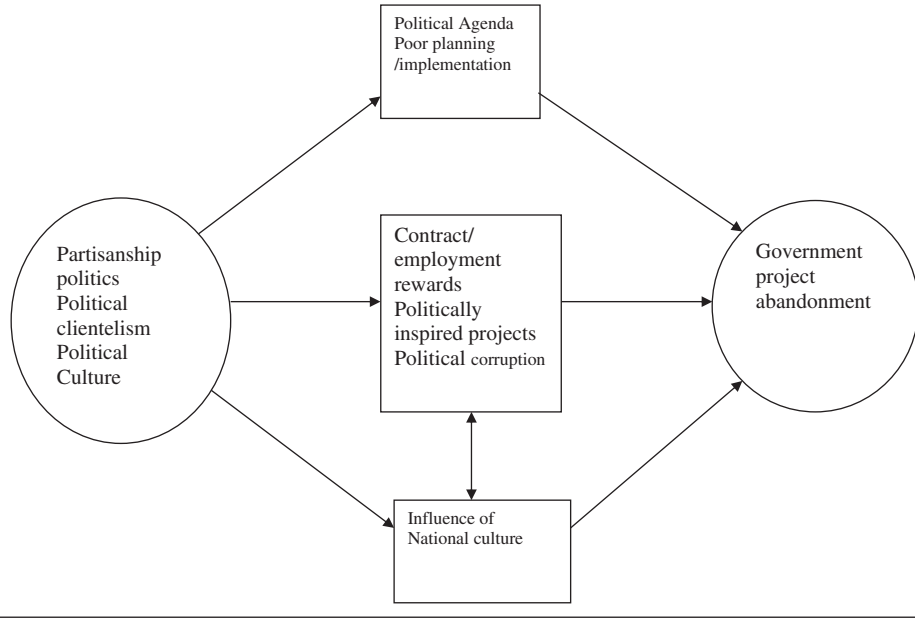
It was revealed that, sometimes, political party members are encouraged through their party leadership to set up companies specifically to execute such programs and projects, and, therefore, the companies may not have the competence and track record to merit the award of such contracts. Therefore, they are unable to successfully complete such programs and projects; hence, abandonment. For instance, R20 opined that:

> Did you hear of Better Ghana Company? It was all over the news that this company was set up purposely to undertake government projects when the NDC came to power in 2009. You know that Better Ghana Agenda was the slogan of the NDC; it even came up in the Auditor General Report and [was shown] on television, so I can confidently mention names. This company took the projects, but they did not execute any project and, as I am speaking to you now, no one has been punished.

Political Culture/National Culture

Projects and programs are abandoned due to Ghana's political and national cultures. Two of the participants interviewed (R9 and R10) opined that, sometimes, government officials appoint their own family members to lead programs and projects when they are not qualified to do so. Here, Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimension concerning Ghana is in evidence: the Ghanaian culture is characterized by family unity and bonds, and as such anybody occupying a higher position, such as those in the political hierarchy in society, are expected to help their family members if they are to be recognized in society. The implication of this, according to our respondents, is that they can do whatever they want and get off scot-free; hence, they are able to abandon programs and projects. This finding can be traced to the national culture of Ghanaians as espoused by the Hofstede Centre (2016)—there is a very strong family bond, which serves as the primary source of identity, loyalty, and responsibility. This explains why program and project contracts are awarded based on family and political patronage instead of on merit. Similarly, this finding agrees with an earlier study conducted by Bob-Milliar (2012), which found that citizens in the country join and participate in political activities in exchange for tangible and intangible benefits and/or material incentives. This finding indicates that those benefiting from such government contracts may be mostly the political elite of the incumbent political party (Putnam 1971). Figure 1 systematizes the relation between the political factors behind project abandonment in Ghana discussed above as they emerged from the respondents' interviews.

Figure 1.
The Influence of Politics on Ghanaian Government Project Abandonment



Conclusions

This article sought to examine how political factors can create or contribute to conditions that lead to government project abandonment, focusing on the Ghanaian government's programs and projects. The study shows that politics, particularly partisan politics, play a key role in Ghanaian government project abandonment. We identified three major political factors that lead to abandonment: partisanship politics, political clientelism, and political culture. These are manifested in the political agenda, in political corruption (corruption in government), and through poor planning and implementation (due to politics).

These political factors were linked to partisan politics and political clientelism, where program and project contracts are awarded based on political patronage rather than on merit. Likewise, program and project leaders are appointed based on party patronage; hence, the aim of such leaders is to satisfy the party hierarchy that appointed them. This leads to the appointment of leaders who lack the capacity or skill to carry out these programs and projects and, ultimately, to project abandonment. Change in government and political agenda were found to be major reasons for program and project abandonment. The general perception offered by our interviewees was that continuing previous government programs and projects implies that, during a general election, voters may not vote for the incumbent because they have no projects or programs to show; hence, politicians are compelled to start their own project/programs with which they can be associated and for which they expect the credit. The underlining reason is that many Ghanaians are illiterate and, therefore, do not understand economic issues such as fiscal and monetary policies. Therefore, the only benchmark they use to assess government performance is program and project performance.

The political culture could be traced to the cultural orientation of the Ghanaians, as espoused by Hofstede (1983), where people in authority are supposed to support their family and friends in exchange for recognition within the family. Being part of a political party in Ghana is like being part of a family. Therefore, leaders reward their party faithfully with the award of contracts. However, in most cases these family, friends, and the party faithful might not possess the requisite technical know-how needed to carry out such projects; hence, abandonment.

We identified corruption in government as a major form of political clientelism that has led to the abandonment of Ghanaian government programs and projects. This is linked to government officials making demands from contractors before awarding such contracts as well as awarding contracts on party patronage; hence, they are unable to enforce the successful completion of programs and projects. Contractors who are mainly party members can, therefore, abandon programs and projects without being punished.

Poor planning and implementation of the programs is thus based on partisanship politics and mainly relate to poor budgeting and starting more

projects than the country can finance, thereby relying on foreign donors. The implication is that, if donors fail to provide funding support, then such programs and projects would have to be abandoned. Furthermore, politicians make unrealistic campaign promises concerning programs and projects. They are thus compelled to embark on these programs and projects without carrying out proper feasibility studies, thereby dumping them on local people; hence, there is a lack of patronage, which leads to abandonment.

Contributions to Theory

The literature indicates that government programs and projects are indispensable in the development of every nation (Alic 2008; Eichengreen and Varquez 1999). Yet some of these programs and projects have failed through abandonment (Fabian and Attaran 2011; Kumar and Best 2006), and in developing countries abandonment has become a rule rather than an exception (Central Press Newspaper 2013; Clausen and Attaran 2011; Kumar and Best 2006; Zoure 2011). Abandoned government programs and projects have been discussed in relation to the general factors that lead to abandonment (Clausen and Attaran 2011; Kumar and Best 2006). We nevertheless offer a novel finding and a framework on how political clientelism and partisanship politics impact on the abandonment of public sector projects in the context of a developing country. We hope this can be used to deepen our understanding of the role of politics in public sector projects management, to extend the public policy and management literature, and to encourage further research, theorization, and teaching.

Contributions to Practice

This study also has several practical implications. First, the findings indicate that all the factors are either directly or indirectly linked to politics, particularly party politics, and, therefore, are interrelated. The implication here is that the management of Ghanaian government programs and projects need to harness the skills necessary to manage those politicians leading such programs or projects if they are to be successful in implementing programs and projects in Ghana—and this is the case for developing countries in general. The suggestion is that programs and projects should be managed by experts with the necessary qualification rather than being managed through political patronage. An independent body devoid of party politics is required to oversee project management. The part which should be certified by government officials should constitute both the incumbent and the opposition members of parliaments—thus, bi-partisanship participation.

Additionally, Ghanaian government programs and projects should not be based on a party manifesto; they should be based on national policy directives. In this case, all political parties, civil societies, and policy think tanks should meet to devise a national agenda on program and project implementation. This should subsequently be subject to parliamentary approval. The basic model

should become national development policy—so that individual political party manifestos rest on how they can achieve the national agenda rather than coming up with their own manifesto on programs and projects. This, we suggest, would ensure continuity of programs and projects after a change of government.

To ensure proper planning to avoid program and project abandonment, governments need to ensure that funds are available and released from donor agencies before a program or project commences. It can also be suggested that, apart from national programs or projects, the government should allow local communities to initiate their own local programs or projects rather than these being "dumped" on them. Government representatives at the local level should play an advisory role rather than taking the lead. This will allow local ownership of programs and projects; hence, local participation and patronage of project deliverables.

Of course, the main limitation of this research has been the use of a purposive sampling technique in the selection of the participants. This means that findings may not be generalizable. However, this is an exploratory study that sought to espouse the phenomenon of corruption in the implementation of government program and project abandonment.

APPENDIX A.
Ghanaian Cultural Dimension

Table A1. Hofstede 6-D Model

Cultural Dimensions	Scores (%)	Ghanaian Cultural Attributes
Power Distance	80	Acceptance of hierarchical order in society and organizations
Individualism	15	Collectivist society
Masculinity	40	Relatively feminine society
Uncertainty Avoidance	65	Prefer to avoid uncertainty
Long-Term Orientation	4	Great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results
Indulgence	72	Willingness to realize their impulses
		The desire to enjoy life and having fun
		Places a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish

Source: The Hofstede Centre (2016).

APPENDIX B.
Interview Participants' Profiles

Table B1. Interview Participants' Profiles

Respondent	Age	Education	Years of Experience in Current Position	Work Experience in Project Management	Overall Work Experience	Industry	Sector
R1 (Administrator)	33	Masters	5	8	8	Health care	Public
R2 (Consultant & Lecturer)	46	PhD/Professional	15	15	21	General	Public & Private
R3 (Architect)	37	BA/PgD/Professional	4	10	10	General	Public
R4 (Structural Engineer)	40	BA/Professional	4	14	14	General	Public
R5 (Quantity Surveyor)	39	BA/Professional	15	15	15	General	Public
R6 (Physical & Works Director)	55	Masters/Professional	1	32	32	Education	Public
R7 (Project Manager)	47	BA/Professional	3	15	18	General	Public & Private
R8 (Civil Engineer)	41	Masters/Professional	5	10	13	Construction	Public & Private
R9 (Project Co-ordinator)	55	Masters	10	15	26	General	Public & Private
R10 (Consultant)	60	PhD/Professional	15	25	30	General	Public & Private
R11 (Deputy Administrator)	35	BA/Professional	3	7	10	Construction	Private
R12 (Architect)	39	Masters	4	5	11	General	Public & Private
R13 (Finance & Administrative Director)	27	Masters	4	15	15	Construction	Public
R14 (Director)	45	A-Level	7	7	25	Construction	Public & private
R15 (Real Estate Developer)	62	A-Level	35	35	40	Construction	Private & Public

Continued

Table B1. (Continued)

Respondent	Age	Education	Years of Experience in Current Position	Work Experience in Project Management	Overall Work Experience	Industry	Sector
R16 (CEO & Administrator)	55	Masters/Professional	1	32	32	General	Private & Public
R17 (Project Coordinator)	50	BA	2	2	27	General	Public
R18 (CEO)	45	BA/PgD/Professional	10	17	20	General	Public
R19 (Consultant & Chairperson)	60	BA/Professional	5	40	40	General	Public
R20 (Project Coordinator)	50	BA	2	2	27	General	Public
R21 (Project Manager)	61	Masters	7	15	37	ICT	Private & Public
R22 (Project and Programmes Consultant & Lecturer)	57	PhD/Professional	12	15	32	ICT	Public & Private
R23 (Architect)	37	BA/Professional	4	10	10	General	Public
R24 (Structural Engineer)	40	BA/Professional	4	14	14	General	Public
R25 (CEO & Financial Director)	38	Diploma	10	7	10	Construction	Public & Private
R26 (Banker)	31	BA	5	5	7	Banking	Public
R27 (Civil Engineer)	45	Masters/Professional	7	25	25	Construction	Public & Private
R28 (Coordinator & Deputy Director)	42	Diploma	10	19	19	Education	Public & Private
R29 (Project Foreman/ Supervisor)	45	BSc	5	15	15	Health care	Public & Private
R30 (Project Manager)	45	BSc/Professional	7	10	25	Construction	Public & Private

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