

The Legacy of J.J. Rawlings in Ghanaian Politics, 1979-2000

JOHN L. ADEDEJI

Abstract: Jerry John Rawlings, Ghana's leader since the December 31, 1981 coup until the 2000 elections, was a Flight Lieutenant in the Air Force and a militant populist when he led the first coup of June 4, 1979, that overthrew the regime of Gen. Fred Akuffo, who had, in turn, deposed his predecessor, Gen. I.K. Acheampong, in a palace coup. According to Shillington (1992), Rawlings was convinced that after one year of the Akuffo regime, nothing had been changed and the coup amounted to a "waste of time," and "it was then up to him to change not only the status quo, but also put the country back on track."¹

Rawlings, unlike many other leaders in Ghana's history, subsequently led the country through the difficult years of economic recovery and succeeded in giving back to Ghanaians their national pride. Chazan (1983) observes "without Rawlings' strength of character and unwavering determination, Ghana would not have survived the Economic Recovery Programs (ERPs) of the 1980s put in place by the ruling Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)."² Rawlings saw his leadership role to be that of a "watchdog" for ordinary people and he addressed problems of incompetence, injustice and corruption.

Rawlings also instituted a transition from authoritarianism to multi-party democracy by attempting to decentralize the functions of government from Accra to other parts of the country.³ When the PNDC established the People's Defence Committees (PDCs), a system of cooperatives, it became a unique move never before seen in Ghana's political economy.

Introduction

In theory, the process of political change, begun in 1982 by Rawlings and the PNDC, was a "bottom up" strategy to ensure the involvement of citizens in nation building. This stance resulted in the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution, the formation of political parties, the holding of elections in 1992 and 1996, and the building of a rural (including grassroots) political base in Ghana. One of the most distinctive characteristics in Ghanaian politics was that the Rawlings regime's commitment to liberal economic reform after 1983 did change its commitment to PNDC's original mandate. Before the implementation of Ghana's ERP, the Rawlings regime pursued radical economic redistribution policies by courting the support of low-income classes.

The shift in political ideology - a free market approach - would, however, lead to tension between the government and its previous allies, such as labor unions and student organizations. Consequently, in order for Rawlings' PNDC to successfully manage and

John Adedeji is with the Doctoral Program at the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v5/v5i2a1.pdf>

maintain neo-classical economic policies, despite the aforementioned opposition, the regime had to insulate itself from powerful social groups and deal with social opposition through: (1) coercion, (2) weak institutional structure, and (3) heavy dosage of financial assistance from internal donors, who were intent on making Ghana a "show piece" in the sub-Saharan region while implementing IMF and World Bank conditionalities, as prescribed by the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs).

In 1992, Ghana held both presidential and parliamentary elections. Rawlings, who had initially resisted multi-party politics, was elected a democratic president and his National Democratic Congress (NDC) won an overwhelming parliamentary majority. The next elections were held in December 1996 and this marked a milestone in the fledgling democracy in Ghana; for the first time in the country's political history, an elected government actually completed its term in office, had an election contest, and secured a renewed mandate in a democratic manner. Through it all, the constant theme in Ghana's political and economic development has a lot to do with the Rawlings factor.

This article reviews the achievements (and by extension, the legacy) of J.J. Rawlings since 1983, as he entrenched the leadership role of a "watchdog" for ordinary people by addressing the problems of incompetence, injustice and corruption; instituted a transition from authoritarianism to multi-party democracy; led Ghana through the difficult years of economic recovery; and succeeded in giving back to Ghanaians their national pride.

The approach used to assess the Rawlings legacy in this article is that of a case study. According to Harry Eckstein (1992), a "single case study can have powerful, and even conclusive theoretical results," for other African nations.⁴ Ghana's experience as a nation lends itself to a historically sensitive method since it reveals causal consequences and shows how they relate to existing political and economic reforms.

THE TWO COUPS

The political situation in Ghana after the first coup led by FI. Lt. J.J. Rawlings on June 4, 1979 remained fluid at best. In order to bring about normalcy, a 15-member Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was established, Rawlings was made the Chairman and the rest of the AFRC was a careful balance of junior- and middle-rank officers of the military. One of the decisions taken by the AFRC, according to Chazan (1983), was that the parliamentary and presidential elections would proceed as planned on June 18, 1979 but that the handing over of power would be postponed for three months to October 1, 1979, to allow the AFRC to "complete its task of house cleaning."⁵

The new AFRC government tried to clear up corruption in all walks of life, especially the kalabule system (the "black" or "parallel" market) which had affected the cost of living and which the state suspected to be responsible for the spiraling inflation in Ghana. In fact, the shortages and low production of the past regime were the causes. Much of Rawlings' energy and activity in those hectic months, however, was bound up with talking with people whom he constantly urged to be aware that this was their revolution and it was they who were calling their past rulers to account for their past deeds, and that the future of Ghana was in their hands. Rawlings and the AFRC carried out public executions of 3 former heads of state and other

senior officers without trial. These actions evoked awareness amongst Ghanaians that this regime was not like any other, and that the new leaders meant business. But these actions were to haunt the Rawlings government later.

To the amazement of most foreign observers, the elections were held on schedule under conditions of unexpected calm and fairness. On July 8, the People's National Party (PNP), led by Dr. Hilla Limann (a Nkrumah stalwart) won the elections, and then there began a process for the transfer of power. At the end of August, Rawlings reflected that since he was confident that the "house cleaning" began by the AFRC would be continued by the Limann administration, he would be handing over power a week early on September 24, 1979. Paul Nugent (1995) reflected on the admonitions of Rawlings to Limann at the inauguration ceremony of the Third Republic with this famous quotation: "...never lose sight of the new consciousness of the Ghanaian people."⁶

Those words by Rawlings would form the basis for his second coming, not only as the leader of the 31 December coup, which toppled the weak and ineffective Limann administration, but also the leader of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) regime, the progenitor of the dual transition program in Ghana. To inaugurate the "second coming," Rawlings stated:

"Fellow Ghanaians, as you will notice, we are not playing the national anthem. In other words, this is not a coup. I ask for nothing less than a REVOLUTION - something that will transform the social and economic order of this country. Fellow citizens, it is now left to you to decide how this country is going to go from today. We are asking for nothing more than the power to organize this country in such a way that nothing will be done from the Castle without the consent and authority of the people. In other words, the people, the farmers, the police, the soldiers, the workers you - the guardians- rich or poor, should be part of the decision-making process of this country."⁷

The Rawlings address, given at the Broadcasting House in Accra December 31, 1981, launched his second coming as the head of a military government in Ghana. According to Shillington (1992), one of the directives of that speech was the setting up of People's Defense Committees (PDCs) in the workplace and in every district out and village, so that the decision-making in Ghana would not continue to be the preserve of politicians, who had previously ruled Ghana under the most corrupt regime. This move was seen as a precursor for a decentralization policy in Ghana; its implementation, however, was another matter.

The 31 December coup had been expected for some time, as there were several plots emerging during the early weeks of December 1981, and many had looked to Rawlings for leadership. This time, however, Rawlings wanted to have control of the military ranks from the beginning. Events in the country almost ground to a halt because of the coup, but by January 2, 1982, life was returning to normal. Rawlings then made a second but lengthier broadcast on radio and television, in which he set out in more detail the purpose and direction of the 31 December revolution. He said:

"Good evening, fellow countrymen. The attempt to justify the action of 31 December, 1981, would not presuppose that we Ghanaians do not know and feel what had been going on since September 24, 1979. Briefly, it has been nothing short of a clear denial of our fundamental rights as a people to enjoy the wealth of our labor. This has been the most disgraceful government in

the history of our country. It is the only one in recent times that criminals and such others like them have become respectable in our society. They have turned our hospitals into graveyards and our clinics into death transit camps where men, women and children die daily because of lack of drugs and basic equipment. To many of us, democracy does not just mean paper guarantees of abstract liberties. It involves, above all, food, clothing, and shelter in the absence of which life is not worth living.

"Fellow Ghanaians, the time has come for us to restructure this society in a real and meaningful democratic manner so as to ensure the involvement and active participation of the people in the decision-making process."⁸

With that broadcast, Rawlings achieved three things. First, he announced the creation and assumption of power by the PNDC as the governing authority in Ghana. Second, he used it to explain the kind of "real" democracy that his group envisioned for Ghana as opposed to the former experiment with democracy that provided him and his colleagues the justification for seizing power. Third, he used the speech to establish a new political system based on a model of revolutionary socialism which would ensure an active participation of the people in the decision-making process.

THE DUAL TRANSITION PROGRAM

Dual transition is a combination of economic and political development. Okome (1999), for instance, observes that the actors involved in the politics of Nigerian economic policy-making, during its dual transition program, could be classified into two main categories. One set of forces, she says, was external but relevant to the reproduction of the economy, and the other was domestic and located within the state, economy and society. The external forces include the private international creditors organized in the London Club and the official creditors organized in the Paris Club, the IMF and the World Bank. They recommend Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) as the "ideal solution" to the problem of balance of payments crises and indebtedness. The domestic forces, in contrast, included the various sectors, classes and associations, as well as the state elite, who are prone to the same cleavages that divide society. Okome concluded that the domestic forces are divided between the opponents and supporters of SAP.⁹ In Ghana, the political wrangling between the PNDC-led government of Rawlings and other political organizations almost derailed the movement toward economic reform and democracy during the 1980s and 1990s. It didn't occur. In Nigeria it did, so there may be lessons for Nigeria (and other African states) in Ghana's experience.

There is no agreement on the nature of the relationship between economic and political reforms. In the case of Ghana, it is not clear why the dual transition program embarked upon in the 1980s and early 1990s failed or succeeded. Nonetheless, the dual transition program put in place by the PNDC-led government of Rawlings would stay the course and yield some good results. Under a committee headed by Kwesi Botchwey, a Harvard-educated lawyer, the government outlined and submitted a four-year Economic Recovery Program (ERP) in 1983.

According to Leith and Lofchie (1993), among the reasons the Rawlings government chose to proceed with an official policy of structural adjustment was the fact that so many of Ghana's domestic prices, including those paid by government agencies, had already risen to reflect

scarcity in the price of foreign exchange. The excess demand pressure for foreign exchange under the previous regime, they observed, was bottled up by quantitative restrictions on imports and delayed international trade payments. Furthermore, the domestic prices of most imports reflected the scarcity of foreign exchange rather than the official exchange rate. Devaluation would mean that the official local currency price of foreign exchange would rise toward the scarcity value of foreign exchange, but the scarcity value of foreign exchange would be unaffected in the short run. The de facto price adjustments that preceded official adjustments, they argued, also paved the way for an official change of policy, and devaluation would not have changed the price structure of importable goods, whose prices had already increased in the market place to reflect the diminished real value of the cedi (the Ghanaian currency).¹⁰

EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION AND RAWLINGS' AUTHORITARIAN RULE

When the PNDC regime instituted economic stabilization policies in 1982, it was aware of its tendency to weaken support for the government, especially since IMF stabilization is a euphemism for "political and social stabilization." Conventional wisdom dictates a linkage between economic stringency and loss of social and political support; structural adjustment often requires careful political management as it involves economic costs that would benefit certain groups and hurt others. Furthermore, identifying the social groups whose interests would be hurt or promoted by liberal economic policy is a crucial calculation of political risks.

Ghana's liberal economic reform was implemented under authoritarian rule. After Rawlings took power by a military coup in 1981, no national elections were held until 1992. The presidential election was full of malpractice, including the accuracy of voters' register and the use of state resources for assisting government candidate's campaign. This led the opposition leaders to not only reject Rawlings' victory but to boycott subsequent parliamentary elections in which the candidates of opposition parties may have won many seats. Also, the PNDC was transformed into the National Democratic Congress (NDC) after the disputed presidential election in December 1992. As Jeong (1995) shows, because of the continued monopoly of power in one party, the 1992 elections have not resulted in any significant changes in government policies and its relationship to major social groups and external economic forces.¹¹

Under structural adjustment, business groups benefited from price liberalization that generated profit margins. The influence of external interest increased under economic liberalization, including donor agencies and multi-national corporations (MNCs), especially on key sectors, since they are often viewed as representatives of foreign interests whose main objectives are to dominate less developed countries (LDCs) and entrench their monopolistic positions in Africa.

On the other side of the spectrum in implementing economic liberalization, bureaucrats, manual workers, and low-income consumers were not only directly affected by structural adjustment, but they also comprised the urban consumers who would suffer from reduced purchasing power and the eventual removal of government subsidies.

The elimination of government regulations also jeopardized the careers of civil servants while giving more autonomy to producers. The tactics employed by the Rawlings government

included elite consensus, repression, and centralization of power in order to maintain the authoritarian regime. In short, this represents the extremes of governance in Ghana during the 1980s and early 1990s under the authoritarian rule of Rawlings and the PNDC.

The emphasis of the ERP by the Rawlings regime was predicated on increased production in agriculture and industry, combined with reducing the budget deficit by cutting government subsidies and establishing a more efficient revenue mobilization and collection. Rawlings, in his dealings with Ghanaians, exhibited the virtues of effective leadership by espousing the notion that sound economic planning would be the only guarantee of improving the well-being of the people after years of decline. Furthermore, since the launching of the 31 December, 1981 coup, his concern has consistently been focused on the poor and the exploited and his declarations of "power to the people," is reminiscent of a leader providing what is "missing" in the body politic in Ghana, a phenomenon much sought after in many neighboring West African regimes.

THE UNEVEN IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS

The accomplishments of Rawlings during the 1980s and early 1990s reflect a period officially referred to as the "period of rebirth" in Ghana. Rawlings espoused a multi-dimensional concept of leadership in reforming the economy that embodied power, discretion and legitimacy, and his success as a leader was predicated on a two-way relationship that he had with the Ghanaian people. As a leader, he exerted influence, but he was also influenced by and accountable to the people. He attempted to be effective and legitimate, continually looking for ways to balance the competing needs and wants of the people in order to build on shared values. The political tools of Rawlings included: the establishment of National and Local Defense Committees; emphasis on economic revival; exposure of corrupt practices; enforcement of price controls and curbing of smuggling; entrenchment of ERP in Ghana; and eventually, encouraging participatory democracy and raising level of political awareness in Ghana.

While many of the above-mentioned accomplishments by the Rawlings government helped to alleviate the economic and social conditions in Ghana during this period, there were instances where some citizens experienced negative or mixed effects. Some Ghanaians saw the structural adjustment as causing hardship, especially in urban Ghana. The new macro-economic policies in Ghana also led to a retrenchment in the mainly urban and public sector but it did shift resources and productivity toward the rural areas. For instance, many urban groups bore much of the cost of the reform program while internal trade terms between rural and urban now favored rural producers.

Devaluation hindered wage-earning urbanites, simply because the wage increases were not enough to offset the price increases for imported goods. Conversely, the increase in producer prices for cocoa, other cash crop commodities and major infrastructure improvement activities by the government in rural areas, produced higher incomes for farmers. Callaghy (1990) states that the ratio of the price of a metric ton of cocoa to the urban minimum wage rose steadily at this time, thus indicating that the relative income of Ghana's rural producers became better than that of urban workers.¹²

While this might be true, not all the people in rural areas benefited from the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP); economic conditions of food crop farmers did not change much

with higher export crop prices. Sawyer (1988) observes that economic liberalization favored especially landowners and commercial farmers who employed sharecroppers or waged workers to maintain and harvest cocoa and other export crop trees. They benefited from higher producer prices but pursued a low-wage policy.¹³

During the SAP in Ghana, cocoa policies and devaluation also benefited small farmers who were engaged in cocoa production, as there were opportunities for wage laborers who were employed to undertake various agricultural activities such as planting cocoa trees, harvesting cocoa beans, weeding, and so forth. Unfortunately the SAP's emphasis on the production of export crops for market did not help many small farmers (especially women and landless wage earners) who operated at subsistence level. As elsewhere, price liberalization measures in Ghana helped small producers, traders, and craftsmen by lifting state controls on producer prices; it provided an incentive to produce for the market, but underdeveloped marketing structures limited increased market production.¹⁴ In these countries, as in Ghana, the rising cost of imported primary products, shrinking domestic demand, and restrictions on domestic credit, all converged during SAP and remained as obstacles to increased production that was needed to benefit small producers.

Another dimension to the SAP were the cuts in food subsidies, devaluation, and massive dismissal of workers in uncompetitive firms. According to Harvey (1991), urban consumers suffered from higher prices via devaluations, an end to key subsidies, introduction of user fees for medical services and education, and the imposition of neo-liberal package on state sector wage earners, such as reduction in civil service employment.¹⁵

On the other hand, the SAP was very favorable to the "comprador class," which embraced a wide variety of occupations - from local agents of foreign businesses, partners and consultants to such businesses as hotel management and tourism. The emphasis on technocratic solutions to economic problems during the SAP increased the influence of people in the higher echelons of the public service. Trade liberalization, says Harvey (1991), generates more profit for import and export merchants and higher salaries for top executives in private businesses, especially in the areas of foreign capital investment. In Ghana, the privatization measures benefited those who were able to "buy up" or "buy into" state-owned enterprises (SOEs), often at concessional prices.¹⁶

Killick (1989) states that the major gainers of such adjustment measures as devaluation were also big local and foreign capitalists who invested in export-oriented sectors, including gold mining, timber industry, and other capital-intensive raw material producing industries.¹⁷ In the views of Jonah (1989), the PNDC regime's economic programs promoted the interests of the country's external creditors and foreign companies that previously were not able to repatriate profits and dividends. Under IMF programs, the government kept up with payments of dividends and other commitments despite facing enormous debt restructuring and cuts in domestic spending.¹⁸

Overall, structural adjustment programs in Ghana favored cash crop farmers and export-oriented industries; the policy was also beneficial to rural areas where both devaluations and producer price increases helped to stimulate higher production. Conversely, the same policies brought down living standards for majority of urban dwellers, such as workers, students, civil

servants and so on, who were hit hard by IMF stabilization measures, and they responded as economic interest groups with all the vigor they could muster.

INTEREST GROUP RESPONSES TO ERP

As expected, when the ERP was introduced in 1983, there were protests against it, particularly from trade unions represented by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and student organizations represented by the National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS). Ironically, these groups had formed the initial base of support for the Rawlings regime in the early days of the revolution. More benignly, the business class, despite its previous hostile stance (based on the perceived government's unwillingness to protect indigenous business interest against foreign economic hegemony), exhibited caution in responding to the ERP even as they stood to gain from the results of such policies as privatization and wage increases.

As for farmers, their lack of organization worked against them and they became politically expendable; but in terms of cocoa producing regions, the government was hard pressed not to pay them more attention, especially as they formed a new source of support and legitimacy for the authoritarian regime. In this regard, there were five distinct responses to the ERP that warrants analysis: (1) labor opposition, (2) business concerns, (3) student protests, (4) criticisms by intellectuals, and (5) interests of the middle class.¹⁹

Labor Opposition: For the urban working class in Ghana, the government's pursuit of economic adjustment marked the beginning of the transition from the period of alliance to one of confrontation with the Rawlings regime. Government's actions, such as anti-labor wage increases, price hikes, and employment policies, completely alienated labor groups. Ninsin (1989) observes that in a statement on October 24, 1984, the executive board of TUC lamented "the grave and critical economic and social situation in the country" and warned against "the continued implementation of the IMF and World Bank-inspired SAP" which was having deleterious effects on workers' incomes and living conditions.²⁰ Labor leaders were also upset at the government for not consulting with them on policy formulation. In fact, the working class was vociferous in criticizing the regime for neglecting the existing mechanisms of policy dialogue, followed by their complaints about the government's reluctance to consult with either employers or workers about the direction of the economy.

The spillover effect of this suspicion by labor leaders related to the government's relations with the IMF and the World Bank; indeed, the biggest union in Ghana, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICWU), not only accused the PNDC of not publishing its agreements with international financial institutions and concealing the cost of maintaining foreign advisors, it also demanded restricting debt service to 10 percent of foreign exchange earnings. This was a bitter pill for the PNDC to swallow. Although privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and subsequent cuts in civil service jobs angered labor unions, they were even more opposed to government's attempts to intervene in the collective bargaining with employers. To the unions, the government was overstepping its bounds in getting involved in the bargaining on wage restraints, suspension of benefits, and widespread retrenchment of workers, which they saw as significantly weakening their power.

Krause (1987) states that the workers' strongly believed, during this time, that "under the guise of economic crisis" the government was trying to eliminate the trade union movement and its class representation. Krause also observes that although Rawlings had reformed the economy since 1983 he abandoned many of his original goals and alienated major segments of the population.²¹ Before he took over, the national economy had been wrecked by oil price increases, low import revenues, world recession, drought, and unwise economic policies, which served as a *raison d'être* for overthrowing the civilian regime of President Hilla Limann to establish an anti-bourgeois, anti-imperialist regime drawing support from radical leftists, organized labor, students, junior military officers, and ordinary citizens.

Objections to the authoritarianism of Rawlings government, which lacked structure for grassroots participation, were widespread despite rhetoric to the contrary by the PNDC. To Graham (1989), the workers during this time showed they were frustrated with the "non-recognition of the crucial role of the masses in revolutionary social transformation and therefore the absence of any proper and consistent channels of participation in the decision-making by the mass of the people through their organizations."²² The people were bitter about human rights abuses, such as harassment and false detention, and then demanded protection of civil rights while criticizing the regime for loss of revolutionary ideals that initially brought it to power, Graham concludes.

Business Concerns: The business community, in its reaction to the ERP, expressed concern about the government's lack of management of industrial-labor relations. At the 28th annual meeting of the Ghana's Employer's Association (GEA), the major concern was that "steep price increases and other social costs had driven the trade unions to exert pressure on our members to pay much higher salaries that are bound to fuel the inflationary spiral and undermine that national wages and incomes policy ... We would like an assurance (that) we shall not be left alone to face the brunt of workers' wrath," according to the Economic Intelligent Unit (1988). Major complaints, concludes the report, were about the lack of input by key social groups in economic policy-making; the GEA pointed out the absence of a forum for employers, trade unions, universities and other groups to exchange views on the economy.²³

In terms of harnessing local private capital, Tangri (1992) states that there were worries in the private sector about the adverse effect of some adjustment measures, including severe liquidity problems, rising interest rates, and high import costs, all caused by continued depreciation of the cedi. During the mid-1980s, massive devaluation of the currency, from 2.75 to the U.S. dollar to over 390 in 1991, generated a severe liquidity crisis; companies that depended on imported machinery and raw materials thus suffered from higher prices of imported goods. The problem was exacerbated by a tight credit policy that resulted from high interest rates designed to curb inflation.²⁴ In observing that trade liberalization measures was not favorably accepted by the business community, Callaghy (1990) says that the owners of existing enterprises continued to call for protection from import competition.²⁵

The president of the Association of Ghanaian Industries (AGI) stressed that the business groups want to secure some form of protection to redress "the near collapse of local industries." The EIU reported that the GEA also called upon the government to impose import quotas on foreign goods to save local industries from extinction. During the implementation of ERP, the businesses facing more severe foreign competition seemed to be unhappy with the regime's

cavalier attitude that SAP generates a favorable business environment, and that trade liberalization, in its myopic view, would facilitate competitiveness of indigenous business.

Student Protests: The basic disagreement of students with the government was in education user fees and low food allowances, in other words, the removal of tuition, boarding and food subsidies. The students' argument was primarily that education reform programs sponsored by the World Bank limits this social welfare program to the children of the rich, and secondly, that the government's withdrawal of these subsidies brought extreme hardship to most students whose parents were either retrenched or simply too poor to afford college education for their children.

NUGS, the umbrella student organization in Ghana, galvanized support during its 23rd annual congress and issued complaints to the regime that "... the various aspects of the planned changes in the education system would force students in boarding schools to pay higher fees as well as other charges; and these additional charges in some cases make the boarding fee three times the minimum civil service wages." In an alliance with the students, the EIU reported that the TUC showed public support for the students' demands in its message to the NUGS Congress, by saying "as parents, we are opposed to the proposed increase in school fees and the threat to remove feeding subsidies as contained in the universities." This general discontent was reflected in a letter written by the Student Resistance Committee (SRC) at the University of Ghana and published in the West Africa magazine of August 17, 1987, which referred to the IMF "poison," that read in part:

"A massive retrenchment of workers is being carried out in both state and private enterprises without a thought for the human beings affected. The removal of government subsidies and the dramatic devaluation of the cedi have resulted in unfavorable hospital fees and rates for utilities and transport. We would continue to struggle till all the remnants of the obnoxious anti-worker and anti-student policies imposed by the IMF and World Bank puppets have been dismantled."²⁶

Criticisms from Intellectuals: The intellectuals in Ghana also expressed their resentment of the economic policies of the regime. The University Teachers' Association of Ghana (UTAG) called upon the PNDC to develop programs that can protect mothers and children as well as promote the indigenous manufacturing sector, and that the government should actively recognize the rights of all classes of Ghanaians. When adjustment programs are criticized in developing countries, it is usually through the linkage between the negative assessment of the role of international financial institutions and their failure to deal with the ever-changing commodity prices that makes the role of the IMF and World Bank all the more suspect.

As Tsikata (1998) observes "... that role cannot be satisfactorily fulfilled unless the operational paradigm of these institutions is specifically oriented to human crisis that Africa confronts and the urgencies of achieving real transformations, not mere improvements in monetary aggregates and global macro-economic numbers."²⁷ Stopping short of questioning the legitimacy of the government, many intellectuals had doubts about its sincerity in carrying out the necessary efforts to implement the ERP. According to Kwasi Anyemadu, an economics professor at the University of Ghana, "the economic situation in the country was not really healthy despite some improvement brought about through structural adjustment. Overall, there was a mistrust between the government and the intellectuals, who believed that the PNDC did

not represent the interests of the general population, but only of those who are well connected."²⁸

Interests of the Middle Class: Three distinct characteristics shape the middle class in Ghana. First, they have traditionally backed liberal economic policies; second, they distrust populist governments; and lastly, they are consistently opposed to oppressive political rule. During the 1980s, the majority of the Western-educated elite were frustrated with the PNDC's closed style of governance, intolerance of criticism, and the resulting inaccessibility due in part to the lack of real public debate and a perceived arrogance on the part of the authoritarian leaders. Jeffries and Thomas (1993) said the lawyers' group, which stood out among the professionals, was able not only to highlight the flaws of the PNDC, but it exposed the regime's practice of detention and other human rights abuses, such as the case of the judges who were allegedly killed by agents of the government.²⁹ Suffice is to say that this incident and the regime's strong-arm practices bothered the middle class immensely.

When the ERP was proposed, its supporters were convinced that the middle class should be able to take advantage of the adjustment program and then engage in investment activities. Their premise was that the middle class has the capacity to understand the positive changes of economic liberalization, in part due to its resources and ability, i.e., its wealth and education. But nothing could be farther from the truth. In the views of Callaghy (1990), the Ghanaian urban middle class, who is considered the oldest and most sophisticated in Africa, was still ambivalent about the Rawlings regime, even up to the late 1980s. Because of the PNDC's previous policies that antagonized them, the middle class was not willing to show visible support for the regime. Furthermore, the middle class remembered the frontal attack by the Rawlings government on the wealthy before the adoption of the ERP and this caused hesitation on their part, at least to the extent of investing their scarce capital for an uncertain economic future.³⁰

Bentsi-Enchill (1988) observes that the ERP was supposed to strengthen those sections of society that would benefit mostly from the capitalist development; but the indigenous private sector, which was once relatively vibrant, became moribund.³¹ As a result, both external donors and the government became worried about the lack of strong private sector response to the free market economic reform; Ghanaians, most regrettably, felt that the ERP benefited only foreign resident business groups such as Lebanese, Indians, Syrians, and Taiwanese. Some Europeans, who were aware of the economic liberalization program, had good management skills, resources to invest, an understanding of the free market system, and access to technology and information, also benefited immensely from the ERP. Ordinarily, these attributes are impressive to possess in a changing economic environment, but unfortunately, this group of businessmen were despised and became targets of resentment by the indigenes. Such resentments were expressed in a government newspaper reflecting growing frustration of Ghanaians with foreign businessmen: "... who flout Ghanaian laws and vaunt their conspicuous affluence ... are warned that unless they take firm steps to curb the excesses of their countrymen, the anger of Ghanaians may spill over to those who exploit their countrymen."³²

AUTHORITARIANISM AND THE PNDC POWER STRUGGLE IN THE RULING COALITION

In his book entitled *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1950-1990*, Douglas Rimmer observes that the radical left, including the militant sections of students, workers, soldiers as well as organized movements, such as the June Fourth Movement (JFM), the New Democratic Movement (NDM), the Kwame Nkrumah Revolutionary Guards (KNRG), and the African Youth Movement (AYM), ascribed poor economic conditions in Ghana to exploitation by foreign capitalists who have been assisted by a "comprador bourgeoisie." He asserts that they prefer direct national control of economic activities rather than Ghana's integration into an international market. During the mid-1980s, the general principle of the agreements with the IMF, as orchestrated by Kwesi Botchwey, Minister of Finance under the PNDC regime, was supported by the pro-IMF bureaucracy and some in the NDM.³³

However, there was simple resistance to the adjustment program from some factions in the SOEs, revolutionary organizations, or "people's power," and some grassroots political organizations that tried to undermine the state structure. Hutchful (1989) asserts that those forces were unpredictable and not easily subject to control. The state bureaucracy, he continues, attacked this problem from two fronts: (1) It looked for allies who could re-introduce "discipline" and help arrest anarchistic developments, and (2) it hoped to use the agreement with international financial institutions (IFNs) to control labor movements. The major opposition to any form of collaboration with IFNs came surprisingly from the leftists faction supported by nationalist intellectuals and workers' organizations.³⁴ Jeong (1995) states that the opposition proposed a self-reliance policy based on popular mobilization and looked for economic assistance from specialist countries. The position of the anti-IMF faction, however, was weakened by the failure to obtain aid from alternative sources, he concludes.³⁵

Overall, implementation of the ERP in the 1980s and the political pressure from donor agencies resulted in the disorganization and defeat of the progressive groups who were subsequently driven to the fringes of power. Aside from the fact that the PNDC survived many coup attempts after introducing the ERP, there was a lot of opposition to the regime from other organized groups that had strong ties to students and labor that vehemently denounced Rawlings and his government's close ties to IFNs. The initial response to this opposition was PNDC's repression of public discussion of adjustment measures and criticisms of the government through the use of draconian means such as outlawing or restricting strikes, stopping mass protests and demonstrations, and the use of force by the state. This lack of representative institutions was sustained until the elections for district assemblies held in 1988. Even after the 1992 national elections the atmosphere was not congenial enough to provide a suitable milieu for wider political participation. Consequently the political legitimacy of the Rawlings government, despite a competitive multiparty election, had a cloud hanging over it because of the prior repression of labor unions and lack of public discourse of government policies.

In terms of repression of popular movements, Callaghy (1990) observes that government officials were most worried that political instability following resistance from key opposition groups could have a devastating impact on the remarkably sustained efforts of the ERP.³⁶ Workers were seen as a major concern to the PNDC regime since they could disrupt the economy. Thus, since the inception of the ERP, Rawlings had attempted with some success, to reduce the economic and political power of workers; and while often stressing the need for

discipline and productivity, the government had often railed against labor unions' demands for wage increases.

The PNDC, says Graham (1989), depended on "moral exhortation" and a subtle campaign depicting some workers as "self-interested". In some speeches, Rawlings often stressed "productivity," "discipline," and "hard work," as the tools needed by Ghanaians to reverse the economic crisis. The press, under the influence of the government, praised farmers for their contribution to the nation, while at the same time urging workers to restrain their demands; when they are not being described as unproductive, says Graham.³⁷ Opponents of popular movements were appointed to high office, and as their influence grew, there was a marked alienation of popular forces, including the working class from the regime.

Without any doubt, labor agitations and unrests were often met by severe repression, as it happened on many occasions during this period when government used military and police forces, for example, against workers in disputes at Assene factory in Accra and the striking mine workers of the State Gold Mining Corporation at Dunkwa, according to Ninsin (1989).³⁸ Graham (1989) states that the growing gap between the PNDC regime and labor was more dramatically represented in the four-month battle that erupted in April at the Pioneer Food Company in Tema. The labor struggle and the brutal repression by the police demonstrated the regime's growing hostility to the working class, and eventually reflected the evolving changes in the government's policy toward industrial relations, he concludes.³⁹ It would not be far-fetched to assert that the PNDC changed to its role of repressing labor movements in order for it not only to implement donors' policies, but also to ensure that industrial relations would not stand in the way of its neo-classical economic reform. This political and ultimately ideological shift exemplified the direction chosen by the PNDC regime to pursue the ERP; that is, authoritarian rule that not only repressed but stifled participation in the political system.

Shaw (1993) observes that in order for the PNDC to build a new support base it had to resort to the politics of capacity mobilization and formal representation. The dilemma for the regime, however, was that the major beneficiaries of the ERP - expatriate businessmen and cocoa farmers - proved difficult to mobilize for support. First, the success of foreign businesses in Ghana, at the supposed expense of local ones, has been embarrassing for the government especially with ERP. Second, cocoa farmers represented a weak interest group that could not be counted for any kind of political mobilization if the need arose. Consequently, the regime was at a loss when it came time to find allies to build rural support for its policies and mobilization for formal representation.⁴⁰

In order to overcome the dilemmas of broadening its political base, the regime reached out to a diverse group composed of lawyers, professionals, and the 31st December Women's Movement - the most prominent women's group in Ghana, to show its inclusiveness in Ghanaian politics and decision making. The courting of local chiefs and members of the clergy was seen by many as a last ditch effort to garner rural support by the PNDC regime. Krause (1987) asserts that Rawlings saw the traditional chiefs as "instruments of stability" and "linkage with the rural population," and the only ones able to overcome populist resistance and reduce anti-government sentiment. The clergy, on the other hand, were seen as capable of swaying the beliefs of their own followers through religious injunctions and moral suasions, and they fulfilled their role to the delight of the regime.⁴¹

Another aspect of the political hurdle for the Rawlings regime was how to balance ethnicity and political and economic outcomes in Ghana. Jeffries and Thomas (1993) observe that the political economy of distribution in Ghana has been based on regional as well as class relations, and essentially, ethnicity has affected the support base of economic policies through these patronage relationships.⁴² In terms of the ERP, Green (1987) states that it was positively received in the main cocoa growing regions, such as Ashanti and Brong Ahafo, which had suffered from previous government policies due to over-taxation and underpayment of cocoa producers. The PNDC's economic policies have been unpopular in the Accra region, including Sekondi and Takoradi, with its large number of organized labor and business and professional groups that resisted the authoritarian regime at every opportunity, he concludes.⁴³ To address the question of ethnic diversity for the government, Rawlings reached out to many ethnic constituencies, including the Ewes, Adangbes, Ashantis, and Brongs. Mikell (1989) says that since effective political control in Ghana necessitates broad support and policies separated from ethnic, regional or economic favoritism, Rawlings attempted to build ethnic cooperation by emphasizing the irrelevance of ethnicity in constructing a strong Ghana; and, to some extent, he succeeded in doing just that.⁴⁴ In 1987, in its effort to create political reconciliation, the regime introduced the Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD).

To many in Ghana, this conciliatory stance was seen as well timed, especially as the government announced decisions to increase social spending for low-income classes before the local district elections in 1988 and the presidential elections in 1992. The PAMSCAD was designed to ease resistance of workers who believed that they have shouldered a disproportionate share of the cost of adjustment. Callaghy (1990) asserts that as the regime faced difficult challenges following several monetary and institutional reforms, the program attempted to prevent worsening economic conditions of retrenched workers and the poor. The PAMSCAD, he concludes, was a result of external donors and the government to gain political support for more reforms.⁴⁵ There were two reasons for this course of action. The donors reasoned that this would sustain the Ghanaian experiment at structural adjustment, setting an example for the rest of Africa where SAPs were under attack.

The PAMSCAD was an important political test, not just for the Rawlings regime, whose adherence to World Bank/IMF- backed programs caused much political grief, but also for the external donors, who attracted much criticism in Ghana, in addition to the risk of nurturing the seeds of political resentment whenever SAPs are concerned. It was no coincidence that Ghana, one of very few African countries to follow the World Bank/IMF programs closely, would be the first subject of political resentment. The PAMSCAD offered an opportunity for the government to legitimize its economic programs.⁴⁶

In the 1990s, the efforts of the international donor community gradually moved toward political reform as well as economic liberalization. Jeong (1995) observes that the pressure for a pluralistic system was based on the confidence that Ghana has overcome difficulties caused by economic stabilization, and that the slow progress in institutional reform has led to recognition of the necessity for a political system that is more susceptible to World Bank/IMF policy.⁴⁷

J.J. RAWLINGS: THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR

In analyzing leadership competence, Decrane (1996) said that there are four fundamental

qualities that have remained constant over time: character, vision, behavior and confidence. He observes "leaders who can spark the imagination with a compelling vision of a worthwhile end that puts us beyond what is known today, and who can translate that into clear objectives, are the ones we follow."⁴⁸ The difference between the success and failure of the dual transition programs, embarked upon simultaneously by Ghana and Nigeria in the early 1980s, lies not so much in the modernization or dependency theories or the bureaucratic-authoritarian model, but rather in the vision and competence of the leaders at the helm of affairs in the respective countries. While this argument might seem naïve or superficial to some, there is ample evidence to show that the role of leaders has a lot to do with the type of public policies they initiate and those they eventually implement.

Wilheim (1996) states "effective leaders have the vision required to see things differently from others. They collect and arrange the same data we all see in ways that allow them to conceive of new and unseen phenomena... A core characteristic of all effective leaders," he concludes "is the ability to have a vision of where they are trying to go and to articulate it clearly to potential followers so that they know their personal role in achieving that vision."⁴⁹

In Nigeria, Gen. I.B. Babangida, who came to power in a coup in 1985, was woefully corrupt, repressive and inept in presiding over a government that was severely criticized for the manner in which it attempted to implement the transition program that often vacillated between liberalization and repression.⁵⁰ Ghana, under Rawlings, was able to weather the storm despite many severe economic and political conditions. He was able to focus his efforts and make choices based on the goals, values, and ideals that he felt ought to be advanced on behalf of Ghana. He also had uncanny foresight. Greenleaf (1977) says "... foresight is the 'lead' that the leader has and once leaders lose this lead and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only."⁵¹

Between 1981 and 1983, Rawlings endured a lot of hostility from many Western governments because of Ghana's close links with Cuba and Libya and his fearless anti-imperialist rhetoric, which made Rawlings one of a select group of targets of the Reagan administration's foreign policy. From the historic low of 1983, when the ERP was introduced, conditions in Ghana could only improve. Much of the credit for the country's economic recovery in the years that followed must be given to the Ghanaian people, whose courage, faith, determination, acceptance and cooperation made the economic revival possible.

Harman (1998) says, "Leadership requires a values orientation that should be accepted, adopted and then translated into a vitalizing vision." The leader, he concludes, is then responsible for articulating the kind of vision that the community validates based on the leader's perception.⁵² Despite many failings, Rawlings espoused a vision of what Ghana ought to be to sustain Ghana's economic growth and political stability, a rare phenomenon for leaders in developing sub-Saharan states.

Rawlings' military training in the Air Force Academy gave him the opportunity to acquire a regimented, structured and disciplined disposition about life, and he was ready to lead after being in the military for a number of years. Furthermore, his compassion and concern has been focused on the exploited and poor in Ghana, and his revolutionary "power to the people" was his way of scanning for the forces of change, a rare trait in developing economies. In order to create this vision, Rawlings was well aware that he had to communicate his passion about

change so others could share in it and then get them to work as a unit, contributing their best towards the achievement of that vision.

To share the vision adequately, Bennis (1989), in his work entitled *On Becoming a Leader*, says "leaders are people who are able to express themselves fully, know what they want, why they want it, and how to communicate what they to others in order to gain their cooperation and support."⁵³ Lastly, to marshal action, Kouzes and Posner (1996), observe "a leader must have a sense of direction and a vision for the future, and it is the capacity to paint an uplifting and ennobling picture of the future that assures people of the possibilities and images of great potential."⁵⁴

From his training days in the Air Force academy, leading the first coup in 1979 and head of the AFRC, handing over power to an elected president, working behind the scenes to ensure the success of democracy, and coming back to lead the 31 December revolution, Rawlings was able to marshal actions to create and sustain the vision of a better society for the Ghanaian people. Many Ghanaians equally believe that Rawlings is a man of strong emotions, convictions and driven by a passion for moral justice, intellect and integrity. On the intellectual front, they maintain that he is the first leader of charisma and stature since Nkrumah (in his early days). Many in Ghana believe that Rawlings' achievements in the political and economic realm were possible only because of his tenacity, honesty, clear objectives and sense of direction.

During the 1990s, Ghana was transformed from a country saddled with economic depression and political instability into a politically aware and economically prudent nation-state, but there was still a lot to be done. According to Herbst (1993), Ghana needed to adhere to the ERP, sustain the development challenges and entrench the political system. After a decade of adhering to the economic reforms, as prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank, in which Ghana was used as a test case for structural adjustment in Africa, he observes, there was the potential for economic renewal under the guidance and vision of Rawlings and his ruling party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC).⁵⁵ While others disagreed with this conclusion, events in Ghana have shown that the opposition that could have challenged Rawlings was weak at best.

On balance, during the 1990s, Rawlings focused on the political essentials underlying effective growth and de-emphasized redistributive issues and neo-imperialism stressed by the critics of structural adjustment. Governing problems, observe Vinzant and Crothers (1995), represent the most pressing dilemmas facing most societies because the governance system is beset with problems of paralysis, public mistrust, and "wicked" public policy issues.⁵⁶ The Ghanaian government, at the time, had to seek reasons for the striking difference between Ghana and the Asian Tiger countries of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The Asian Tigers' success story, states Chibber (1991), lies partly in the interaction between the public and private sectors; the liberalization of trade and barriers (including removal of tariffs, administered prices, etc.); and the existence of real exchange rates. The Ghanaian government saw the need to have clear roles in its dealings with the private sector, concludes Chibber, and that the relationship was expected to transcend any suspicions by the public and private sectors, especially on the part of government technocrats who harbored acrimonious feelings against their "money-grabbing" counterparts in the private sector.⁵⁷ Rawlings also learnt from the fiscal prudence of the Asian Tigers, enough to prompt him to propose spending

programs toward promoting and not competing with the private sector. According to Hussain (1994), the revolutionary environment for the private sector was enhanced through a low corporate tax structure, import duty exemptions on capital equipment, and liberalization of trade and foreign payment arrangements to help sustain the Ghanaian economy.⁵⁸

DEMOCRACY IN GHANA FROM THE 1996 TO THE 2000 ELECTIONS

When the 1996 elections were completed, there was a clear indication that the result was taking hold. Onadipe (1997) states, "... for the first time in its political history, a civilian administration was able to complete its term in office and also secure a renewed mandate democratically. The opposition also accepted the results." With this political development, Ghana, to many observers in the international community, seemed to have left the ranks of African countries saddened by military coups and repressive dictatorships. Through this democratic process, Ghana ascended to the group of civilized, responsible and representative governments, or more aptly, a workable democratic experiment in Africa. Onadipe asserts, "the simple fact that the incumbent Rawlings administration allowed the electoral process to move on with the opposition adequately represented, speaks volumes of how far political development has come in Ghana."⁵⁹

During the four years after the 1992 elections, democratic rule was not disrupted and the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), which Rawlings led along with its parliamentary majority, governed the country with relative peace and less political and social rancor. Unfortunately, this same political sentiment cannot be said for neighboring Nigeria, where the despotic rule of Gen. I.B. Babangida was just coming to an end, after he cancelled the 'freest and fairest' election the country has ever experienced, and the equally ruthless regime of Gen. Sani Abacha was coming to life. Furthermore, in 1996, Rawlings, with his second mandate and visionary stance, was poised to lead his country through another four years of political compromise and then serve out his two consecutive terms as president and arrange for the next round of elections in the year 2000. In spite of this sentiment, there was still a mystique about Rawlings; the charismatic leader who has had the unique opportunity to effectively lead his nation and accomplished so much over a nineteen-year period.

Onadipe (1997) observes, "though Rawlings' victory in 1996 was not a foregone conclusion despite the incumbency factor and the limitless resources at his disposal, such as uninterrupted media coverage, use of government facilities and transportation for his campaign, his popularity was probably the most crucial factor." Rawlings courted voters through populist projects, such as rebuilding Ghana's crumbling infrastructures including roads, hospitals, and electricity for rural areas. This should be an excellent case study for Africa's growing ranks of democratic leaders, he concludes.⁶⁰ Rawlings' victory left no obvious aftertaste because his lengthy stay at the top was an advantage. In the first place, the younger voters, who had known him as head of state, seem impressed enough to vote for him rather than an unknown in the opposition. Additionally, Rawlings enjoyed a connection with younger Ghanaians who saw him not only as one of them in terms of his age (some call him JJ or Jerry), but also because of his imposing figure and dashing looks which was complemented by well-tailored suits and traditional garbs.

During the 1996 campaigns, the NDC focused on rural areas; the strategy paid off as the ruling party won ten out of eleven regional capitals, mostly in the rural areas where most Ghanaians live. Rawlings had strategically targeted rural areas for development; he provided roads, water, electricity, and other facilities that usually encourage urban drift and he was simply rewarded with a second term. The issue of providing rural services helped to decide the election and future of Ghana for the next four years in the second and final term of Rawlings at the helm of affairs. The NDC ran a campaign slogan: "Let there be light for rural people, for they are Ghanaians too!"

The opposition, sensing that the charisma of Rawlings was too big for them to impugn, resorted to highlighting the dismal economic status of the country. They pointed to the rate of economic growth that since September 1992 had slowed considerably with a corresponding sharp increase in the inflation rate and significant reduction in the standard of living. The opposition accused Rawlings of insensitivity especially in view of the supposed ostentatious living style of the presidential household. The outcome of the election was a testimony to the awe and respect with which Ghanaians treated Rawlings, and in the waning years of his stewardship, his concern shifted to the person who would carry on the 'revolution' and also keep the party together for the 2000 elections.

In the aftermath of the 1996 elections, in which Rawlings was elected to a second and final term as president, Ghanaians were demanding reconciliation and change. National reconciliation became essential, says Onadipe (1997), because the people believed that Rawlings had alienated himself from the general populace through the execution of many politicians and former leaders, the imprisonment of opposition figures, and confiscation of people's property.⁶¹ In a newspaper interview with the Daily Graphic, of January 21, 1997, Kabrah Blay-Amihere, the Ghanaian president of the West Africa Journalist Association, declared: "Rawlings' AFRC and the PNDC created many wounds and polarized the society. Since he became president in 1992, he never met the opposition or the private press ... there is need to need build bridges. All Ghanaians should be made to feel they belong to Ghana."⁶²

POSTSCRIPT

The result of the December 2000 elections gave John Kufour of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) victory over Rawlings' National Democratic Congress (NDC) in a run-off election. This prompted the BBC "Talking Point" program of December 9, 2000 to ask the questions: "Has Ghana reached political maturity?" and if so, "Has the election set a good example for the rest of Africa?" The program not only elicited wide-ranging comments from many respondents, but they provided many interesting opinions.

Many Ghanaian respondents expressed their joy and pride that the election was peaceful, and that the rest of the world, especially the West, never believed that an African country could hold a democratic election without a hitch. Their comments exemplified the joy of Africans and national pride of Ghanaians, as the nation made a transition toward democratic rule.

On December 18, 2000, while participating in a BBC Special Political Forum in the aftermath of the Ghanaian elections, Professor Gyimah Boadi and Audrey Gadzekpo responded to general questions regarding the future of Ghana and the possibility of Rawlings returning to

rule. Gadzekpo's response was mostly esoteric in nature: "In view of Rawlings' young age as a former head of state (he is 54 years old), energetic and with lots of ideas, Ghanaians would have to deliberate on the means of taking care of him in a manner that would 'dissuade' him from coming back." He also pointed that during the campaign President Kufour responded to the question of whether Rawlings could be tempted to come back by stating, "... as a former statesman, Rawlings would be called upon from time to time to do statesmanlike services, provided he will keep within the bounds of law."

It is my argument, however, that based on the charisma and achievements of Rawlings, the populist ideology of the June Fourth Movement (JFM), and political awareness of Ghanaians, the Kufour coalition needs to be vigilant and proactive because the politics of "divide and conquer" would bring Ghana back to the period of political instability and slow economic growth reminiscent of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Professor Boadi's response on the future of Ghana was a diabolical stance on the legacy of Rawlings. He said "there is a lot to love about Rawlings and also a lot to hate him for; in short, he is a polarizing figure." As regards the post-Rawlings era, he said, "I think as far as the public is concerned, what will happen to Rawlings out of power has a lot to do with the kinds of activities he decides to get involved in that would be befitting to a man of his stature." "There has to be a sense of gratitude to Rawlings," he asserted, "for presiding over two terms of an elected administration, and for following constitutional provisions on presidential term limits and handing over power to a victorious party after the elections."

As a postscript, these comments from experts were not only prophetic, but also realistic as they exemplified the political situation in Ghana. In December 2000, Rawlings handed over power smoothly to the next elected party and left office.

Conclusion

Many Ghanaians believe that Rawlings, more than any other individual in the country's history, has led them through the difficult years of economic recovery and has given them back their self-respect and national pride. Without his strength of character and unwavering determination, according to Chazan (1983), Ghana would not have survived the ERP.⁶³ Rawlings saw part of his role as the head of state to be that of a "watch dog" for the people; in that role, it was not unusual for him to speak his mind and intervene in issues whenever he saw what he considered to be an injustice, corruption or gross incompetence. The process of political change begun in 1982 by Rawlings, in my view, was a deliberate strategy to rebuild the political structures from "bottom up" and at each stage, to ensure that the citizens were involved (usually in a referendum) to debate the issues and decide their future in the name of nation building.

The vision resulted in the drafting of the Constitution, formation of many political parties, and holding of the 1992 elections, all based on good planning to guarantee the restoration of electoral and political systems in Ghana. When Rawlings was reelected in 1996 to a second and final term, many observers saw it as the perpetuation of the political malaise of "sit-tight leaders" in Africa; political events in the aftermath of the elections had since proved the skeptics to be incorrect. Nonetheless, when the 2000 elections were held, Rawlings had ruled Ghana for 19 years - a lot less than many other incumbents in Africa, but unlike other African leaders, he

had many accomplishments to show for his stewardship in Ghana. In this respect, Rawlings brought about many positive changes and his enduring legacy will not only guarantee strong economic pursuits and an entrepreneurial class but also sustain democracy and human rights in Ghana.

In September 1999, Rawlings reflected on his 18 years at the helm of affairs in Ghana, in an interview with the Rev. Jesse Jackson on CNN's "Both Sides with Jesse Jackson." Rawlings, among other things, stated that he saw his stewardship as an unusual opportunity; he presided over regimes that instituted authoritarian rule, engaged in political and economic reforms, and encouraged an administration that engendered multi-party democracy in Africa. In response to a question as to whether he saw himself as a visionary leader, Rawlings responded unequivocally "yes." "At the risk of sounding immodest," said Rawlings, "I knew that Ghana would not be brought out of the political abyss of 1981 without a visionary, but more importantly, the people were yearning for nothing less than a popular democracy. They were asking for nothing more than the power to be part of the decision-making process of their country. In other words, they wanted a voice in deciding their everyday life, as it is done in the West, and not for politicians to be dominant and who are all-knowing to be at helm of affairs of everyday life in Ghana." Rawlings also used the opportunity to express his immense gratitude to the Ghanaian people by bestowing on him the rare honor of being their leader and for giving him the chance to govern.

In conclusion, I argue that the leadership qualities enumerated in this article - effective, transformational, and visionary - all espoused by Rawlings, have provided Ghana with a political system that could endure for a long time. Rawlings seized the rare opportunity of guiding the affairs of his country, saw it through several political and economic transitions in the 1980s and 1990s, alienated political and social groups by employing authoritarian means, obtained financial aid from institutional donors to implement the various recovery programs, entrenched an economy that is growing through long-term structural adjustment, and sustained a democracy that is not only a work-in-progress but an institutionalized political system. Overall, Rawlings left a legacy where Ghanaians, as a people and society, have the enviable opportunity to enjoy the quality of life and also reap the benefits of a systemic development in an ever-changing global, political and economic environment.

Notes

1. Shillington, K. *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
2. Chazan, N. *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession, 1969-1982*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983.
3. Ayee, J.R.A. *An Anatomy of Public Policy Implementation: The Case of Decentralization Policies in Ghana*. London: Avebury Ashgate Publishing Company, 1994.
4. Eckstein, H. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Harry Eckstein, ed., *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political theory, Stability and Change*. Berkeley. CA: University of California Press, 1992.
5. Chazan, N. Op.cit.

6. Nugent, P. *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana: Power, Ideology, and Burden of History*. New York: Pinter Publishing Limited, 1995. p.79.
7. Shillington, K. *Op.cit.*
8. Ministry of Information. *J.J. Rawlings, Selected Speeches vol. 3*. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Information, 1990. p.18-19.
9. Okome, M. *A Sapped Democracy: The Political Economy of the Structural Adjustment Program and the Political Transition in Nigeria, 1983-1993*. New York: University Press of America, 1993.
10. Leith, C.J. and Lofchie, M.F. "The Political Economy of Structural Adjustment in Ghana," in Robert H. Bates and Anne O. Krueger, eds., *Political and Economic Interactions in Economic Policy Reforms: Evidence from Eight Countries*. Oxford, U.K.: Cambridge, Blackwell, 1993.
11. Jeong, H., "Liberal Economic Reform in Ghana: A Contested Political Agenda." *Africa Today* vol.42, no.4, 1995. p.82-104.
12. Callaghy, T.M., "Lost Between State and Market: The Politics of Economic Adjustment in Ghana, Zambia, and Nigeria," in Joan M. Nelson, ed., *Economic Crisis and Policy Choice: The Politics of Adjustment in the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, p.278.
13. Sawyer, A. "The Politics of Adjustment Policy." Paper for International Conference on "The Human Dimension of Africa's Recovery and Development." Khartoum, Sudan, March 1998. p.22.
14. Killick, T. *The Adaptive Economy: Adjustment Policies in Small, Low-income Countries*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1993.
15. Harvey, Charles. *Recovery from Macroeconomic Disaster in Sub-Saharan Africa*. 1991. p.25.
16. Harvey, Charles. *Op.cit.*
17. Killick, T. *Op.cit.*
18. Jonah, K. "The Social Impact of Ghana's Adjustment Program, 1983-86," in Bade Onimole, ed., *The IMF, the World Bank, and the African Debt*. London: Institute for Africa Alternatives, 1989. p.149.
19. Jeong, H., *Op.cit.*
20. Ninsin, K., "State, Capital and Labor Relations, 1969-1987," in Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A. Ninsin, eds., *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*. London: Cordesria, 1989. p.37.
21. Krause, J. "Ghana's Shift from Radical Populism." *Current History* vol.86, no.520, May 1987. p.227.
22. Graham, Y. "From GTP to Assene: Aspects of Industrial Working Class Struggles in Ghana, 1982-1989," in Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A. Ninsin, eds., *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*. London: Cordesria, 1989. p.62.
23. Economic Intelligent Unit. *EIU, Ghana Country Report, no.3*. London, 1988.
24. Tangri, R., "The Politics of Government-Business Relations in Ghana." *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol.30, no.1 (1992), pp.97-111.
25. Callaghy, T.M. *Op.cit.*

26. West Africa. August 17, 1987. p.A21.
27. Tsikata, T., "The Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development: Ghana's Country Experience." Paper presented at the International Conference in Khartoum. Sudan, March 1988. p.22.
28. Africa News. December 7-20, 1992. p.5.
29. Jeffries, R. and Thomas, C. "The Ghanaian Elections of 1992." *African Affairs* vol.92, no.368, July 1993. p.358-59.
30. Callaghy, T.M. Op.cit.
31. Bentsi-Enchill, N.K. "Year Six of the PNDC: The PNDC and National Policies." *West Africa*. January 11, 1988. p.17.
32. Daily Graphic. November 23, 1988. p.21.
33. Rimmer, Douglas. *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1959-1990*. Oxford: Paragon Press, 1992. p.180.
34. Hutchful, E. "From Revolution to Monetarism: The Economics and Politics of the Adjustment Program in Ghana," in Bonnie K. Campbell and John Loxley, eds., *Structural Adjustment in Africa*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989. p.103.
35. Jeong, H. "The Impact of the World Bank and IMF on the Structural Adjustment Program in Ghana." *Journal of the Third World Spectrum* vol.2, no.1, Spring 1995. p.102.
36. Callaghy, T.M. op.cit.
37. Graham, Y. "From GTP to Assene: Aspects of Industrial Working Class Struggles in Ghana, 1982-1989," in Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A. Ninsin, eds., *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*. London: Cordesria, 1989.
38. Ninsin, K. Op.cit.
39. Graham, Y. op.cit.
40. Shaw, T. *Reformism and Revisionism in Africa's Political Economy in the 1990s: The Dialectics of Adjustment*. London: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
41. Krause, J. "Ghana's Shift from Radical Populism." *Current History* vol.86, no.520, May 1987.
42. Jeffries, R. and Thomas, C. "The Ghanaian Elections of 1992." *African Affairs* vol.92, no.368, July 1993.
43. Green, R.H. "Stabilization and Adjustment Policies and Programs: Country Study 1, Ghana." Helsinki, Finland: World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1987. p.20.
44. Mikell, G. *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*. New York: Paragon House, 1989. p.245.
45. Callaghy, T.M. Op.cit.
46. Jeong, H. "The Impact of the World Bank and IMF on the Structural Adjustment Program in Ghana," *Journal of the Third World Spectrum* vol.2, no.1, Spring 1995.
47. Ibid.
48. DeCrane, Jr., A.C. "A Constitutional Model of Leadership," in *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era*, F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, and R. Beckhard, eds., San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

49. Wilhelm, W., "Learning from Past Leaders," in *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era*, F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith and R. Beckhard, eds., San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p.223.
50. Waterbury, J. 1993. *Exposed to Innumerable Delusions: Public Enterprise and State Power in Egypt, India, Mexico and Turkey*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- And Okome, M. *A Sapped Democracy: The Political Economy of the Structural Adjustment Program and the Political Transition in Nigeria, 1983-1993*. New York: University Press of America, 1993.
51. Greenleaf, R.K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. p.26.
52. Harman, W. *Global Mind Change: The Promise of the 21st Century*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.
53. Bennis, W. *On Becoming a Leader*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1989.
54. Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z. "Seven Lessons for Leading the Voyage to the Future," in , F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, and R. Beckhard, eds., *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the New Era*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.
55. Herbst, Jeffrey. *The Politics of Reform in Ghana, 1982-1991*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.
56. Vinzant, J.C. and Crothers, L. *Street-level Leadership: Discretion and Legitimacy in Front-line Public Service*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998.
57. Chibber, A. "Tackling Inflation during Reforms in Africa." *Finance & Development*, March 1991. p.28-31.
58. Hussain, I. "Results of Adjustment in Africa: Selected Cases," *Finance & Development*, June 1994. p.17-18.
59. Onadipe, A. "Democracy in Ghana: The Rawlings Mystique Endures." *Contemporary Review* vol.270, April 1997. p.191-95.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. *Daily Graphic*, January 21, 1997. p.17.
63. Chazan, N. *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession, 1969-1982*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983.

References

Africa News. December 7-20, 1992. p.5.

Ayee, J.R.A. *An Anatomy of Public Policy Implementation: The Case of Decentralization Policies in Ghana*. London: Avebury Ashgate Publishing Company, 1994.

Bennis, W. *On Becoming a Leader*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1989.

Bentsi-Enchill, N.K. "Year Six of the PNDC: The PNDC and National Policies." *West Africa* January 11, 1988. p.17.

Callaghy, T.M. "Lost Between State and Market: The Politics of Economic Adjustment in Ghana, Zambia, and Nigeria," in Joan M. Nelson, ed., *Economic Crisis and Policy Choice: The Politics of Adjustment in the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990. p.278.

Chazan, N. *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession, 1969-1982*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983.

Chibber, A. "Tackling Inflation during Reforms in Africa." *Finance & Development*, March 1991. p.28-31.

Daily Graphic. November 23, 1988. p.21.

Daily Graphic. January 21, 1997. p.17.

Eckstein, H. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Harry Eckstein, ed., *Regarding Politics: Essays on Political theory, Stability and Change*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992.

Economic Intelligent Unit. *EIU, Ghana Country Report, no.3*. London, 1988.

Graham, Y. "From GTP to Assene: Aspects of Industrial Working Class Struggles in Ghana, 1982-1989," in Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A. Ninsin, eds., *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*. London: Cordesria, 1989. p.62.

Green, R.H. "Stabilization and Adjustment Policies and Programs: Country Study 1, Ghana." Helsinki, Finland: World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1987. p.20.

Greenleaf, R.K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. p.26.

Harman, W. *Global Mind Change: The Promise of the 21st Century*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1998.

Harvey, Charles. *Recovery from Macroeconomic Disaster in Sub-Saharan Africa*. 1991.

- Herbst, Jeffrey. *The Politics of Reform in Ghana, 1982-1991*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.
- Hussain, I. "Results of Adjustment in Africa: Selected Cases." *Finance & Development*, June 1994. p.17-18.
- Hutchful, E. "From Revolution to Monetarism: The Economics and Politics of the Adjustment Program in Ghana," in Bonnie K. Campbell and John Loxley, eds., *Structural Adjustment in Africa*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989. p.103.
- Jeffries, R. and Thomas, C. "The Ghanaian Elections of 1992." *African Affairs* vol.92, no.368, July 1993. p.358-59.
- Jeong, H., "Liberal Economic Reform in Ghana: A Contested Political Agenda." *Africa Today* vol.42, no.4, 1995. p.82-104.
- Jeong, H. "The Impact of the World Bank and IMF on the Structural Adjustment Program in Ghana," *Journal of the Third World Spectrum* vol.2, no.1, Spring 1995. p.102.
- Jonah, K. "The Social Impact of Ghana's Adjustment Program, 1983-86," in Bade Onimole, ed., *The IMF, the World Bank, and the African Debt*. London: Institute for Africa Alternatives, 1989. p.149.
- Killick, T. *The Adaptive Economy: Adjustment Policies in Small, Low-income Countries*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1993.
- Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z. "Seven Lessons for Leading the Voyage to the Future," in F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, and R. Beckhard, eds., *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the New Era*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.
- Krause, J. "Ghana's Shift from Radical Populism." *Current History* vol.86, no.520, May 1987. p.227.
- Leith, C.J. and Lofchie, M.F. "The Political Economy of Structural Adjustment in Ghana," in Robert H. Bates and Anne O. Krueger, eds., *Political and Economic Interactions in Economic Policy Reforms: Evidence from Eight Countries*. Oxford, U.K.: Cambridge, Blackwell, 1993.
- Mikell, G. *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*. New York: Paragon House, 1989. p.245.
- Ministry of Information. *J.J. Rawlings, Selected Speeches* vol. 1-8, 1982-1992. Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Information, 1990.
- Ninsin, K. "State, Capital and Labor Relations, 1969-1987," in Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A. Ninsin, eds., *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*. London: Cordesria, 1989.

Nugent, P. *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana: Power, Ideology, and Burden of History*. New York: Pinter Publishing Limited, 1995. p.79.

Okome, M. *A Sapped Democracy: The Political Economy of the Structural Adjustment Program and the Political Transition in Nigeria, 1983-1993*. New York: University Press of America, 1993.

Onadipe, A. "Democracy in Ghana: The Rawlings Mystique Endures." *Contemporary Review* vol.270, April 1997. p.191-95.

Rimmer, Douglas. *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1959-1990*. Oxford: Paragon Press, 1992. p.180.

Sawyer, A. "The Politics of Adjustment Policy." Paper for International Conference on "The Human Dimension of Africa's Recovery and Development." Khartoum, Sudan, March 1998. p.22.

Shaw, T. *Reformism and Revisionism in Africa's Political Economy in the 1990s: The Dialectics of Adjustment*. London: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Shillington, K. *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Tangri, R., "The Politics of Government-Business Relations in Ghana." *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol.30, no.1 (1992), pp.97-111.

Tsikata, T., "The Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development: Ghana's Country Experience." Paper presented at the International Conference in Khartoum, Sudan, March 1988. p.22.

Vinzant, J.C. and Crothers, L. *Street-level Leadership: Discretion and Legitimacy in Front-line Public Service*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998.

Waterbury, J. 1993. *Exposed to Innumerable Delusions: Public Enterprise and State Power in Egypt, India, Mexico and Turkey*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

West Africa. August 17, 1987. p.A21.

Wilhelm, W., "Learning from Past Leaders," in *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era*, F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith and R. Beckhard, eds., San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p.223.

Reference Style: The following is the suggested format for referencing this article:

Adedeji, J.L. 2001. "The Legacy of J.J. Rawlings in Ghanaian Politics". *African Studies Quarterly* 5(2): 1. [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v5/v5i2a1.htm>